1-31-1984

The Role of Precollege Philosophy in Education

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THE ROLE OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

A Thesis Presented
By
ANN GAZZARD

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies
University of Massachusetts, Boston in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

January 1984

Critical and Creative Thinking Program
THE ROLE OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

A Thesis Presented

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank both the faculty and student body of the Critical and Creative Thinking Program - they stimulated my thinking and displayed an unending enthusiasm for my ideas. Encouragement of this kind makes the successful completion of a thesis possible.

Special thanks go to Professors Robert Swartz, Carol Smith and Arthur Millman for their invaluable suggestions during the supervision of this thesis.

Ann Gazzard 1983

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

### CHAPTER

I THE NATURE OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY ............... 5

- Three Conceptions of Philosophy and the Concomitant Implications for Teaching 6
- A Proposed Model for Teaching Philosophy 12
- Methods Currently Employed in Teaching Precollege Philosophy 19
- Some Advantages and Disadvantages of the Current Methods 26
- The Relationship Between the Current Programs in Precollege Philosophy and the Three Conceptions of Philosophy 32

II THE DOMINANT ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY: THE IMPROVEMENT OF THINKING SKILLS ............ 36

- The Nature of the Claim 37
- The Viability of the Claim 43
  - The Teachability of Thinking Skills
  - The Transferability of Thinking Skills
- The Contribution Made by Philosophy to the Development of Thinking Skills 55

III OTHER MOTIVATIONS FOR PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY ....... 62

- Precollege Philosophy and Indoctrination 62
- Precollege Philosophy and the Unification of the School Curriculum 77
- Precollege Philosophy and a More Meaningful Life 82

IV THE VIABILITY OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY ............. 88

- The Cognitive Capacity of Precollege Students 89
- The Readiness of Precollege Students to Confront Issues in Philosophy (iv)
Table of Contents (cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY 111

APPENDICES 115
This thesis is concerned primarily with an examination and assessment of the proposals that are currently employed to promote the inclusion of philosophy in precollege education. It is the central contention of the thesis that the dominant arguments in favour of precollege philosophy are not yet adequately formulated. In support of the inclusion of philosophy in the school syllabus, therefore, I shall in this thesis seek to identify areas of apparent and real weaknesses within the framework of the dominant arguments, with an aim to showing how these weaknesses might either be extirpated or overcome.

Requisite to the achievement of this comprehensive task is an understanding of the term 'philosophy' as it is used in the context of precollege education. To this end, Chapter I focuses upon alternative conceptions of philosophy and the teaching practices to which they give rise. Current methods of teaching precollege philosophy are described, and they are then examined in terms of this broader conceptual framework.

Having completed this initial part of the thesis, I will concentrate more determinately upon the arguments surrounding the introduction of philosophy in the schools. Chapter II examines the main argument which presently serves as the primary source of motivation for implementing philosophy in the schools, namely that the study of philosophy develops and improves thinking skills. Together with the anatomization of this claim, Chapter II also explores the viability of the claim in terms of
the teachability and transferability of thinking skills. Finally, I shall evaluate the role played by philosophy in the development of thinking skills. Two arguments will be considered in this connection: (i) that philosophy is the exclusive vehicle for the development of thinking skills - this I deny; and (ii) if philosophy does not have a monopoly on thinking skill development, then does it contribute anything unique to cognitive ability?

In Chapter III three claims made in favour of philosophy for children whose benefits are putatively a function of studying philosophy are considered. Whereas the development of thinking skills is an argument that has been adduced in the justification of other educational innovations, the arguments presented in this chapter which espouse the virtues of precollege philosophy are believed to be concerned with by-products peculiar only to the study of that discipline. The proposals examined here are (i) that philosophy can act as a buffer to indoctrination; (ii) that philosophy affords a framework in terms of which the curriculum can be integrated; and (iii) that philosophy can bring more meaning into the lives of those who pursue it.

Chapter IV then turns to consider the overall viability of philosophy as a pursuit suitable for precollege students. Two aspects of viability are examined. The first relates to the capability of children for the kind of thinking that philosophy requires and, given the requisite ability, the second concerns the degree to which they are ready to confront the issues engendered by philosophic inquiry. The most persistent challenge to philosophy for children is fostered on the
grounds of Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development. His theory can be interpreted so as to sustain the objection that children younger than 12-14 years have neither a facility with nor the ability for abstract thinking, the mode of thought which is predominantly demanded by the study of philosophy. Accordingly, Chapter IV is devoted to an analysis of this objection, ascertaining the strength of the contention in light of both the contemporary work in cognitive development theory and the emergence of conceptual frameworks promoting alternative explanations for the dynamics of cognitive growth. The chapter then moves on to consider the viability of precollege philosophy in terms of the student's readiness to confront issues in philosophy. Very little research has been done in this area. However, there is a line of investigation, the findings of which strongly suggest that most children are ready for philosophy. The argument gives rise to two problems namely, the assessment of readiness, and individual differences in readiness; recommendations for their resolution are provided.

It is to be hoped that the analysis of precollege philosophy presented here will afford the reader a better understanding of the nature of the discipline and the concomitant theoretical and practical problems in need of resolution. The admission of these problems should not be taken as an argument for the futility of precollege philosophy programs. On the contrary, the discussion in this thesis attempts to show that the difficulties are not insuperable. In respect of more recalcitrant problems, it is to be hoped that the thesis at least
suggests avenues which might in the future be profitably followed to achieve their resolution.
CHAPTER I
THE NATURE OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY

What is precollege philosophy? What, in other words, is taught in the schools under the rubric of precollege philosophy or philosophy for children?

The answer to this question depends primarily upon the conception of philosophy within which the philosophy program is embedded. I shall begin this thesis, therefore, by bringing together three interpretations of the nature of philosophy which engender slightly different orientations towards its teaching. In the most general sense, the term philosophy refers to the love of wisdom, and its etymology clearly bears this out. There is also the sense of the term where philosophy refers to a specific body of problems and/or the history of the ideas of the famous philosophers. In either case, the philosopher is one who exhibits a special competence with the traditional philosophical theories and problems. In more recent times, the term philosophy has been used to indicate a particular mental methodology or analytic habit of mind. On this latter account philosophy has no subject matter of its own; it is rather a meta-discipline which affords the elucidation of virtually any problem.

My aim in this chapter is twofold: first, it is to argue that the ideal practice of teaching philosophy in the schools requires that the philosophy program incorporate components based upon each of these three conceptions of philosophy; and second, it is to examine the
relationship that exists between the current approaches to teaching precollege philosophy and these three interpretations of philosophy. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three sections:

(1) a description of three conceptions of philosophy and the implications for teaching philosophy to which they give rise. From this discussion, a proposal for what might constitute a successful, if not ideal, philosophy program is developed;

(2) an outline of the methods currently employed in teaching precollege philosophy. To better understand these methods, some of their advantages and disadvantages are discussed; and

(3) an examination of the relationship between the conceptions of philosophy discussed in (1) and the teaching methods discussed in (2).

Three Conceptions of Philosophy and the Concomitant Implications for Teaching

Let us begin with the concept of philosophy as the love of wisdom. To determine what, on this view constitutes philosophy it is necessary to examine more closely the nature of wisdom. This involves an appreciation of the distinction between wisdom and knowledge. As problematic as any account of knowledge may be, wisdom implies the ability to deal sagaciously with what one knows. This is perhaps more easily expressed as part of the distinction between knowledge and understanding. For example, one might know how high Mt. Everest is, but if in the morning one goes to climb it dressed in a swimsuit and without a packed
lunch, then it is clear that one has not understood what one claims to know. Indeed, one would not be described as having behaved wisely. Wisdom, to some extent then, may be described as a combination of knowledge, an understanding of the knowledge, and an ability to make decisions and act in accordance with that understanding. On this view then, an educational program which hoped to teach philosophy would need to develop in its students an appreciation for what wisdom is, and an actual love of what that involves. In order to appreciate more fully the nature of this requirement, let us examine more closely what the love of wisdom involves. First, an appreciation of what wisdom is requires that the individual be able to detect the difference between learning and understanding. This conception of philosophy requires that the students learn to seek not so much knowledge and facts as an understanding of what knowledge is, what facts mean, the way in which facts feature as knowledge, and the use that can be made of them. On this view of philosophy it is clear that the teaching of philosophy employs little, if any philosophy, at least if philosophy is thought of as some content or subject-matter, say the history of philosophy or the particular problems which it treats. This is not to say that an acquaintance with this subject-matter might not contribute to the understanding being sought, but rather the point is that it might not. In other words, there is no logical reason why one should expect philosophy, in the sense of the knowledge of traditional problems, and philosophy alone to make a person wise.

Second, the actual love of wisdom requires a love of learning. Indeed, it seems uncontroversial that the love of wisdom, no matter what
else it might involve, entails a love of learning. This involves the
development of a sense of the excitement of intellectual curiosity and
discovery and an appreciation for the uses to which knowledge can be put.
The generation of these feelings and attitudes is, by and large, a
result of the way in which lessons are presented. It is not so much the
content of what is said as in what is shown by what is said. On this
view of philosophy then, the teaching of philosophy also requires that
the teacher have and be able to share a love of the enterprise in which
he/she is engaged. It is through that love that they transmit to their
students the love of learning.

It should now be easier to appreciate the scope and limits of the
second concept of philosophy, that is, philosophy as a body of content or
subject matter. Although there is an interaction between the two, the
subject matter referred to here covers two broad areas - the history of
philosophy or philosophical thought and the classical problems of
philosophy. It would be misguided to think that a comprehensive
understanding of philosophy could be reduced merely to the historical
account of philosophy. The view of philosophy as content admits of a
less myopic construal than the rendering of what this or that philosopher
has espoused. The content of philosophy can be substantive in the sense
of an appreciation of the traditional problems of philosophy.

Certain problems have come to be identified as peculiarly
philosophical problems, for example, free will and determinism, the
mind-body relation and personal identity. If one construes philosophy
as a discipline constituted of such problems and the world-views to which
they give rise, it would follow that a course in philosophy would need to treat these issues. Moreover, one would expect that the better the nature of these problems was presented, then the better would be the philosophic education. On this account, it would be expected of a philosophy program to present the classical problems of philosophy in such a way that the students become familiar with the nature of the intellectual demands placed upon those who consider them. It is not required that the program have a high level of sophistication in all areas of philosophy, nor even in one. Indeed, such an expectation is seldom, if ever, satisfied even in the case of professional philosophers whose specialist area accumulates literature so quickly that their absorption requires more attention than could be given. Expertise might actually serve as an impediment to the teaching of philosophy, in the sense that the feeling that all problems have been solved can be intellectually debilitating. Nevertheless, there is a strongly based presumption in favour of the philosophy course containing enough substantial information about the traditional problems of philosophy to transmit an understanding of them. The good teacher of philosophy would, on this account, educate for philosophical capability in creating an intellectual climate in which the student feels capable of making a personal contribution. The teacher of philosophy is not so much required to cultivate professional philosophers as to nurture an appreciation of what it is about philosophy that makes philosophy worth professional pursuit. In respect of the concept of philosophy as content, students need an acquaintance with the traditional problems of philosophy to the extent that they are inspired to pursue the problem's resolution.
Now let us turn to the third concept of philosophy, philosophy as a technique of intellectual reflection, and determine the extent to which it demands a curriculum consistent or otherwise with the foregoing. Philosophy is often regarded as a reflective habit of mind. Most particularly, it is rendered as a predisposition to analysis where the subject of the analysis is, by and large, the conceptual framework in which the problem or issue in question lay. For example, to think philosophically about the problem of abortion entails, on this view, reflection upon and analysis of more global concepts like 'the right to life', 'the ownership of choice', 'the morality of murder', etc. Whereas a scientific discussion focuses upon issues like the probability of an outcome (e.g. adoption rate after birth of unwanted child) based on statistical computation.

On this view of philosophy, philosophy is deemed to have no subject matter of its own, the sphere of influence of the technique extending far beyond the traditional problems. Virtually any problem can be treated philosophically, and viewing problems philosophically, including the traditional problems, in many cases signifies an analysis of the language in terms of which the problems are themselves formulated. On this view, philosophy is concerned with making explicit the assumptions and implications implicit in the questions and answers that philosophers and others have been disposed to raise and provide. While this conception of philosophy represents a distinct way of looking at things, it is not easy to say or teach what it is that makes it distinct. There are two things, however, that it seems necessary for the students to be able to
do. First, insofar as philosophy rests heavily upon the distinction between empirical and conceptual matters, part of what the student needs to know is how to make this distinction. Secondly, philosophy here is concerned to circumscribe the domain of possible states of affairs and events and, therefore, the student must develop the skills appropriate to this task. In other words, the philosophy student needs to know how to determine when an account of a matter reflects a coherent description of events. However, it is not enough for the students merely to be able to do this. They must also be able to articulate for others what they have done, that is, to be able to delineate the features of the matter which constitute its coherency. On the one hand, the traditional problems of philosophy are in themselves of little use in acquiring the skills of analysis familiar to contemporary philosophy. On the other hand however, the so-called traditional problems do admit of the contemporary approach and much recent literature is in this vein. Although a study of the traditional problems does not in itself advance the teaching of philosophy as a method of analysis and reflection, the application of the contemporary approach to the traditional problems does. Hence, it is easy to see that the student of philosophy could benefit from exposure to the contemporary dialogue. It would afford a familiarity with the tools of conceptual analysis, as well as an opportunity to experience the intellectual inheritance of the past. In this way, the second and third concepts of philosophy can be integrated.
A Proposed Model for Teaching Philosophy

In this section I am concerned to show that the successful, if not ideal, practice of teaching philosophy requires components drawn from each of these three conceptions of philosophy. In what follows I set out to justify this model for teaching philosophy by considering some of the consequences of excluding from a philosophy course those teaching practices peculiar to each of the three conceptions of the discipline.

First, let us consider the effects of a philosophy program that fails to generate an appreciation for, and a love of, wisdom. Two outcomes are likely. On the one hand, the processes of critical thinking and reflection may easily become ends in themselves. Sophism is a good example here. When students are not taught to use these skills in the context of the search for understanding and meaning, they are open to acquiring the mindless habit of applying the skills in the manner of a ritual to all problems they confront. While the thinking processes might be developed in this way to a high level of excellence, the unthinking application of the respective corporate skills defies the 'true' nature of the philosophic spirit. Moreover, the practice of ritualized application closes minds on issues that are fundamentally open. For example, it does not allow for the re-assessment of thinking strategies in light of the intricacies and nuances of each situation. In other words, in the absence of the search for meaning, students may have as their goal 'skill proficiency'. This would be unfortunate as it serves to curtail the actual use to which thinking processes can be put.
On the other hand, students are unlikely to display much incentive to search for the meaning contained within the experiences of everyday life unless the philosophy programs are dedicated to imparting a love of knowledge and understanding. Within the context of the classroom, any lack of incentive will not be so apparent. However, outside the classroom where the motives of pleasing the teacher and passing examinations are no longer cogent, students are less likely to be concerned with reflection and deeper interpretations of everyday experience. Imagine, for example, Johnny a boy who in the context of the classroom applies his critical thinking skills to a passage in his textbook, yet who outside the classroom does not 'think' to apply the same thinking skills to the discourse of a friend. While he can ascertain the validity, worth and meaning of his textbook, he is not afforded the same opportunity in respect of his friend's dialogue. It is not that the friend's discourse does not admit of such analysis. The point is rather that without the motivation to perform reflective analysis, the range of possible meanings that Johnny could extract from the interaction with his friend is reduced.

Programs, therefore, which do not attempt to generate a love of wisdom, by and large, reduce to either thinking skills development or a history of intellectual thought. In both cases, the scope of the study is restricted by virtue of undeveloped incentive to the material presented in the classroom. Insofar as all aspects of our lives need understanding, it seems unreasonable to construe the pursuit of wisdom as merely a function of inschool education. Every aspect of our daily lives
admits of a philosophic interpretation and accordingly, I would choose to argue that any program which failed to encourage the motivation to pursue this type of analysis across a broad spectrum of situations could not rightly claim to teach philosophy.

Let us now turn our attention to those philosophy programs which exclude the traditional subject matter of philosophy, whether it be the historical study or classical problems of the discipline. Programs which generate an understanding of philosophy as certain processes of thinking and/or the love of wisdom alone, deny students an appreciation of the great tradition of intellectual thought that has come to be known as philosophy. Perhaps the most pernicious feature of this orientation to philosophy is the lack of respect it imputes to the interests of key concern to professional philosophers. This is unfortunate because it is a familiarity with these intractable problems of philosophy that affords children an opportunity to reinforce their enthusiasm for confronting the perplexities and apparent irresolvable difficulties they face in their everyday lives. In other words, an awareness of the respect that the seemingly recalcitrant problems of philosophy engender in professional philosophers and others can help students recognize that the problems worth attempting are not only the ones whose solutions are guaranteed.¹

Of course anyone familiar with the classical philosophic problems is aware that the amount of relevant data that can be accumulated in respect of any one problem is almost unending. Therefore, one needs to

¹See Chapter III of this thesis for a more detailed account of the issue.
consider what amount of subject-matter is necessary for a program to be successful.

In most cases the answer to this question depends upon two things: the intricacy and intractability of the philosophic issue under consideration; and, the prior experience with and competency for dealing with the philosophic issues that the prospective students enjoy. Granted that these more specific needs have been met, a requisite condition to be met across all situations is the provision of at least that amount of subject-matter which would serve to prevent 'philosophic indoctrination' or indoctrination into a particular philosophic viewpoint. Instruction which fails to communicate accurately the range of opinions concerning a particular philosophic issue or which involves the assertion of controversial philosophic views without reasoned consideration of the broadly held contending views, can be indicted for inculcating biased views. Of course, there are those persons who consciously seek to teach in this way primarily for the purpose of instilling in the young a specific ideology. Notwithstanding the seriousness of this malpractice, I wish to draw attention here to unconscious indoctrination, that is, the inculcation of beliefs which occurs as a result of the teacher's ignorance about the dynamics of the philosophic issue at hand. Consider, for example, the teacher who comes to a place in the lesson where the mind-body problem arises. Without a prior exposure to the centuries-old debate about this problem, a teacher whom we will assume for the purposes of the present discussion holds a materialistic position, may react so adversely to any account of dualism that intellectual inferiority is automatically transferred to the dualist's viewpoint.
What all this shows is how insufficient attention to the subject-matter of philosophy may transmute in the context of the classroom to unintentional indoctrination. Without an understanding of the range and subtlety of arguments that accrue in respect of the different philosophic viewpoints, a teacher is both closed to and discourages the philosophic vitality of his/her students. Teachers and their students, therefore, need to be educated in philosophic subject matter to the extent that the opportunity for philosophic indoctrination is minimal.

Finally, what would be the outcome of a philosophy program which was not concerned with developing the reflective habit of mind? Two unfortunate consequences present themselves. First, without the development of the mental skills which afford reasoned criticism, a student's role in learning is relegated to that of the passive receiver or the receptacle of the information that the educational system chooses to communicate. In other words, the students are ill-equipped to assess and make meaningful the diverse information with which they are bombarded daily both within and without the school context. Second, pupils are denied the joy and satisfaction that comes about by thinking through issues, philosophical and otherwise, when the capacity for reflective and analytic thinking is left underdeveloped. They become more easily frustrated in their love of learning and pursuit of truth since the skills which would allow them to achieve these ends remain dormant. Without a component designed to encourage the reflective habit of mind, a philosophy program may amount to little more than a description of the different philosophical viewpoints. Such a program in itself does not provide the opportunity to participate
in the practice of philosophy and the kinds of thinking that, in the first place, generated these viewpoints. Again, the question of balance arises; that is, how much emphasis should a philosophy program place upon philosophic subject matter, and how much upon the development of the reflective habit of mind.

At the outset, it seems uncontroversial that the reflective habit of mind should be developed in students to its fullest potential. The question, therefore, is probably best addressed by considering the upper limits of the practice. It would seem desirable to educate for reflective thinking up to that point at which further instruction would likely result in motivating the use of thinking skills as ends in themselves. In other words, to discourage students from becoming 'avid little analyzers' who analyze 'everything to death' seems desirable. The love of wisdom component of philosophy comes into play here. The love of wisdom can serve to temper the predisposition to chronic analyticy. It orients the capacity for reflective criticism so that it can function as a tool in pursuit of meaning, rather than as a single isolated perspective upon reality. Socrates reminds us of the importance of this framework in the following passage:

Even if we know how to turn stones into gold, such knowledge would be worthless. For if we did not know how to use gold, it would do us no good .... Even if there were some knowledge that would make us deathless, if we did not know how to use our deathlessness, even that would do us no good.2

One aspect of teacher performance is very important for developing reflective thinking. The teacher must be adept in the skills he/she is

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attempting to instruct. Let me give an example pertaining to the development of critical thinking. Consider a teacher who is not proficient in the skills requisite for assessing coherency. Not only would he/she be unable to assist students in recognizing incongruities, but he/she could not assist in the students' development of their own analytic skills. This is unfortunate. The most pernicious feature of this lack of knowledge, however, manifests itself when the teacher is unable to correct specious reasoning, particularly sad when the student is dedicated to the pursuit of truth.

In conclusion then, I would choose to argue that any proposed model for teaching philosophy which did not include practices befitting each of the three interpretations of philosophy actually fails to make use of the wealth of knowledge that has come to be known as philosophy. The most unfortunate consequence of the other models is that students are denied access to many vital sources of learning and knowledge. I do not wish to suggest that the exclusion of any one of these components from a course will serve necessarily to vitiate any contribution it might otherwise make to existing educational practice. The point is rather that, in their absence, a course entitled 'philosophy' cannot afford a contribution sufficiently comprehensive to do justice to the philosophic mode. Moreover, a course lacking any one of these three dimensions could, consequently, be indicted for misrepresenting the nature of the discipline in all its complexity.
Methods Currently Employed in Teaching

Precollege Philosophy

I should now like, within the framework of the foregoing discussion, to examine the current methods employed in teaching precollege philosophy. Three different methods of precollege philosophy present themselves for consideration: (i) the philosophy program for elementary and middleschool children instituted by Professor Matthew Lipman and his associates; (ii) programs attending to the philosophical content of various literary works and/or to the philosophical issues already embedded in the existing curriculum. These programs on the whole tend to be the products of individual teachers or groups of teachers with special interests in philosophy; and (iii) high school philosophy programs which consist primarily of logic and the traditional philosophic issues presented in an historical context.

In what follows, I shall first describe each of these methods, and second, I shall consider their major educational advantages and disadvantages. This discussion should provide the necessary background for the then subsequent determination of the extent to which the programs actually exploit the diversity and richness of philosophy by incorporating elements from the three dimensions of the discipline presented above.

I shall begin by considering the third type of program, (iii) mentioned above. This method of teaching precollege philosophy is based on a very narrow conception of philosophy and it is thus a much less interesting program than the other two methods. My analysis of it here
will, therefore, be brief. Together with its description, I will include a brief discussion of the method's limitations.

By and large, the high school philosophy programs consist of the didactic presentation of the following: the history of philosophy and/or the traditional problems of philosophy; and, logic. This method of teaching philosophy treats philosophy as a body of knowledge both complete in and of itself wherein students are viewed as the passive recipients of that information. Educationally, the method faces two major difficulties. First, there are many economic and administrative problems brought about by the introduction of a new and separate unit of study into the curriculum. For example, there is the problem of suitable course instructors, and the problem of accommodating a new subject in an already overcrowded curriculum. Second, the method does not offer a context suitable for introducing philosophy into earlier education. For example, it makes no provision for bringing the classic problems of philosophy to younger children in a language that they could understand. This method of teaching is neither orientated to the generation of a love of wisdom nor to the development of the analytic, reflective habit of mind. Accordingly, its students are deprived of a large amount of knowledge that is actually the potential outcome of a philosophy course.

Now let us turn to Professor Lipman's program in precollege philosophy, or as it is now widely known, 'the philosophy for children approach'.
The program is characterized by the following two basic features:

(1) Philosophy is presented to children in a language appropriate to their age through the medium of the 'philosophical novel'. These novels, written by Professor Lipman and his associates for each age group from K-12th grade, are designed for the specific purpose of teaching philosophy to children. Each story centers upon a group of children of comparable age to the readers for whom it was written. The traditional problems and contemporary issues in philosophy, the rules of formal and informal logic, and the practices of establishing good reasons for belief are introduced at an early age and continue to be developed throughout the series. By way of the philosophical novel, philosophy is presented within the context of events which supposedly typify the real events in the lives of the child readers. As a result, everyday life is made to serve both as the stimulus to philosophic reasoning and speculation, and as the framework in terms of which philosophy itself is understood. This serves to develop an appreciation of the extent to which daily life admits of deeper and broader meanings. Indeed, it is likely that this feature of Lipman's program serves as the single most important motivation for its continued implementation.

Little, if any, attention is given within the novels to informing children that they are actually engaged in philosophy. Rather, the novels portray the children as persons who are sensitive to problems and philosophic issues; as persons who seek enthusiastically the increased

3An outline of the Philosophy for Children curriculum is given in appendix 1.
depth of understanding that the reflective habit of mind can afford. It is intended that the children in the novels should serve as models for the readers; models of persons who are keen to partake in philosophic inquiry and problem-solving.

(2) The philosophy for children approach emphasizes the importance of class discussion for teaching philosophy. According to Lipman, the philosophic novel, in and of itself, has little to offer by way of educating for philosophy. For the latter, Lipman contends that the novel needs to be accompanied by ongoing class discussions wherein the issues and thinking practices outlined in the novels can be brought to life. In other words, the novel is designed to function as the context in terms of which philosophical issues are introduced and the techniques appropriate to their resolution are modelled. The ensuing class discussion, on the other hand, is the place where philosophy and the skills requisite for its practice are actually acquired and understood. The development of the class discussion, therefore, is an integral component in the philosophy for children program. Each novel is accompanied by an Instruction Manual for teachers. The manuals provide an extensive coverage of techniques useful for facilitating class discussions, especially as they relate to the topics treated within the novel. Class discussion is seen as the means by which philosophic inquiry proceeds, and for Lipman, it is tantamount to the quest for meaning. His method of philosophic inquiry is characterized by a set of principles which are formulated as intellectual and moral commitments. Both the class as a whole and its individual members must appropriate these commitments when partaking in their class discussions.
The commitments are as follows: (i) a commitment to the process of inquiry itself; (ii) a commitment to the principles of formal logic, when attempting to determine the validity of an argument, reason or explanation; (iii) a commitment to the principles of informal logic when searching for good reasons for belief. These include, for example, a commitment to respect the views of others and to search for further reasons; and (iv) a commitment to the reevaluation of one's reasons. This includes, for example, a reevaluation of one's belief in light of the accumulation of new factual evidence. The desired method of philosophic inquiry portrayed here is modelled and discussed by the children in the novels, and the Teachers' Manuals provide further recommendations for initiating the practice in the classroom.

Finally, let us consider the second major way, (ii) above, in which philosophy is brought into precollege education. Actually, there is not one characteristic method. Rather, the uniting feature of these methods is that they are designed by individual teachers. Two approaches are available: either, the teacher can design a philosophy program around the philosophical issues already embedded in the existing curriculum, or, he/she can supplement the curriculum with a variety of literary works and concentrate on the philosophical issues contained therein. Some may even choose to combine these two methods. Let us examine the first of these approaches. The traditional curriculum systematically admits of philosophical analysis. The philosophic issues to which traditional curriculum most often gives rise, however, are epistemological and logical in kind. For example, the question 'How do you know that?' is applicable to all bodies of knowledge and it provides a good starting point for
introducing students to issues in the foundations of knowledge. Similarly, questions like 'Why do you believe that?', and 'How do you know that that's right?' are pervasive within the curriculum and provide a basis for discussing logic and the use of its tools in the establishment of reasons for belief.

While the subjects of the traditional curriculum do occasionally engender questions and issues more metaphysical and ethical in nature, the contexts best suited for analyses of these kinds do not occur systematically. These issues, moreover, are not so readily apparent when they do occur, particularly to the nonprofessional philosopher untrained in the ways of their detection. In the general absence then of contexts suitable for studying metaphysics and ethics, it becomes necessary to supplement the curriculum with the appropriate materials. It is not only necessary to enrich the curriculum with materials, metaphysical and ethical in nature, but it is also necessary to do so when any of the philosophical issues which the teacher wishes to treat do not occur appropriately, if at all, in the context of the existing subjects. Professor Gareth Matthews has identified children's literature which treats philosophical issues. He provides a source list of books useful for elementary and middleschool philosophy, together with a discussion of the philosophical considerations contained therein. The majority of books selected by Matthews deal with

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Matthews has a regular column in the Journal of Philosophy for Children which he dedicates to a discussion of excerpts from children's books which he has found to be pertinent to the teaching of philosophy to children. A description of some of this material is presented in appendix 2 under the heading 'Books and Other Materials Useful for Teaching Precollege Philosophy'.

metaphysical, ethical and epistemological issues, and his work is a good starting point for teachers who wish to develop curriculum in those areas.

Sundry other materials more suited to high school students have now been identified. In general the selection of literary works has been carried out on the basis of the extent to which a book either models a particular philosophic viewpoint, or contains expositions of and debates between conflicting philosophic views. High school teachers, unlike elementary and middle school teachers, have the advantage of being able also to include within their program traditional writings and texts drawn from the discipline of philosophy itself. Introductory textbooks to philosophy, including logic, are in most cases accessible to the older pupil. Two sources provide an excellent selection of resource materials suitable for teaching philosophy in the high school. They are the publications from the Centre for High School Philosophy, 1968-1974; and the High School Philosophy Program developed by Ms Anna Merrington.5

5 The Centre for High School Philosophy was established in 1968 in Chicago. It was responsible for the development of curricula in philosophy for high school and their implementation in a cross section of high schools in the Chicago area. Monthly newsletters were printed during this time, and three manuscripts are now available outlining the history, development, structure and success of the program. Both sources provide a wealth of suggestions and recommendations for high school philosophy curriculum development and implementation.

Ms A. Merrington is a high school teacher in the Boston area who has for the last three years been teaching philosophy to her students in a course entitled 'Philosophy through Literature'. Her program is well coordinated and the curricula sufficiently detailed so as to afford an excellent sample of literary works suitable for presenting a number of philosophic problems to high school pupils.

A brief description of these materials is presented in appendix 2.
For those teachers who wish to concentrate more specifically upon the introduction of logic into precollege education, there is no shortage of materials in the current literature designed to introduce elementary, middle and high school children to and develop their facility with the tools of logic and critical thinking. Numerous programs designed to teach critical thinking are available and the teacher can select courses appropriate to his/her own students needs; for example, the Edward de Bono Lateral Thinking Program, the Instrumental Enrichment Program, and the Strategic Reasoning Program. 6

Some Advantages and Disadvantages of the Current Methods

Let us first consider some of the more important educational advantages and disadvantages of the philosophy for children approach to precollege philosophy. The use of the philosophic novel has two notable advantages. First, the author can selectively piece together within a context of continuity and in a relatively small space many philosophical ideas and problems. Without this, the teacher must either present the material by way of lecture, or he/she confronts the formidable task of amassing selections of work which contain selections of the philosophic point in question. Second, the philosophic novel is a very convenient tool for modelling the behaviours and thinking skills deemed necessary for successful philosophic inquiry. The readers are brought face to face

6 These programs are described more fully in appendix 2.
with individuals who like themselves are learning to appreciate the purpose of philosophic investigation and the techniques of the process. Although a verbal exposition of the philosophic process might be possible, it would be less likely to engage the attention and understanding of as many students. A variety of personalities and thinking styles interacting in philosophical discussions are represented in the novels. This not only demonstrates the contribution that many individuals can make to the philosophic inquiry but it also outlines courses of action most appropriate to their participation.

The second major advantage of the philosophy for children approach is the support that the Instructors Manuals lend to the teachers. They provide a diverse selection of exercises and activities designed to enrich the children's experience together with background material sufficient to familiarize the teachers with the philosophical issues treated in the novel. Of course, it is expected that the teachers have on some previous occasion explored these topics in greater depth. The Manuals are designed to serve more as a source of readily accessible materials covering in brief the variety of arguments and points of view pertaining to the issue at hand.

Perhaps the most worrying disadvantage of the philosophy for children program is the demand it places upon the school curriculum. As a separate unit of study, its inclusion into the school curriculum, may necessitate the displacement of an already existing course of study. This in itself generates numerous problems which are at present in need of
resolution and to which this thesis is in part concerned. Two questions predominate: first, can philosophy add something unique and desirable to the already existing curriculum such that its implementation is justified?; and secondly, given that it is worthy of inclusion into the curriculum, by what criteria should the arbitration between programs competing for inclusion be made? These types of problems are notoriously difficult to resolve, yet their intractability should not be used to provide sufficient reason for their being evaded.

Precollege philosophy programs of the type constructed by individual teachers have a number of advantages over the philosophy for children approach. For example, philosophy is no longer restricted to being taught as a separate unit of study in the school curriculum, though the opportunity to teach philosophy in this way is not prohibited by this approach. Individualized programs make possible the assimilation of philosophy into the subjects and disciplines of the already existing curriculum. The problem of squeezing philosophy into the curriculum and of removing another subject from it for its inclusion is circumvented, and the opportunity to experience the extent to which philosophy relates to and assists in the integration of all disciplines is readily available. A second advantage of these precollege philosophy programs is the range of teaching styles of which they admit. Precollege philosophy is no longer delimited by the prescription for teaching set out by the philosophy for children approach. The teaching process is more flexible.

7The problem is treated more fully in Chapter III.
and the teachers can judge for themselves the style most befitting the
philosophic material and the individual abilities of the children. For
example, some new and more difficult philosophical issue might be better
served by a series of expository lectures followed by a class discussion,
whereas an issue, more familiar to the students, might be effectively
presented in terms of class discussion alone. It is this flexibility
in teaching strategy which individually designed programs afford.

The major disadvantage of philosophy programs of this type is
that they rely for their inception and successful implementation upon
teachers who have a somewhat unusual, maybe even rare, blend of teaching
and philosophical skills. On the one hand, the teacher must be competent
in his/her own speciality, whether it be elementary schooling or high
school mathematics. On the other hand, he/she must possess a knowledge
of philosophy which is both sufficient to employ the literary works
amenable to teaching philosophy and sufficient to recognize the elements
of the curriculum which admit of epistemic, metaphysical or some other
form of philosophical analysis. Part of what the knowledge of philosophy
comes to is an understanding of the process of philosophic inquiry. To
develop in the students a facility with this process such that they could
explore issues on their own, philosophy teachers would also need to have
an expertise in this area and a capacity to describe, demonstrate or,
in some other way, familiarize students with the requisite techniques
which advance philosophical understanding. This is a difficult and
demanding task, so much so that many teachers may not attempt to teach
the procedure without the assistance of a professional philosopher or without a detailed, comprehensive manual providing a step by step guideline of techniques. It is here that the philosophy for children approach holds an advantage. Not only do the novels contain a model of the process for the students, but the Manuals provide the teachers with detailed suggestions for undertaking philosophic inquiry in the classroom. Unfortunately however, Lipman's materials are not particularly suitable for being used selectively as a teaching device in this area. Being a central feature of the program, the model of philosophic inquiry is so embedded throughout the entire program that the successful use of the program for teaching the process of philosophic inquiry would be tantamount to doing the whole program. In other words, it is difficult to imagine how the philosophy for children program could be used selectively as a model of philosophic inquiry without an injustice being done to the complex and delicately balanced nature of the process of inquiry itself.

In conclusion then, it seems that there is a need for the development of yet another approach to precollege philosophy. A curriculum which could at one and the same time supply both the type of teacher assistance which the philosophy for children approach provides, and the literary richness and flexibility of teaching styles which the individually sponsored programs offer would make a significant contribution to the current practices of teaching precollege philosophy. The following framework provides an outline of one of the ways in which this new curriculum might be organized. It could, for example, be constructed
to include:

(i) an extensive list of literary works specifying the philosophic topics to which they pertain and the lines of relationship between them. Ideally, works suitable for different age groups would be part of this delineation,

(ii) background reading, discussions and lists for further reading on the different philosophic problems, together with some general guidelines for the amount of reading useful for the teachers of the different age groups,

(iii) a detailed account of philosophic inquiry and the procedures for establishing a classroom environment capable of sustaining the practice,

and (iv) a variety of materials - film strips, lectures, plays or novels - designed to increase the children's understanding of the nature of philosophic inquiry and the importance of the principles by which it abides.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the perplexing issues related to teacher education and precollege philosophy. In order to set my proposed orientation to curriculum development in context, however, it is necessary that at least the key feature of the posture it assumes to the education of precollege philosophy teachers be adumbrated.

I believe that the precollege philosophy teacher needs both a substantial background in the subject-matter of philosophy and a prior and ongoing experience with exploring the various philosophic problems
through the context of a community of inquiry. The adequate teaching of philosophy and the exemplification of its richness seem to demand these two qualities as educational prerequisites. Irrespective of how elaborate a teachers manual might be it cannot serve as a substitute for struggling first hand with philosophic issues, nor can it function as the teachers sole introduction to philosophical literature. Rather, the manuals are best conceived of as refresher courses providing information relevant to various philosophic views and suggestions for instituting classroom discussion on related activities. The means by which precollege philosophy teachers are to be educated is a problematic issue and beyond the scope of this thesis. The extent of the problem is comprehended, however, by recognizing that its resolution demands an arbitration between various claims including those based on economics, the interest level and relevant education level of the prospective teachers, the availability of professional assistance, and the interests of the student population.

The Relationship Between Current Programs in Precollege Philosophy and the Three Conceptions of Philosophy

Finally, let us now turn to consider the relationship that exists between these current methods of teaching precollege philosophy and the three conceptions of philosophy discussed earlier.

The philosophy for children approach represents a serious attempt to conflate into a single curriculum two key conceptions of philosophy,
namely, the notion of philosophy as a specific body of problems and the notion of it as a particular mental methodology. The curriculum is designed primarily with a view to developing thinking skills, putatively those thinking skills peculiar to the reflective habit of mind. What makes this program unique, however, is the context in which the thinking skills are taught.

Thinking is developed by way of encouraging the students to struggle with the traditional problems of philosophy and these are set in the context of everyday life. In other words, students are taught to develop and refine their thinking skills by way of thinking about the classical problems of philosophy.

This approach to teaching precollege philosophy then, rests heavily upon two of the primary conceptions of philosophy. What provision, however, does it make for developing the love of wisdom? In the book 'Philosophy in the Classroom' Professor Lipman writes at great length about the importance of meaning to the integrity of life, and he evokes many reasons supporting the value of studying philosophy in this vein. The children's novels and the Teachers' Manuals, however, focus more intently upon the development of thinking skills and the development and assessment of reasons for belief. If it were undoubtedly the case that clear and valid thinking and the establishment of sound reasons were the sole purveyors of meaning, then the philosophy for children approach could

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8 The thinking skills referred to here are listed in appendix 3.
be considered a comprehensive program for promoting the love of wisdom. Insofar as the relationship between reasons for belief and knowledge is controversial, however, and insofar as the relationship between knowledge and wisdom asymmetrical, the love of wisdom is not, as the philosophy for children approach would have it, such a straightforward achievement. The development of the love of wisdom, therefore, would seem to require more than this program offers.

Programs in precollege philosophy designed by individual teachers who harbour a special interest in philosophy are much more likely, on the other hand, to be capable of generating, if not, an actual love of wisdom, then at least, an appreciation for what that entails. As a result of their special interest and enthusiasm to initiate philosophy programs in the schools, it is not unreasonable to conclude that, these teachers have a love of the discipline and an understanding of its imports to the life of the mind. It is these characteristics which in the context of the classroom transmute to a love of learning and understanding.

With regard to teaching both philosophy as a special body of problems and philosophy as a mental methodology, it is the individual teachers interests and abilities which define the scope of the philosophy program. The philosophical subject-matter covered in a program will be, for example, a function of two things. First, it will depend upon the teachers knowledge of the range of philosophic problems that actually exist, and second, it will depend upon the philosophic problems in which he/she is most interested and feels most competent to teach. Similarly,
the extent to which these programs develop thinking skills and the mental apparatus for conceptual analysis is also subject to the teacher's interests and abilities. In the first place, the teacher needs to be aware not only that this dimension of philosophy exists but that it is a worthwhile pursuit. In the second place, the teacher needs to be knowledgeable about the field and adept in the skills the program itself proclaims to advance. Without the first, the specific aspect of philosophy in question could not be included in the program, and without the second, it could be included but would likely be unsuccessful. In other words then, precollege philosophy programs designed by individual teachers can only hope to incorporate dimensions from the three conceptions of philosophy to the extent that the teacher is aware of their existence and has the interest and ability to teach them.
CHAPTER II

THE DOMINANT ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY:
AN IMPROVEMENT IN THINKING SKILLS

At present, the primary motivation for precollege philosophy is that it will develop and improve the student's thinking skills. This argument in favour of philosophy for children has received the most attention, and in many cases it is the only one which is advanced. There are two explanations for the position of priority enjoyed by this claim. On the one hand, it relates directly to the almost universal concern for the poor reading levels and lack of critical thinking ability displayed by schoolchildren and college freshmen. On the other hand, the claim is by its very nature the one most amenable to empirical validation.

My task in this chapter is threefold: First, I will examine more closely the claim that philosophy can enhance thinking skills. Second, I will examine the viability of the claim by considering the extent to which thinking skills are, on the one hand, teachable, and on the other, transferable into different subject areas. Finally, I will evaluate the extent to which philosophy's contribution to the improvement of thinking skills is unique. I shall conclude by arguing that in light of the many programs similarly designed to improve thinking skills, it is not productive to use this claim as the dominant argument in favour of precollege philosophy.
The Nature of the Claim

Stated most succinctly, the claim is that through the study of philosophy children's thinking skills can be improved. The major exponents of this view are Professor Lipman and his associates who have worked prodigiously to promote the philosophy for children approach.

The claim itself is straightforward enough. There is an apparent confusion in the literature, however, concerning the thinking skills which are supposedly effected. This is indicated by the variety of ways in which the claim has been stated. Sometimes, for example, the claim has been cast in terms of reasoning ability: 'philosophy for children is a systematic and complete curriculum which fosters the improvement of reasoning ability.' On other occasions it is construed as the development of independent thinking: 'the main purpose of a program in philosophy for children is to help children learn how to think for themselves'; and at other times, it is affirmed as the encouragement of reflective thinking, 'the aim of a thinking skills program is not to turn children into philosophers or decision-makers, but to help them become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, and more reasonable individuals'.

Moreover, the terms 'independent thinking skills', 'reflective thinking

1 Matthew Lipman, Philosophy for Children, Spring 1983, Pamphlet from Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

2 Matthew Lipman, Ann M. Sharp, Frederick J. Oscanyan, Philosophy in the Classroom, 2nd ed.

3 Ibid., p.15.
skills', 'critical and creative thinking skills', and 'reasoning skills' have been used interchangeably, and it is not uncommon to find, for example, a discussion commencing in terms of 'thinking skills' and concluding in terms of 'reasoning ability'. Both Lipman and Bergen have made this mistake.\textsuperscript{4,5} The issue has been confounded further by the introduction of the terms 'philosophical thinking' and 'philosophical thinking skills'. The development of philosophical thinking is espoused as an aim of the philosophy for children curriculum and it too is used inconsistently. 'Philosophical thinking' is construed at times as conceptual analysis and the analysis of language, while at other times it is used to refer to thinking about the traditional problems of philosophy. This type of terminological confusion tends generally to indicate the presence of a deeper, underlying conceptual hiatus. And indeed, within the area of precollege philosophy continuing theoretical progress now depends upon the delimitation and clarification of the terms presented above. With this in mind, I have tried to identify those aspects of the claim in respect of thinking skills which provide some sort of coherency when they are brought together. Let us now turn then to these key features of the claim.

In general terms the claim that the practice of philosophy improves thinking skills admits of anatomization into three rather more specific issues. The first is that philosophy affords a unique opportunity for

\textsuperscript{4}Matthew Lipman, 'Why aren't thinking skills being taught?', \textit{Thinking} 3(4), 1982, p.45.

\textsuperscript{5}Timothy J. Bergen, C.I. Mwambo, 'Critical Thinking: A Sign of the Times', \textit{Analytic Teaching} 3(2), 1983, pp.31-33.
instruction in the improvement of thinking skills; the second, that it provides the framework in terms of which instruction in the subjects of mind, thought and thinking styles can occur; and finally, that by virtue of the above logical features, it encourages the inclination towards reflective thinking.

Let us consider the first of these. The encouragement of thinking skills is thought to be achieved initially by introducing children to formal and informal logic and subsequently, by bringing these processes to bear upon classroom discussion. The thinking skills which are most often discussed in this context are those pertaining to critical analysis, for example, classifying, drawing inferences and identifying inconsistencies. Philosophy for children is based on the assumption that discussion skills are the foundations of thinking skills. By assimilating the procedure of a well-constituted philosophic discussion the argument is that children concomitantly enhance their capacity for clear and correct thinking. In other words, by utilizing the logical structures implicit in ordinary discourse philosophy for children is believed to instruct children in the art of mental hygiene. And this is supposedly the uniqueness of philosophy's contribution to thinking skills; a contribution that the traditional subjects alone cannot afford.

Lipman contends that traditional schooling fails either to explain directly to children what is meant by 'good thinking' or to cultivate

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6A list of the thinking skills which the philosophy for children program is aimed to develop is given in appendix 4.

7Matthew Lipman, *Philosophy in the Classroom*, p.22.
those practices whereby it may be achieved. Moreover, he contends that while the traditional subject areas like maths, science and reading may contribute to good reasoning, they are not in themselves sufficient to generate it. The suggestion is that in mathematics where reasoning is highly abstract and often content-specific, there is no guarantee of transferability of reasoning skills to the verbal conceptual mode. Similarly, in the sciences where much emphasis is placed upon inference, stress is given to inductive inference, leaving the more rigorous deductive inference relatively untouched. Lipman's second invective against the traditional claim is that children are not specifically encouraged to reflect upon the type of thinking, or logical form of thought, appropriate to the enterprise in which they are engaged. In other words, an explicit account of the various forms of thinking, of their roles and legitimate application, is not overtly developed in these subjects. It is not as if he wants to deny that the brighter children can independently synthesize an understanding of the relevant thought processes. His point is rather that a better understanding of the scope and limits of reasoning can be brought to all children by virtue of the type of curriculum intervention he is proposing. In respect of reading instruction, he argues that it has become an end in itself where the thinking process it was intended to encourage assume a role of lesser importance. In other words, instead of reading being used as a tool to develop further, the child's thinking processes and his/her body

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9 Ibid., p.19.
of knowledge, good reading defined by verbal performance has become the educational objective. Lipman cases the interdependence between thinking and reading differently. He proposes that an improvement in reading improves concomitantly with an improvement in thinking ability. He suggests that, in learning how to reason, children learn to grasp the meanings of words and phrases in their relevant contexts thereby ensuring that the connotations, suggestions and other sorts of hidden meanings contained within communications are made more accessible. Sponsored on the assumption that we read to get meanings, he concludes that philosophy in the schools would serve greatly to make reading a more meaningful exercise.

The second key point to the claim that philosophy improves thinking skills is that it also provides a framework suitable for teaching about the mind and thought. The suggestion is that the philosophical discussion familiarizes children with virtually all aspects of thinking, that is, with the sundry capacities of mind and the variety of styles of thought which derive from it. A properly conducted philosophical discussion affords its participants an opportunity to observe the ways of thinking adopted by the other participants. In this way children thus come to appreciate the variety of ways in which it is possible to think about an issue. They learn to appreciate that other thinking styles can elicit proposals as valid and as appropriate as their own. The important point here is that exposure to a variety of thought modes puts one's own thought in perspective, which itself in turn develops healthy attitudes towards

10 Ibid.
thinking. Without this, ill-founded beliefs about the less common styles of thought are more readily formulated, and children with unusual insights, for example, are less likely to be discouraged. An awareness of variety in thinking strategies, moreover, is thought to be valuable for enhancing children’s thinking repertoires. Some situations, for example, require strict formal thought, others require insight and speculation, others involve memory and questioning, while others involve nonlogical and creative processes. Inasmuch as different situations are better served by different thinking strategies the claim is that a familiarity with philosophic discussion should facilitate the selection of the best thinking strategy.

The final point related to the claim that philosophy improves thinking ability now presents itself. The argument in this case is based on the claim that philosophy, by virtue of its longheld and persistent inquiries into the nature of thought and mind provides an abundant source of material suitable for enriching children’s understanding in this area. Lipman contends that by discussing this component of philosophic subject-matter in a philosophically standardized discussion, students are afforded the opportunity to experience what it is to think about thinking, what it is, that is, to turn their thoughts to a consideration of the thinking process itself. By exploring the nature of thought and by observing in themselves and in others the aspects of thought and mind being discussed, the proposal is that children acquire both an understanding of the traditional concepts formulated about mind and a capacity for reflective thought.
In conclusion then, philosophy is believed to promote good thinking skills and a deepened understanding of the nature of thinking and thought itself. These qualities supposedly form a sound basis for the development of effective, independent thinking strategies and the reflective habit of mind. Instead of being encouraged merely to acquire significant reflections by trying to think someone else's thoughts, children are - on this view - encouraged to develop and express their own ideas.

The Viability of the Claim

The time has now come to consider two controversial issues which are closely tied to the claim that programs in philosophy can significantly improve thinking skills. Both issues, namely the teachability and transferability of thinking skills, demand examination in this context since their validity effects the immediate viability of the more general argument in favour of philosophy for children.

Before commencing this task, however, a little more still remains to be said about the term 'thinking skills'. The confusion as to whether the term means logical, analytic, creative or reflective thinking was discussed in the foregoing discussion. The discussion here transcends this issue, and I am now concerned to describe two broader conceptions of that term.

Whether referring to 'logical thinking' or 'reflective thinking', the proponents of precollege philosophy characterize thinking skills as
techniques to be taught and developed through the medium of some particular subject-matter. By and large, the nature and dynamics of the skills themselves are not taught. That is, metaconceptual awareness is not developed directly. Rather, skills are learnt solely by exercising them within the boundaries of specific content materials. An alternative approach is to view thinking skills as metaconceptual knowledge. On this account, thinking skills are developed through: (1) an explanation of the structure and application of skills; and (2) the practice of actually applying them to different materials. Here improvement in thinking is not so much dependent upon exercising the skill as it is upon acquiring knowledge about what the skill actually is and knowledge about the range and means of its application.

The implications for the transferability of thinking skills which these two approaches engender serve as their key distinguishing feature. On the first account, the transferability of thinking skills is a somewhat haphazard affair. Children are not instructed specifically in the processes of transfer. Rather the success of this process depends, for example upon things like a high degree of similarity between situations and the student's ability to detect this. On the second account, however, the transferability of skills is a large component of the metaconceptual knowledge that children acquire. Accordingly, the identification of situations suitable for transfer is made easier, and the process itself made more systematic.
With these two conceptions of thinking skills in mind, let us return now to consider in more detail issues pertaining to the teachability and transferability of thinking skills.

The Teachability of Thinking Skills

It is clear that unless thinking can be shown to admit of instruction, then the claim that philosophy can improve thinking skills is vacuous. The extent to which thinking is deemed to be teachable depends upon the underlying conception of cognition from which it derives. Three possible conceptions of cognition present themselves—cognitive development brought about by: (i) the natural processes of biological maturation; (ii) the individual’s interaction with his environment; and (iii) some combination of (i) and (ii). Position (i) does not yield the processes of thinking teachable. On this view, cognitive development depends entirely upon changes in physiology brought about by the inbuilt processes of biological maturation. The theoretical postures described in (ii) and (iii), however, suggest that instruction in thinking skills is far from being a futile exercise. On view (ii), for instance, cognitive development can be brought about only through learning, and the conjunction of (ii) and (iii) would presuppose the truth of (iii). On these two latter views, that is, cognitive development is guaranteed, at least partially, by learning. This being so, we can see that the substantiation of the claim that philosophy improves thinking skills will depend upon the extent to which the supporting arguments in (ii) and (iii) can be sufficiently elaborated to articulate...
a theory of learning to think. Some research has been done in this vein, and indeed, there is now an accumulation of persuasive evidence attesting to the teachability of thinking skills.\textsuperscript{11,12} The evidence, however, tends largely to demonstrate the teachability of thinking skills in terms of the acquisition of metacognitive knowledge. David Perkins, for example, has shown that metacognitive strategies like the search for counterfactuals, the hunt for alternative causes of an effect, and the search for causal chains leading from the same initial situation to the same or contrary consequent all admit of instruction. Susan Carey, on the other hand, addresses the problem of the teachability of thinking skills differently. Rather than cite particular examples which demonstrate the teachability of thinking skills, either content-specific or metaconceptual in nature, she chooses to reinterpret the traditional findings, in terms of metacognitive acquisition. What is important here is that both these lines of research suggest that, when construed as metaconceptual knowledge, thinking skills admit of successful instruction.

The Transferability of Thinking Skills

Let us turn now to consider some of the issues relevant to the transferability of thinking skills. Two aspects of the controversy


deserve elucidation here: (i) the theoretical debate, and (ii) the empirical evidence amassed in support of the claim. The issue of transferability is important to the claim that philosophy can enhance thinking skills. It is important since the claim would have little to recommend it if the thinking skills philosophy supposedly engendered were either not able to be used in any other situation or restricted in their sphere of influence to situations similar in type to those where they were first acquired.

Let us begin our analysis of transferability then by examining the relevant theoretical debate. Philosophy putatively gives rise to thinking skills broader than the reasoning skills of formal and informal logic. Most discussion about thinking skills in the philosophy for children literature, however, is confined to reasoning ability and critical thinking. This is a significant stricture, and the current debate concerning the transferability of thinking skills, a debate stimulated primarily by the work of John McPeck, is centred around it.14 In the broadest sense, critical thinking has been understood as a set of general thinking skills that can be developed through continued practice and which have the capacity to improve 'everyday' reasoning. The dominant works in the field - Ennis, Blair, Scrivan and Beardsley - attest to this view.15 Thus construed, the motivation for the inclusion of general reasoning skills into the school curriculum is obvious. That is, it has

15 Ibid., p.39.
generally been believed that general reasoning skills afford a uniform tool for performing critical analysis in any discipline. In other words, the main motivation for the inclusion of reasoning skills programs in the schools has been sponsored on the assumption that general thinking skills are transferable across disciplines to situations different from those in which they were acquired. John McPeck, in his book 'Critical Thinking and Education' makes perhaps the first serious attempt to contest this claim about the transferability of thinking skills. He suggests also that the traditional, unexamined view of transferability promises the rather opaque hope of a short cut to intellectual proficiency in a diverse range of subjects. His argument against the transferability of thinking skills rests primarily upon two criticisms. The first concerns the transfer power of general thinking skills. He contends that while the notion of exhaustive transfer power of general thinking skills represents a strength of the traditional approach, it also constitutes its greatest weakness. According to McPeck, universal generalizability is a sign of vacuity, rather like the way in which a tautology's consistency with every state of affairs ensures that it is empirically uninformative. His second attack upon the transferability of general thinking skills, namely that general thinking skills simply cannot be transferred is based upon the work of Stephan Toulmin. According to McPeck, Toulmin argues that different disciplines function through different logics. McPeck then proposes his 'somewhat "weaker" view', that is, that each field or discipline has its own epistemology which itself prohibits the transfer of thinking skills from one domain to
another. In the absence of a direct statement about the transferability of logic one is left to conclude that McPeck is decidedly sympathetic with Toulmin's alleged characterization of logic as being not transferable from one domain of knowledge to another. On this latter point, one can only await a clearer statement from McPeck. What is clear is McPeck's view that the type of thinking which contributes to an understanding of any specific domain of knowledge is a unique function of the discipline from which that knowledge derives. In other words, for McPeck there is no possible style of thinking constitutive of general reasoning ability which might render successful epistemic investigations within different disciplines. On this view, there are no such things as general reasoning skills which can be successfully employed in the problem-solving tasks or the processes of knowledge acquisition typical of the different disciplines.

While McPeck's contribution to the transferability debate is engaging and deserves further analyses, there are two considerations which serve to temper his somewhat extreme view of this issue. The first relates to McPeck's own interpretation of Toulmin's thesis in respect of the transferability of logical thinking. McPeck would have it that Toulmin denies the transferability of logical skills from one subject-matter area to another. Admittedly, situations have been adduced where particular rules of logic cannot be generalized for the whole of language; the rule of the excluded middle in quantum mechanics being a case in point. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that this is what Toulmin had in mind in his discourse on 'different logics for each discipline'. In light of
the extent to which the rules of logic—propositional, modal, and ontological—can be applied meaningfully to many domains of knowledge, it seems unreasonable to interpret Toulmin as inveighing against the usefulness of the basic laws of logic in a variety of subject-matter areas, most particularly in respect of epistemic analyses. On the contrary, it seems more reasonable to interpret Toulmin's use of 'logic' as referring largely to what is usually meant by the term 'epistemology'. Consequently, one might argue that McPeck's argument is based upon a somewhat specious interpretation of Toulmin's thesis. This in itself tempers the credibility of his own claim that general thinking skills are not transferable.

The second consideration which serves to mitigate the force of McPeck's argument concerns the conception of 'thinking skills' in which the argument is embedded. McPeck is committed primarily to the first account of thinking skills described earlier, the view, that is, which fails to acknowledge a metaconceptual interpretation of thinking. Metacognitive skills can be viewed as general thinking skills and, as such, must be regarded as thinking skills relevant to the transferability debate. Unfortunately, McPeck fails to consider this. Susan Carey has shown how metacognitive skills admit of instruction16 and a cogent argument in favour of their transferability has been advanced by David Perkins.17 Perkins, for example, has shown how the metacognitive

strategies like the search for counterfactuals and the hunt for alternative causes of an effect can all be used to improve everyday reasoning and the reasoning appropriate to the elucidation of knowledge in many disciplines. The argument in favour of the transferability of thinking skills then is that the use of metacognitive questions such as those suggested above together with questions that help direct epistemological inquiry such as 'Why not?', 'What if ...?', and 'How do you know that ...?', would serve greatly to establish a comprehensive and thorough critique of an issue independent of the discipline within which it occurs.

Having provided a theoretical framework which adequately accommodates both the teachability and transferability of thinking skills, let us now turn our attention to the empirical findings adduced in support of the claim that philosophy improves thinking skills which can be used in a variety of disciplines. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed analysis of all the empirical research on transferability in the philosophy for children literature. Rather, my primary goal here is that the present discussion should provide an outline of the issues which such an analysis must consider if it is to render legitimate conclusions in respect of transferability.

The first issue which needs to be clarified when the research on transfer is examined, is the specific degree of transfer in question. Two levels of transfer present themselves for consideration: (i) near transfer, which refers to applications of the thinking skill to
situations that are like the original learning situation in many
important regards; and (ii) remote transfer, where the learner has to
extend the skill to accommodate a new task where no clear relationship
between the original learning situation and the new task is evident.\textsuperscript{18}

Empirical investigation in the philosophy for children literature to
date has focused upon 'remote transfer'. In particular, the concern
has been to show that the improved thinking skills which come about
through the study of philosophy manifest themselves as improvements in
reading, mathematics, and English. The research findings, however, are
not unequivocal. Some studies, for example, report the transfer of
skills to these subjects\textsuperscript{19,20,21} whereas others fail to establish the
same relationships.\textsuperscript{22,23,24} The situation is further confounded by poor
research reporting. A variety of crucial variables, including rigorous
statistical methodology appear to have been overlooked in many of these
studies. One can only hope that the absence of such features in the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] Bryce B. Hudgins, \textit{Learning and Thinking}, (Illinois: Peacock
\item[19] Matthew Lipman, 'A State Evaluation of a Philosophy for Children
Program', \textit{Thinking} 2(1), 1980, p.32.
\item[20] Mary I. Yeazell, 'A Report on the First Year of the Upshur County,
West Virginia, Philosophy for Children Project', \textit{Thinking} 3(1), 1981,
pp.12-14.
\item[21] Dolly Cinquino, 'An Evaluation of a Philosophy Program with 5th and
\item[22] William R. Higa, 'Philosophy for Children in Hawaii: A Quantitative
\item[23] Linda F. Annis and David B. Annis, 'The Impact of Philosophy on
Children's Critical Thinking Ability', \textit{Contemporary Educational
Psychology} 4(3), 1979, pp.219-226.
\end{footnotes}
published reports is more a result of incompetent report writing than it is a neglect for the actual practice of carrying out rigorous experimental procedure. In light of these research inadequacies, whether they are real or apparent, substantive claims about the transferability of thinking skills are difficult to make. Progress in this field is dependent then upon the extrication of these inadequacies together with the investigators themselves developing both a greater respect for the scientific method and a style capable of more accurately reporting their findings. The significant effects upon reading, mathematics and mental maturity\textsuperscript{24,25,26} which philosophy for children has been shown to have, is encouraging and worthy of the type of pursuit suggested here.

The findings in respect of near transfer are much more consistent, showing that philosophy for children significantly improves performance on tests designed to measure reasoning ability.\textsuperscript{27,28,29} The basic instrument used to evaluate the success of the philosophy for children program in teaching thinking skills is a critical thinking test developed

\textsuperscript{24}Mary I. Yeazell, 'West Virginia Philosophy Project', pp.12-14.
\textsuperscript{25}Dolly Cinquino, 'Evaluation of Philosophy Program', pp.79-83.
\textsuperscript{26}Matthew Lipman, 'Philosophy for Children Program Improves Student's Basic Skills', \textit{NASSP Bulletin} February, 1979.
\textsuperscript{28}Ronald Reed and Allen Henderson, 'Analytic Thinking for Children in Fort Worth Elementary Schools', \textit{Thinking} 3(2), 1981, pp.27-29.
\textsuperscript{29}Dolly Cinquino, 'Evaluation of a Philosophy Program', pp.79-83.
by the Educational Testing Service at Princeton in conjunction with
Professor Lipman. The latest test assesses student's proficiency on some
twenty definable thinking skills including: syllogism, induction, and
ambiguity; as well as the less formal skills such as the use of authority
in reasoning, and jumping to conclusions. The thinking skills tested
here are in fact the thinking skills that the philosophy for children
approach specifically sets out to teach. The positive findings,
therefore, attest to little other than the success of the program in
teaching those particular reasoning skills it set out to teach. I do not
wish here to undermine the importance of this finding. Rather, I want to
make a caution against concluding that philosophy for children improves
'reasoning ability', where that term is either left global and
unspecialized, or where it includes skills other than those tested by the
above mentioned instrument. Indeed, when the reasoning ability of
students in the philosophy for children program has been tested by other
measures, inconsistent results have been found.\(^{30}\) Certainly, the extent
of reasoning ability of these students needs much further investigation.

Given that there is a theoretical framework capable of
accommodating notions of transfer, and given that there are positive
findings in respect of both the near and remote transfer of thinking
skills, one might reasonably anticipate the transfer of some thinking
skills after studying philosophy. However, the research to date is not
yet sophisticated enough in design to formulate definite conclusions in
this regard.

The Contribution Made by Philosophy to the Development of Thinking Skills

As intimated earlier, the prime motivation for introducing philosophy into the schools is that it develops and improves thinking skills. In light of the wide currency that this claim has come to enjoy, two issues deserve closer examination: (i) the extent to which philosophy can actually be considered the sole purveyor of thinking skills; and (ii), in the case that this role for philosophy is found to be untenable, the extent to which philosophy can actually contribute something unique and desirable to thinking skills development.

The claim that philosophy improves thinking skills has its genesis in the philosophy for children literature where it is generally explicated in terms that cast it as the sole purveyor of thinking skills. Construed in this way, the claim stands in need of emendation, and I shall in what follows endeavour to show why.

In a recent edition of the New York Times, the educational supplement featured articles which addressed both the need for thinking skills development in the schools and the practices currently employed to achieve this end. Philosophy for children was but one of the many methods identified. A number of thinking skills programs currently being used in education both at the college and precollege level were described. The Structure of the Intellect, the Strategic Reasoning, the Instrumental

Enrichment and the Lateral Thinking Programs were given as examples of major commercial approaches, whereas the critical thinking courses at Marymount Manhattan College, Xavier University, LaGuardia Community College and Hunter College Elementary School were included to indicate the range of different approaches that individual schools have taken to teaching thinking. The importance of these programs and the consequent position of priority that thinking skills development has come to assume in educational practice was clearly portrayed. For example, Hunter College Elementary School 'has signalled its recognition of the importance of such skills by including on the report card to parents a section rating thinking skills. Marks are given for critical, creative and logical thinking.'

The article clearly reveals that the development of thinking skills now features across the U.S. as a major educational objective, and that a variety of programs in service of this end have been developed and successfully instituted in the schools. The implication for philosophy and thinking skills development then is that it is simply no longer realistic to aggrandize philosophy instruction as the sole, or even the dominant, method for developing thinking skills. And indeed, the New York Times article characterized philosophy for children as the traditional approach to teaching thinking skills - 'working out of a more traditional mode, a growing number of schools, especially in New Jersey, are using philosophy as the vehicle for teaching thinking skills.'

\[32\] Ibid., p.37.

\[33\] Ibid.
that if philosophy's inclusion into the school curriculum continues on
the basis of the thinking skills argument alone, then it will have to
vie evermore strenuously with the increasing number of competing programs
being developed in this area. Its success here will depend upon there
being developed a cogent argument in favour of philosophy which
emphasizes its unique contribution to thinking skills.

Let us turn now then to examine of what this unique contribution
might consist. Philosophy's uniqueness needs to be formulated in terms of
the development of philosophical thinking skills. For, in view of the wide
range of thinking skills - critical, creative, logical, etc that the
other thinking skills programs purport to teach, it is difficult to
formulate an argument for the uniqueness of philosophy in these terms.
Moreover, it would not be easy to construct an argument showing that
philosophy could improve on these other methods. There is, that is to
say, no logical reason why the tools of formal and informal logic, any
more than the learning which takes place within a community of inquiry,
need be viewed as a peculiarly philosophic enterprise. Moreover, the
use of these techniques in non-philosophical thinking skills programs
does not characterize those programs as philosophical.

Let us consider, therefore, the nature of philosophic thinking
skills. The terms 'philosophical thinking' and 'philosophical thinking
skills' are not yet well explicited in the literature. However, some
interesting work has begun in this area.34 Professor Jack Zevin's article,

34 Jack Zevin, 'Thinking Critically, Thinking Philosophically', The
'Thinking Critically, Thinking Philosophically' perhaps represents the first serious attempt to define philosophical thinking by clarifying the distinction between it and critical thinking. Although Zevin fails to provide a definitive definition in respect of either term, his article suggests that critical thinking is concerned more with the correct, or most valid, resolution of a given problem, whereas philosophical thinking is concerned more with the meaning of the problem in terms of both its origins and consequences. His contention is that 'criticalness includes significant growth in awareness and sensitivity to problems and views, as well as a deepening understanding of alternatives and consequences available to solve a given problem or resolve a particular issue', whereas, 'philosophy encourages us to probe motives and reasons, values, and cherished beliefs. This is not merely done to cause trouble but to raise our level of understanding and make us aware of the courses and consequences of the beliefs we hold and act upon'. Professor Zevin's article is in many ways obscure. He does not, for example, settle the issue as to whether critical thinking is itself a necessary part of philosophical thinking or whether there are parts of critical thinking altogether distinct from it. Nonetheless, the article does serve to highlight the cardinal role which the analysis of meaning plays in philosophical thinking. This is the first point that could be addressed in bringing together an argument for philosophy's unique contribution to thinking. Although the analysis of meaning is construed in Zevin's

article largely as the contribution of philosophy to an understanding of the meaning of life, it is as pertinent to the understanding of language, as it is to thought itself. Hospers expresses the relationship between philosophy, meaning and language well when he writes:

We shall not primarily be asking the questions that laymen usually think of when they hear the world 'philosophy', namely 'philosophy of life'... One must first develop tools for dealing with them ... Where, then, shall we begin? ... with a study of language: not a study of the history of words, or the derivation of words, or the structural similarities of words, or for that matter anything about words which is peculiar to specific languages, but rather the nature and function of language in general - especially the relation of words to what words stand for.'\textsuperscript{36}

In other words, philosophy's contribution to thinking made in terms of the analysis of meaning applies equally well to the meaning of language and thought as it does to the meaning of everyday life.

The actual thinking skills employed in an analysis of meaning may be no different to those required, for example, in a critical analysis of the validity of an argument. This being so, philosophical thinking construed primarily as the analysis of meaning may not require a specific set of thinking skills peculiar to that undertaking alone. The analysis of meaning needs a further qualification, therefore, before it can adequately serve to identify philosophy's unique contribution to thinking. The uniqueness is perhaps best understood more in terms of the meanings which one selects to think about. For example, thinking philosophically about another person's discourse involves, on this view, thinking about the meaning of what is said by choosing to think about...

\textsuperscript{36}John Hospers, An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed., (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957) p.xii.
things like the range of possible motivations the person has for saying whatever it is he is saying, and the range of possible interpretations of which the discourse admits. A critical assessment, on the other hand, is more likely to select for an analysis the validity and reliability of a discourse where thoughts turn to issues like coherency, consistency and evidential instantiation.

The ability to sustain inquiry for long periods is a second point which I believe could feature in an argument for philosophy's unique contribution to thinking ability. This capacity entails not only the capacity for prolonged attention on a particular problem and all its nuances, but it also entails a willingness to engage in an inquiry where answers are not guaranteed and, in some cases, may not even by possible. The analyses of meaning, in particular, the meaning of language, and the critical analysis of the traditional, intractible problems of philosophy both serve to develop this capacity by providing situations where analysis can be sustained virtually ad infinitum. In both cases, inquiry can be upheld for at least as long as it takes the inquirer to reach his/her desired level of understanding; maybe one hour, maybe a lifetime. The importance of these types of flexible, open ended situations to the development of thinking ability is also acknowledged by Zevin.

Teachers should not be afraid of leaving provocative questions unanswered or partially answered ... Thinking, critical or otherwise, is viewed by most people as unnecessary after very definite conclusions have been reached.37

In conclusion then, it would be inaccurate to characterize philosophy as the sole purveyor of thinking skills unless the term 'thinking skills' was being used in the sense of 'philosophical thinking skills' alone. The more important point to be drawn from the foregoing discussion, however, is that if the implementation of philosophy into the school curriculum is to continue solely on the basis of its capacity to improve thinking, then it is the development of philosophical thinking skills that needs to be emphasized.

I believe, however, that philosophy's contribution to education is much more varied than its beneficial effects upon thinking ability. Moreover, I submit that the other advantages of studying philosophy which I will consider in the next chapter, are equally, if not more, important than those discussed here. It is unfortunate that the thinking skills argument now serves as the main motivation for doing philosophy. For, while it is not difficult to show philosophy's important contribution to thinking, the orientation tends to trade on the underplaying of these other benefits which philosophy has for those who study it.
In this chapter I will examine three proposals which have been advanced in support of precollege philosophy. They are: (i) philosophy can act as a buffer to indoctrination; (ii) philosophy affords a framework in terms of which the curriculum can be integrated; and (iii), philosophy can bring more meaning into the lives of those who pursue it. My primary concern is to explain each claim and to consider its strength in light of both its coherency and the objections that have been raised against it. Each of the claims has at some time been cast in terms which render the purported benefits of studying philosophy as being peculiar to that discipline alone. Accordingly, I am also concerned in this chapter to determine the validity of framing the claims as being unique to philosophy.

Precollege Philosophy and Indoctrination

A key point delineating the rationale for precollege philosophy is that philosophy can serve as a buffer to indoctrination. This is the view that philosophy can afford a protection against indoctrination, a protection that is, against the closing of minds on matters that are fundamentally open, whether it be value theory, social and political theory, or scientific theory. In this section I will examine this argument, considering also the major objection that has been raised
against it. Before commencing this task, however, it will be useful to provide a brief exposition of the term 'indoctrination' as it is used by the proponents of precollege philosophy.

The term 'indoctrination' has been used in the philosophy for children's literature in two ways. First, 'indoctrination' is used to refer to that process whereby, as a result of a particular course of study, students are unquestionably imbued with a specific set of values or beliefs. On this view, indoctrination can occur by virtue of the course content and/or the way in which it is taught. In both cases, indoctrination is said to have occurred whether or not the result was intended. In other words, the criterion for indoctrination here is not so much the nature of the held belief, as it is the way in which it is held. On this account, indoctrination is the process which results in the uncritical acceptance of information; information concerning all human endeavours whether it be values and morality, for example, or science and politics. Granted this extensive framework, however, the issue is most typically discussed in the precollege philosophy literature with reference to moral education. Different theoretical approaches to morality have led to the implementation of a variety of moral education programs. Some 'portray morality as efficient reasoning, other construe morality as obedience and acceptance of discipline', while 'others interpret the child as being naturally virtuous so that good behaviour will naturally ensue if only the
emotions are unthwarted and sensitivity to others heightened'. What is important is that either one of two extreme goals for moral education is prescribed: either, that there exists a specific set of values which children should acquire; or, that because values are relative and because there are divergent opinions with respect to those values, nothing is right or wrong. The point which advocates of philosophy for children want to emphasize is that in neither case are children equipped with the skills requisite for assessing the validity of either position nor the values it entails.

The second sense in which 'indoctrination' has been used in the precollege philosophy literature relates directly to the notion of the hidden curriculum. On this account, 'indoctrination' is used to refer to that process whereby the elimination of possible courses or course components from the curriculum misrepresents the credibility and reinforces both the value and authority of those that are included. Three examples are given below by way of illustration of this process. The first concerns religious education in Australia. In most cases, the Christian point of view is expounded to such an extent that even the mere recognition of the existence of other points of view is absent. On the view defended here, such a pedagogy could be indicted as indoctrination on the grounds of being a covert, yet powerful means to instil in the minds of those who undertake its study a fundamental belief in the supremacy of Christianity. The second example is afforded by Jane R.

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Martin in her article 'What should social philosophy be for children?', where she similarly accuses the school system of encouraging in our young an uncritical acceptance of the status quo. The argument in this case is that unless education can actively encourage questioning and criticism of the existing socio-political background and the perception of viable alternatives, it will carry with it a social and political presumption in respect of acceptance of things as they are; in terms that is, of an unthinking acceptance of existing institutions and practices. A third example, this time in respect of science and indoctrination, is afforded by R.S. Laura who argues that science and its technology have been transferred into institutional components of the status quo, in desperate need of critical appraisal. As a result of the pervasiveness of the scientific idiom that stems from such authority, it is argued that the school curriculum has been so constricted that approaches to problems and dispositions in thinking which do not approximate the traditional concept of being 'scientific' are discouraged, and in some cases suppressed. In other words, the contention is that the uncritical acceptance of the authority of science has so influenced the value structure of education that the educative process itself can now be indicted for indoctrinating the authority of science.

How then do proponents of precollege philosophy propose that philosophy can serve to counteract these forces of indoctrination? The

dominant argument in the field has been advanced by the advocates of the Philosophy for Children Approach to precollege philosophy. Consistent with this origin, the argument focuses upon philosophy as a method of critical and conceptual analysis and the ways in which these skills function to buffer indoctrination. The proposal is that by developing an appreciation for the philosophical method, in particular the skills of reasoning and of inquiry through discourse, philosophy affords its students access to the habit of independent, reflective thinking. The claim that follows, a claim that is also a rather strong claim is that, once children have acquired the skills they need for critical assessment they can turn to any of the problems in moral education, science, social or political education, with the legitimate hope of reaching a balanced understanding of the issues involved. Moreover, the contention is that as children appropriate these skills and bring them to bear upon those situations confronted both within and without the school context, they are to a much greater extent protected against indoctrination, since all experiences and points of view which they encounter are screened through this framework of critical assessment. A closer examination of the philosophic method, that is, philosophic reasoning and discourse, will provide a better understanding of the specific ways in which philosophy is believed, on this view, to act as a buffer to indoctrination.

As it is used in the context of philosophy for children, 'philosophic reasoning' refers to both that form of deductive reasoning derived from the tradition of formal logic, and that mode of reasoning subsumed under
informal logic which includes inductive reasoning and the reasoning employed in the search for establishing good grounds for argument.

When these reasoning skills are brought to bear upon problematic situations, the probability of an adequate critical appraisal is supposedly enhanced, and the child is better placed to advance constructive ideas which can be acted upon to bring out changes where necessary. For example, the principles of informal logic such as consistency, impartiality, and comprehensiveness, are believed to be important for developing an objective framework for critical assessment. In other words, the philosophy for children approach teaches children that the appropriate assessment of reasons etc. is made in terms of their consistency and comprehensiveness wherein personal biases are put aside, if not overcome. This is particularly apparent in the program when the children are concerned with determining the quality of an information source. Formal logic, on the other hand, is taught as a method more appropriate for assessing the credibility of an argument in terms of its logical cohesion. That is, children are encouraged to use, for example, the rules of syllogistic inference when determining the truth of a claim. The skills from both the formal and nonformal arenas are believed to work co-operatively to buffer uncritical acceptance of the ideas of those who, consciously or unconsciously, seek to indoctrinate. Moreover, what is generally meant by 'independent thinking' in children refers to a facility with these comprehensive skills of reason in their application both to an analysis of the thoughts of others and to the
critical analysis of one's own thoughts. 'Independent thinking', that is, involves subjecting one's own musings to the same rigorous analysis to which one would subject the thought of others. Philosophical discourse, on the other hand, is said to provide an environment which is both sensitive to philosophic issues and respectful of differing points of view. The philosophy for children approach advances this framework as being crucial for both critical assessment and philosophic modes of inquiry. In abiding by the principles of informal logic set down for philosophical discussions, the participants learn that an array of opinions different from their own may legitimately accompany the reasoning tied to a particular area of interest. Participation in philosophical discussion is believed to strengthen one's inquiry skills as they are openly practiced, and it broadens the children's repertoire of skills as they observe the critical orientation and expertise of the other participants. In other words, the scope of relevant arguments and counterarguments upon which children can draw should be more extensive and more accessible after they have participated in a community of inquiry. Children can mentally rehearse the range of positions both similar to and different from their own and in so doing, bring a deeper understanding to bear upon the issue in need of appraisal. The suggestion is that an experience of the ways in which others think and the ensuing familiarity with a wide range of intellectual habits should encourage broader, more comprehensive assessments of situations than if thinking skills are presented atomistically in the absence of the opportunity of shared expression.
This is the main argument that has been proposed to show that philosophy for children is an appropriate tool for counteracting potential forces of indoctrination. It is also the argument which has led parents to object most strongly to the introduction of philosophy into the schools. Before then considering the limits of this claim, let us examine both the objection that parents are wont to make and the type of response that is most often provided to counter it. The objection made by parents is that the development of independent thinking in our young, also affords them the opportunity to reject more readily the values of the home and society. Based on the fearful assumption that the clear and unbiased criticism of these values will lend automatically to their rejection, the argument has been extended by means of specious reasoning to the following types of conclusions. First in the case of parental values, it is concluded that children will become amoral and reject all standards, or immoral and adopt values other than those of the home. Second, in the case of societal values, the conclusion drawn is that children will become anarchical or revolutionary. While it is to be granted that some children will follow these courses, it is neither the case that all children will do so, nor that there will be a larger proportion that do so after having undertaken a philosophy program. To assert, for example, that the children who undertake philosophy will reject the society's values, is to make two unwarranted assumptions. On the one hand it suggests that children have similar priorities with respect to values and, on the other that they would choose to behave similarly and reject those values.
Clyde Evans in his article 'Philosophical Thinking: An Ally for Parental Values' responds to this objection by arguing that if parental teaching is to be successful, it must be capable of withstanding the critical assessment of those to whom it is taught. The philosophy for children program is concerned equally with drawing out both the negative and positive aspects of any given situation so that children come to understand more clearly what the ethical possibilities are within that situation before making a decision about it. According to Evans, this process of critical assessment is important for two reasons. First, on the assumption that parents are not merely interested in programming their children to behave rightly, moral education needs to encourage children to question and assess a whole range of values for themselves. It is only after such analysis that any value can be held with commitment and reason. Indeed, part of what it means to have behaved rightly is that one is sufficiently informed to discriminate right from wrong and freely chooses to do so. Secondly, he argues that if the rejection of one value from a system is not to lead to the rejection of the entire system of values, then each value needs to be assessed critically according to its own merits. In the case of parental teaching, for example, the rejection of one value from the set will automatically lead to the rejection of the entire set of parental values. Needless to say, Evans is not alone in thinking that it is almost inevitable that at a certain stage in the child's development he/she will reject some particular aspect of the parents teachings.

"Lipman and Sharp, Growing Up with Philosophy, "Philosophical Thinking: An Ally for Parental Values", by Clyde Evans, p.375."
In the light of this response, the objection raised against fostering independent thinking in young children cannot be so easily sustained. For if parents are concerned that children uphold their values, then it is the capacity to think independently and reflectively that will ensure that those values are held with the required commitment. Such commitment can only be given after a full consideration of the assumptions underpinning, and the implications of, those values. Philosophy for children then is designed neither to undermine children's beliefs nor to erode parental values. Its purported objective is rather to help children establish firmer foundations for believing those things they have chosen, upon reflection, to believe in.

In sum, the primary argument in favour of philosophy for children as a means to counteract the forces of indoctrination is advanced on the grounds that the practice of philosophy develops independent, reflective thinking strategies. On this view of philosophy for children, practice in the reasoning and discourse enjoined by philosophy enhances the capacity in those who study it not only for assessing the structures in terms of which their own thinking takes place, but also for bringing to bear upon all matters the framework of critical assessment. In other words, the uncritical acceptance of subject-matter, beliefs or values is discouraged in favour of that kind of acceptance which accrues as a result of the individual's own pursuit for the meaning, relevance and credibility of the issue at hand. Of course there is still the threat of parents and teachers who consciously seek to program children into believing certain things or behaving in certain ways. In this case,
there is no guarantee that the philosophy for children program will be successful in buffering the effects of indoctrination. Indeed, it would be difficult to guarantee the success of any program which hoped to counter the effects of indoctrination when it was placed in the hands of persons with such rigid goals for children.

Let us now turn to a more critical examination of the indoctrination claim. There are three features of the philosophy for children program which actually serve to mitigate the strength of this proposal.

The first relates to the topics about which reasoned criticism is encouraged. While the Philosophy for Children program claims to provide the tools requisite for engaging in reasoned criticism in all situations both within and without the school setting, it has been criticized for encouraging reasoned criticism in a limited context. More specifically, it has been indicted for ignoring the political and social background against which most of the teaching materials are set. In her article, 'What Should Social Philosophy be for Children?' Jane R. Martin points out that the moral dilemmas which are used in this program for instruction in ethics do not turn critically upon the framework in which they are set.\(^5\)

Accordingly, she argues that in this regard the philosophy for children program serves to reinforce the view that the contexts in which the dilemmas arise are themselves unproblematic. The criticism is that in the absence of social and political critical reflection, the program serves to foster an unthinking acceptance of the status quo. Stated more

strongly, the accusation is that of indoctrination for social and political conservatism. This criticism is severe, yet the conditions for its avoidance are easy to establish. Any program which hoped to buffer the forces of indoctrination by reasoned criticism, that is, would need only encourage the use of this technique in all domains including those, social and political. While time may not permit the actual practice of reasoned criticism in all areas, it is necessary that children be made aware not only of its relevance to all contexts but also of what those contexts can be.

The second criticism of philosophy for children concerns the hidden curriculum which the program itself appears to engender. The underlying claim of this program is that reasoned criticism will suffice as a protection against indoctrination. While independent, reflective thought is important to buffer indoctrination, the view that this is all which is required needs to be resisted. The basis for this criticism is twofold. First, the philosophy for children program neither subjects the limits nor the tools of philosophical reasoning and discourse to critical reflection. On the contrary, these methods, most particularly formal and informal logic, are presented as techniques adequate for establishing the complete critical appraisal of an issue. The point here is not that children need, for example, to confront the sophisticated philosophical debates in respect of the actual powers of logic to ascertain truth. It is rather that, in light of the existence of these debates, teaching which does not acknowledge some degree of flexibility with respect to their powers is susceptible of the title, 'indoctrination'. The second
problem with using reasoned criticism as a tool sufficient to buffer indoctrination is that it assumes that all the potentially indoctrinating aspects of a situation admit of critical reflection. This assumption is unsound, unsound because even in those situations where time permits the deliberation of all possible alternatives, there are alternatives which are made inaccessible to the individual by virtue of his knowledge and experience. Therefore, any program which hopes to use reasoned criticism as a means of protection against indoctrination must also address these two issues. On both accounts the recommendation which might perhaps best dispel the negative features of the hidden curriculum is one which encourages the development of awareness: an awareness of the limits of critical thinking; and, an awareness that a situation might contain factors presently incapable of being recognized. This type of approach provides an amendment to the philosophy for children program, one which is both readily accessible and easily implemented.

The third major problem of the approach of reasoned criticism to indoctrination is that it depends for its success entirely upon the students actually using their newly acquired skills and this in turn depends upon their being motivated to do so. Reasoned criticism as a means of buffering indoctrination has much to recommend it when the skills peculiar to it are employed. It is not enough, however, that the student acquire and be adept with these thinking skills, he/she must also choose to use them in the appropriate contexts. The difficulty of motivating
students to think is widely acknowledged. The problem is well stated, for example, by John McPeck when he writes that 'getting people to think critically may in fact be like getting them to act morally', and he concludes that training in particular critical thinking skills is not sufficient to produce a critical thinker. One must also develop the disposition to use these skills.

Therefore, any program which hoped to develop the capacity for reasoned criticism as a tool to buffer the effects of indoctrination would also need to inspire the motivation to use that tool. The philosophy for children approach is not directly concerned with this objective, although it is intimated at times. In this approach, for example, the philosophical issues are set in contexts typical of the real life situations of its readers. Insofar as students come to appreciate the role of reasoned criticism in clarifying the dynamics of any given situation, one might legitimately anticipate that the motivation to use the skill would itself be enhanced. However, for this type of philosophy program to be successful in counteracting the forces of indoctrination, the techniques for inspiring motivation would need to be addressed more directly than they are here. It is in this capacity that a philosophy program would benefit immeasurably from components designed to inspire a love of wisdom.

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8 Ibid.
These three problems then are perhaps the ones which present the most severe limitations upon reasoned criticism as an approach to buffer indoctrination. Philosophy programs which choose to use this approach, however, need little amendment to make their impact upon potential forces of indoctrination much more marked. Now that some limitations of the 'indoctrination' claim have been considered, let us examine the extent to which philosophy's purported benefits in this regard are unique. The philosophy for children approach rests solely upon the acquisition and development of reasoned criticism and critical reflection as a means of protection against indoctrination. This philosophy program, indeed any philosophy program which adopts this approach to indoctrination, therefore, does not offer a technique which differs greatly from any of those acquired in a general critical thinking program. Construed in this way, philosophy's contribution to indoctrination, although valuable, is not unique. Does philosophy then have anything unique to contribute to the fight against indoctrination? Yes. One such contribution is that which is made possible by the wealth of literature known as philosophy. This role for philosophy is, on the whole, left poorly articulated in the literature.

Philosophy has traditionally concerned itself with the kind of issues that pervade everyday life and the meaning of what it is to be human. For example, the problem of identity, the continuity of existence, the existence of God, free will and determinism, the right to life and abortion, and a host of other moral issues are of central concern to philosophers. It is from this framework of knowledge
that philosophy has a unique contribution to make in respect of indoctrination. Through recognizing that many viewpoints can accrue to an issue, students are less likely to succumb to the unexamined acceptance of any one particular view in respect of it. Moreover, by exploring a wide range of viewpoints, students come to appreciate that it is not only the widely-held beliefs that are worthy of attention. Students learn also to appreciate the value of many different responses, even the unusual response. There is one caution that needs to be made here, however. If a range of views is presented for consideration on most occasions, then one needs to be aware that a commitment to a neutral, 'always non-committal' attitude is not unconsciously encouraged. While it may be important to harbor this view on some issues, it would be misleading to uphold it as the ideal orientation to all situations. One would need to consider seriously, for example, the consequences of advocating neutral views about nuclear holocaust. In other words, the acquisition of the general skills appropriate to reasoned criticism are important to counter indoctrination, but equally important is an understanding of the materials to which they are applied; an appreciation, for example, of the ethical consequences of logical choices.

Precollege Philosophy and the Unification of the School Curriculum

A second key point delineating a rationale for precollege philosophy was first raised by Matthew Lipman in his book Philosophy in the Classroom. Basically, the claim is that philosophy provides a framework suitable for experiencing education as a unified whole.
From the time of Plato Western educators have projected two fundamental goals: the integration of all knowledge and the full development of the individual. Lipman and his co-workers see philosophy in education as a means to resurrect these goals; a method for enhancing children's ability to interrelate knowledge from various fields; and a method of improving their general capacity for learning. Lipman argues that philosophy serves to integrate the diffuse elements of the school curriculum which itself in turn minimizes the frustration experienced by children as they seek to unite the pieces of a segmented school day.9

The impact of this argument is particularly forceful since it has been brought forward at a time when the knowledge explosion appears not only to be fragmenting all learning but also when the specialisation it invokes seems unavoidable for the foreseeable future. It is easy to understand how children confronting their school experience might feel daunted by the prospect of obtaining expertise in one area or even a familiarity with a number of areas. Indeed, it is reasonable to anticipate that children will expect only to acquire bits and pieces of knowledge in the hope that it will become meaningful or useful at a later time. The view that the present fragmentarily structured school day reinforces this attitude has, therefore, much to recommend it. Lipman's argument in favour of philosophy in the schools gains its full purchase in this context. Given the growth of knowledge and its division into separate disciplines, it is not so much that the present subject by

subject structure of the school day is inappropriate, rather it is the manner in which the subjects are generally presented that admits of improvement. Instead of presenting the disciplines as discrete entities in terms peculiar only to themselves, Lipman's point is that philosophy provides a single framework from which all disciplines can be similarly appreciated.

The 'framework' to which Lipman refers here is characterized by two features. It constitutes both an awareness of the epistemological, metaphysical, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of different disciplines, and a facility with the reflective or analytic habit of mind. By virtue of its concern to clarify concepts and make explicit the framework assumptions upon which they depend, his claim is that philosophy provides the necessary conceptual tools for analyzing and comparing all the different disciplines in the curriculum according to these dimensions. In other words, the educational experience becomes unified through the understanding that most subjects admit of philosophical analysis, whether it be epistemological, ethical or aesthetic.

In addition to these two aspects of philosophy, one of the pedagogical principles which is encouraged by proponents of precollege philosophy is an openness to children's questions. Unlike the more traditional approaches to teaching which have tended to reinforce only those questions which permit of a simple solution, this principle brings those questions which children ask like 'What is a fact?,' 'What is history?,' and 'How can we be sure of anything?' into bold relief. Within
the philosophy for schoolchildren program, for example, these questions are neither ignored nor treated perfunctorily with responses such as 'That's not important' or 'Don't be silly!'. On the contrary it is believed that it is just such questions that can, and should be, used to nurture the reflective habit of mind. By considering questions such as these, the resulting analysis affords examples of the extent to which a wide range of subjects admit of the same conceptual foundations. For example, the question 'How can you know that?' in a maths class can lead to the discovery that the epistemological problem to which it refers transcends discipline boundaries and may just as readily be of relevance to english, french or history lessons. These philosophical questions are basic, basic in that they underpin the disparate subject matters which they alone can unify. It is the children, then, who in this sense integrate the curriculum and make the school experience more meaningful. The conceptual tools imparted to them serve to dissipate the previously unavoidable frustration of having to understand a school experience which by the very nature of its structure, is fragmentary.

The argument given here serves to mitigate the view that philosophy merely represents another subject to be added to an already overcrowded curriculum. In anticipation of this objection, it is argued that precollege philosophy is given its most correct ascription when it is viewed as providing a framework in terms of which the entire curriculum can be better understood. This model of philosophy is described as having historical precendence in John Dewey's theories on education. Dewey is quoted:
philosophy can be the comprehensive and foundational discipline for all curricular undertakings, so that ... benefits ... can accrue to the entire range of subject matters with which elementary school students have to deal. Philosophy, then, could be appropriated as a subject area, and transformed by simplification, into a single elementary school subject, to be inserted into the curriculum along with other subjects. Here, philosophy may be seen as an ideal way of organizing the somewhat chaotic field known as 'language arts' so as to encompass all forms of thought and creative expression. Or, most ambitiously, philosophy may be taken as the central methodology or armature around which all subjects can be organised, in that it provides the model of discovery and participation that can be utilised by many different teachers for many different subjects. In this sense, philosophy can become a fundamental discipline into which all others are integrated and from which they derive their theoretical and methodological orientation.

The integration of the curriculum then, is a unique contribution that philosophy can make to precollege education. A variety of thinking skills programs can develop the tools of conceptual analysis. Such programs, however, could not do justice to conceptual analyses based upon the epistemological, metaphysical or aesthetic dimensions of a subject unless they also educate for an understanding of those aspects of philosophy.

Although Lipman brings forward his argument here as a strong motivation for doing philosophy with children, the philosophy for children program itself does not directly address the ways in which the experience of integration is to be achieved. Rather, his approach implies that integration occurs as an automatic by-product of doing philosophy. In other words, Lipman's proposal is that the development of thinking skills

and their application to various philosophic analyses will be sufficient to experience the curriculum as a unified whole. While I do not wish to deny that there are some children who may achieve this understanding without any further elaboration by the teacher, I am not inclined to the view that this will suffice for all children. Given the range of individual differences in interests and intellectual ability, there is a need for explicit instruction concerning ways of integrating the curriculum. Not only would this ensure a better understanding of the phenomenon for all children, it would also enhance that understanding where it had in some way been already grasped. Any philosophy program which hoped to generate the experience of curriculum unification, therefore, would on this account also be required to: (1) increase student awareness of curriculum unification and the ways in which it is achieved; and (2) recommend techniques for both demonstrating and practising the transfer of philosophcal analyses across contexts.

**Precollege Philosophy and A More Meaningful Life**

A third significant point adduced in support of incorporating philosophy into precollege education is that philosophic reflection can bring more meaning into the lives of those who pursue it. The argument here is sponsored on the basis of three more specific claims, each of which proposes that the study of philosophy is commensurate with investing the student's life with more meaning.

The first claim relates back directly to the previous discussion, the argument being that philosophy brings more meaning into children's...
lives by providing a framework in terms of which the school experience can itself be unified. This argument is elaborated upon in the previous discussion. The point to be stressed here, however, is that children will almost inevitably come to distrust an education they find meaningless which makes the experience of curriculum integration an opportunity to embrace warmly and openly the events of the school day.

The second claim relates to the view that philosophy can improve reasoning skills, and that an improvement in reasoning bestows an improvement in reading. To recapitulate, the suggestion is that we read to get meanings, and that the ability to grasp meaning involves not only an ability to discern what a sentence says, but also what a sentence implies. Given that this account is correct, it follows that the more readily children can draw inferences, the more meanings they should be able to find in what they read. This in turn provides a better comprehension of both the obvious and more subtle meanings in written passages. A second component to this argument is that a greater appreciation of literature develops through the realization that reading enables the acquisition of specific meanings. Philosophy is believed, therefore, to afford children the opportunity of finding more meaning in what they read, as well as facilitating their use of reading as a tool to acquire the specific information which might bring greater understanding to their lives. In other words children come to see reading as a tool in service of their needs, those needs which either demand problem solving or concerning which they are particularly desirous of knowledge. The philosophy for children's literature tends to emphasize the relationship between
philosophy, meaning, and the written word. However, when reasoning skills are brought to bear upon verbal communications, a broader understanding of what others mean is also more likely to be sustained. As a result of an enhanced appreciation of the panoply of interpretations that accrue in spoken communication, philosophy also has the potential to make personal interactions more meaningful. By way of facilitating the process of thinking, philosophy thereby enables children to think more comprehensively about what others say. It enables them to understand the views of other people more fully and to consider respectfully what it means to hold those views. Insofar as there are a number of nonphilosophically-orientated curriculum which are also designed to develop reasoning capacity, it is not in the ways outlined here that philosophy's contribution to enriching lives is unique. For a better understanding of what this unique contribution might be, let us now turn to the third claim in support of studying philosophy and having a more meaningful life.

The third claim suggests that precollege philosophy enriches children's lives by contributing to their understanding of the world in a way in which neither the development of critical reasoning nor the subject matters of other disciplines can do. 11 Let us consider the two aspects of this claim separately. First, what are the alternatives to critical reasoning being intimated here? The suggestion is that philosophical thinking also requires the development of the intellectual and affective imagination, that is, the ability to speculate imaginatively about ideas and feelings. Whereas logic and critical reasoning skills

refine children's thinking so that the meanings they seek become more accessible and open to evaluation, the argument is that these other skills afford even a deeper understanding of the different disciplines and life events. In other words, the contexts from which meanings are derived, whether it be an academic discipline or a life event, are themselves believed to be made more pellucid. For example, in subjects such as history, the development of the affective imagination enables students to identify with the human beings of the past through an understanding of the propensities of human nature under different conditions. In this way children can better appreciate the circumstances that precipitated certain historical decisions, including those decisions which critical analysis alone may render as being absurd. And in mathematics, for example, a greater understanding of the important role played by numbers in human life may be imparted by trying to imagine a world without numbers.

Perhaps what is more important to the identification of philosophy's unique contribution, however, is the subject-matter of the discipline; the subject-matter, that is, which only philosophy can provide. Of particular importance is the body of literature that has accumulated from the grappling that philosophers have had with the problems of understanding life itself. This includes, for example, debates about metaphysical issues such as the true character of reality and the form of experience through which it is apprehended, to ethical and aesthetic issues which are also relevant to contemporary life, such as children's rights, the value of art, nuclear holocaust and capital punishment. Consider, for example, the value that discussions about the nature of reality and its various
interpretations might have for students confronting psychedelic drug experience. If philosophical ideas and thinking could not replace the need for this experience then at least they might assist to put the experience in perspective and to better orientate the child towards it. Consider also the assistance that ethical discussions about abortion, for example, may provide for young persons faced with such monumental life choices. Philosophic literature presents an array of viewpoints on any given issue. This can assist students in two ways: first, it can improve their understanding of life events by providing them with a range of unthought of alternatives; and second, it can serve to ease the process of making important choices by showing them that there is often not one correct solution to a problem, but rather, a number of equally valid and worthwhile ones.

Pertinent here is the view advanced by Russell in the last chapter of his Problems of Philosophy, where he discusses the value of philosophy. He says that if the study of philosophy has value for those other than students of philosophy, it must be through its effects upon the lives of those who study it.  

He goes on to claim that philosophy is to be studied because the questions it raises 'enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination, and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation ...'. The same sentiments pervade the philosophy for childrens' literature. If the relevance that philosophy has for ordinary people living ordinary

lives were accepted, it is urged, then ways of letting philosophy enrich those same lives no matter what the age of the person must also be possible. Having taken practical steps to bring philosophy into people's lives, those working with precollege philosophy have designed programmes in philosophy specifically aimed at enriching the lives of children.
This chapter is concerned with the viability of precollege philosophy. Two aspects of viability are considered here: (i) the viability of a curriculum in respect of the student's actual ability to think in the ways that the subject matter requires; and (ii) the viability of a curriculum in respect of the student's interest in or readiness for confronting the kinds of issues that the subject matter entails.

The first section of this chapter is concerned with the viability of precollege philosophy in terms of the younger student's cognitive ability to deal with the type of thinking that it requires. An objection that is constantly raised against proposals for the introduction of philosophy into the classroom is that elementary and most middleschool children do not possess the mental capacity for the abstract thinking which philosophy requires. The source of the objection can be traced to the classic works of Jean Piaget, and the argument adduced is that it is not until a child has reached the stage of formal operational thought (12-14 years) that he/she is capable of abstract, hypothetical thinking. In this section of the chapter I will firstly outline (i) the major tenets of the traditional Piagetian view pertaining to cognitive development and the implications for education which it engenders, and (ii) the major objections to the inclusion of philosophy in the schools which
this view tends to support. Secondly, I will discuss the responses that are typically made to these objections and I will consider the strength of these replies with particular reference to the broader context of T.S. Kuhn's work. Finally, by exploring possible conceptualizations of cognitive development alternative to that of Piaget's, I conclude with the argument that the 'Piagetian objection' to philosophy for children is not insuperable.

The viability of a curriculum, however, is not entirely dependent upon the prospective students possessing this or that cognitive skill. Viability is also a function of their displaying a readiness to confront the types of issues that the proposed course will raise. The second section of this chapter, therefore, is concerned with the viability of precollege philosophy in terms of the student's readiness to confront issues in philosophy. Very little work has been done to establish the extent of the young child's readiness to do philosophy. Gareth Matthews has made the most significant contribution to date in this field. His argument, which is the focus of this section, is based on an extensive selection of excerpts from children's speech. In short, his argument in favour of children's readiness for philosophy is that, upon close inspection, much of children's apparent whimsical dialogue actually overlays deeper philosophical puzzlement.

**The Cognitive Capacity of Precollege Students**

Let us defer no longer and turn now to the first section of this chapter by examining the traditional Piagetian conception of cognitive development and the implications for education which it engenders.
Piaget's writings on cognitive development admit of a number of interpretations with respect to both the concept of a stage and the means of progression through them. The following account, however, represents that interpretation of his stage theory which has become the most entrenched in educational settings. First, Piaget advances three stages of cognitive development namely 1) preoperational, 2) concrete, and 3) formed operational thought. Progression through them is said to occur as a result of maturation. Second, the ages at which these stages are reached are generally set at 2, 5-7, and 12-14 years respectively. And third, an individual is held to be capable of only those forms of thinking characteristic of the putative stage in which he is currently located and those prior to it. For example, while an individual at the stage of concrete operations is presumed to have access to patterns of thinking from previous stages, the dominant interpretation of Piaget holds that the individual is not capable of entertaining thoughts characteristic of the next stage, namely formal operations. The pervasiveness of this interpretation of Piaget and the extent of its acceptance have led many to assume that knowledge about children's thinking styles and capacities is a matter of age alone. It would seem as if the terminology that once served to describe what at most might be the dominant modes of thinking in children at different ages, now serves to define the range of thought children are capable of.

This view of cognitive development has a number of serious implications for the educator. For our present purposes, however, I
have included only those which have given rise to the major objections
in respect of introducing philosophy into the schools.

A major implication of this view is that a child's education
should be tailored to conform to the intellectual capacities consistent
with the cognitive structures which occur at each successive stage of
 logical development. Inasmuch as progression through the three
intellectual phases is the natural outcome of an individual's overall
development, education is subordinate to maturation in terms of its
power to enhance cognitive growth. In other words, education can on this
view facilitate the use of concepts already made accessible by the process
of maturation, but it can do little, if anything, to advance an
understanding of higher order concepts. The suggestion here is that it
would be futile to engage students in activities that require thinking at
a stage beyond the one in which they are currently operating. Some would
even go so far as to propose, for example, that such an activity constitutes
educational malpractice. In this case, the suggestion is that higher order
concepts give rise to confusion which itself in turn fosters the development
of rote-learning strategies and negative attitudes towards learning.

A second implication of this view and one which to some extent
offers an explanation for the paucity, in our recent past, of educational
programs specifically designed to enhance thinking skills is the
inevitability of intellectual-logical development. The point here is not
so much that it is impossible to push the child up the inclined plane of
improved reasoning, but rather that it is not necessary since this
progression will occur itself as a result of normal human development.
Philosophy for children is thus susceptible to indictment on both accounts: first, inasmuch as it requires facility with abstract concepts, it is considered unsuitable for children younger than 12-14 years; and second, insofar as one of its major goals is the development of reasoning skills and reflective thought, its major source of justification becomes untenable.

Those in favour of philosophy for children have responded to these criticisms in one of three ways: 1) attempting to identify weaknesses in Piaget's theory (Gareth Matthews); 2) interpreting Piaget in such a way that his theory can be made to accommodate the possibility of philosophy for children (Hope J. Haas); 3) by ignoring the discrepancy between practicing philosophy for children on the one hand and thinking in Piagetian terms on the other.

In what follows I shall elucidate the weaknesses inherent in each of these 3 responses. I shall then proceed to construct a framework in terms of which the 'Piagetian objection' can be more adequately met.

Gareth Matthews's criticism of the basis of Piaget's theoretical formulations is an example of the first type of response. In the course of formulating an argument concerning the appropriateness of philosophy for children, Matthews inveighs against Piaget's research techniques on the grounds that Piaget wittingly excluded from his data those unusual responses from children which he himself called 'mere romancing'.

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According to Matthews, it is the unusual response which is more likely to be the result of honest reflection and philosophic speculation and reasoning. Moreover, he adduces many examples of children's speech both from Piaget's work and his own research which lend convincing support to his claim. Matthews's point here is an important one. However, insightful criticism of a theory upon which objections are based is not in and of itself sufficient reason to dispel those objections. Undermining the theory will of course undermine the immediate theoretical justification which the objections might have, but it remains to be seen whether an alternative account of cognitive development conducive to the introduction of philosophy in the school, can be provided.

The second typical response to objections from the Piagetian framework is to make interpretative manoeuvres within that framework such that the framework might allow for abstract reasoning in younger children and the training of thinking or reasoning in general. Hope Haas, for example, points out that in a more recent version of his theory Piaget concedes that the development of formal operations is not inevitable. While this claim makes possible the teaching of abstract thinking, it has no similar implications for those defined patterns of thought typical of the earlier developmental sequence. In other words, preoperational thought and concrete operational thought remain the inevitable consequences of the natural process of maturation. In order to accommodate empirical findings from a variety of sources which divulge

2Hope J. Haas, "The Value of 'Philosophy for Children' Within the Piagetian Framework", *Metaphilosophy* 7(1), 1976, p.73.
the capacity for formal thought in children much younger than 12-14 years, a number of strategic theoretic-interpretative adjustments have been posited. The suggestion has been made, for example, that the transition between stages is much more gradual than previously believed, and that, for any given stage, the thinking patterns which it sustains may manifest themselves at different starting times and at different rates. Moreover, in some instances the solution has been to push back further to younger and younger children the age at which formal thought is believed to surface.

Finally, there is the response one finds in persons who are at one and the same time committed to the Piagetian model as a result of their education and happy to teach philosophy and philosophical thinking skills to young children. Confronted with the theoretical dissonance, they may respond with a shoulder-shrug claiming that they persist with the practice of philosophy because the children can manage it and do like it, and because they find that its practice facilitates children's learning in other areas. In the next breath, however, the same people continue their discourse drawing upon Piagetian terms and concepts.

The second and third points made above are interesting, particularly in light of T.S. Kuhn's work on conceptual revolutions. The latter point, for example, seems to be a typical case of treating as 'a pesky little anomaly' any phenomenon that does not fit with the contemporary paradigm of choice, that is, the paradigm which on account of its wide acceptance has become rigidly embedded in everyday thinking. Similarly, the phenomenon described in the second point above addresses the issue
surrounding the unremitting resistance encountered to challenging the existing dominant paradigm with altogether alternative conceptions. Rather, the typical course of action is to attempt to squeeze the intractable data into the existing paradigm, or to stretch the fabric of the theoretical framework in the hope of accommodating the discrepant data. Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development has been subjected extensively to both kinds of treatment. However, theoretical moves of this kind are themselves not unproblematic. New issues concerning the extent to which one can manipulate and reinterpret a theory and still claim to be working within the same theoretical framework emerge. With particular reference to Piaget's work, for example, it becomes questionable whether the concept of stage remains viable given the theoretical manoeuvres mentioned above. Moreover, one might also contest the claim that it is still plausible, if not profitable, to continue to think solely within the Piagetian framework. The point that needs to be stressed here is that while manipulations of the Piagetian model may in the end produce a formulation of stage theory which can embrace the divergent empirical findings, this activity, should not preclude the pursuit of equally valid, if not more adequate, conceptual models. To the contrary, the exclusion of this pursuit from research design constitutes irresponsible theorizing and an unnecessary stricture upon the range of possible alternatives. In respect of some of the claims Piaget makes about cognitive structures, Flavell makes a similar point when he writes, "In certain cases, a little reflection establishes that Piaget's claim could only be jeopardized by logical counterarguments, or by some
superior alternative conceptualization of the whole domain - in other words, by some sort of nonempirical philosophical-theoretical type rebuttal. 3

It is not so much, however, that the rejection of Piaget's model is necessitated by these deliberations. Indeed, one should be willing to identify and develop the insights of a great thinker, particularly in those areas where the appropriate claims are well supported by evidence. Rather, what is of utmost importance is the development of an openness to the weaknesses of the theory and to the idea that this model represents only one of possibly many conceptualizations of cognitive development.

The work of Susan Carey presented in her article "Are Children Fundamentally Different Kinds of Thinkers and Learners than Adults?" is apposite here. By way of investigating possible interpretations of what could be meant by the expression 'fundamentally different thinkers and learners', she has arrived at five plausible conceptions of cognitive developmental change, four of which may be viewed as the beginnings of genuine alternatives to the Piagetian framework.

Let us begin with the interpretation most commonly aligned with the Piagetian position. Although Piaget's writings at times admit of interpretations in keeping with one of the other four interpretations, the following interpretation has featured prominently in the literature and consequently, has not only shaped educational theory and practice.

but has also directed the course of research in developmental psychology. On this interpretation "Children differ from adults with respect to the kinds of concepts they can represent mentally, and/or with respect to the logical operations that can be computed over their mental representations. Either type of difference is called one of representational format." Developmental changes at this level represent the most fundamental differences in thinking and learning possible and are considered the result of maturation. On this view, children are limited by these formats in terms of the ways in which they can think, and these formats are themselves in turn limited by the rate of maturation. (This view together with its educational implications was discussed earlier).

By contrast, the other four interpretations of 'fundamentally different thinkers and learners' explain cognitive developmental changes in terms of the acquisition of knowledge. Carey makes a further distinction, namely that between 'domain general' and 'domain specific' knowledge. 'Domain general' knowledge is that knowledge whose acquisition is capable of affecting thinking and learning across discipline boundaries. In this category Carey incorporates: meta-conceptual skills; 'foundational concepts', that is, concepts which are putatively a part of all theories; and, 'tools or ideas of wide application', for example, mathematical tools like calculus and logarithms. Domain specific knowledge, on the other hand, refers to knowing the content of

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specific disciplines, for example, physics and chemistry. According to Carey, it is a truism that on this interpretation children are fundamentally different thinkers and learners - 'children are novices in a multitude of domains where adults are experts'.

Whereas most explanations of cognitive development have been cast in terms of representational format or foundational concept change, Carey finds little, if any, support in the research for this rationale. As a result of reviewing much of the empirical work of both Piaget and contemporary developmental psychology in light of these five different conceptual frameworks, Carey concludes that perhaps the best explanation of cognitive development is to be made in terms of the acquisition of metaconceptual skills and/or domain specific knowledge. Carey examines the evidence which is typically adduced to support Piaget's notion of major cognitive shifts in the child's logical structures which are said to be available between both preoperational and concrete operational thinking and concrete operational and formal operational thought. According to the tenets of the Piagetian model, children who have not made the shift from preoperational to concrete operational thinking (occurring around age 6) have difficulty, for example, with class inclusion simply because they cannot mentally represent the relation of class inclusion. In other words, prior to this shift it is held on the Piagetian conception that children do not have the cognitive structures capable of representing the concept of class inclusion. Carey insists that the research findings

\footnote{Ibid., p. 40.}
'leave no doubt that the young child differs from the adult in his ability to impose inclusion hierarchies on new materials ...'.

However, she claims that explanations for the phenomenon, other than that of representational format, are possible. Indeed, she suggests that they are most strongly indicated in light of the findings of Smith (1979) and Markman (1978). These findings show that the very young child (4 years) is capable of representing inclusion. Carey offers, (1) lack of specific knowledge about the language used in describing the classes, (2) lack of knowledge about classes themselves, and (3) lack of knowledge about the nature of the class inclusion concept and how it works, as three compelling alternative explanations. First of all, rather than the difficulties with class inclusion being brought about by an inability to represent class inclusion, it may be that questions like 'Are there more flowers than daisies?' which are typically used in tests of class inclusion, violate normal everyday conversation maxims rendering them easily misunderstood. In other words, the difficulties may accrue as a by-product of obscure syntax. The meaning of the syntax in these cases stands in need of clarification, a feat older children have probably already accomplished. With respect to the significant effect of specific knowledge about the classes themselves on class inclusion task performance, the point is that a comprehensive knowledge of flowers and their hierarchies would greatly enhance performance. Instruction about the hierarchies of flowers, for example, is expected to improve performance in young children since most of them have had little instruction, either formal or informal, in this way of looking at the world. Carey cites her

6Ibid., p.11.
7Ibid., p.13.
own series of studies which show, for example, the important role that
the acquisition of biological knowledge plays in the construction of the
hierarchy of plants and animals, on one level, and living things on the
next.\(^8\) At one point the evidence even tempts her to suggest that 'the
acquisition and reorganization of strictly domain specific knowledge
probably accounts for most of the cognitive differences between 3 year
olds and adults.'\(^9\) Secondly, Carey believes that lack of metaconceptual
awareness of the inclusion relation precludes the child's appreciation
of the necessity of various consequences of inclusion. In other words,
knowledge about and an explanation of the dynamics of the class inclusion
relation would serve to facilitate a correct understanding of the
specific class inclusion relation in question.

In conclusion then, cognitive development can be viewed primarily as
a function of learning when it is explained in terms of the acquisition of
knowledge, domain-specific and/or metaconceptual, as opposed to changes
at the level of representational format.

What does all this have to do with philosophy for children? The
recognition that cognitive development might be conceived more adequately
as a process of learning meets the objections to the introduction of
philosophy into the classroom which were promoted on the basis of the
traditional Piagetian view. First, insofar as children are no longer
limited in terms of their cognitive capacities by maturation, there is no

\(^8\) Ibid., p.14.
\(^9\) Ibid., p.40.
reason to suspect that given the appropriate information they might not manifest and be proficient in abstract thinking at young ages. In other words, the objection made against philosophy for children proclaiming the inability of young children to understand higher order concepts is not tenable on this latter view. Second, philosophy for children and indeed any program aimed directly at developing thinking skills is elevated to the status of a worthwhile, if not vital, educational practice. The view that cognitive growth is predominantly a function of learning reinforces this conception. No longer is education relegated to the role of providing practice in thinking capacities made accessible by virtue of maturation alone. Instead, on this latter view it can appropriate the role of initiating and developing a variety of thinking styles in children. It need not be argued that the Piagetian position could not be extended eventually to accommodate this role of education and the consequent viability of philosophy for children. The point is rather that in light of the alternative conceptions to cognitive development shown here, the viability and importance of philosophy for children are at once ratified.

The Readiness of Precollege Students to Confront Issues in Philosophy

The foregoing discussion has provided an orientation to cognitive developmental theory which grants younger, prepubescent children the capacity to deal with abstract and higher-order, metaconceptual thinking. In so doing, it has provided a framework in terms of which precollege philosophy can be considered a viable curriculum endeavour since young children can partake in the type of thinking that the subject requires. Precollege philosophy programs which involve the study of philosophy's
traditional problems, however, have an additional requirement to be met before their viability is fully attained. Viability in these cases is also a function of the children's readiness to deal with the subject-matter of the discipline; that is, a readiness to confront issues in metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of science and the philosophy of religion. The remainder of this chapter is concerned, therefore, with an examination of young children's preparedness for interactions with this type of subject-matter.

Professor Gareth Matthews offers the most convincing evidence in support of the claim that precollege age children are ready for philosophy. Matthews has amassed an enormous selection of excerpts from children's dialogue which he believes indicates their propensity for philosophic speculation and reasoning. Even among very young children he has found dialogue which strongly suggests this tendency to wonder about problems typical of philosophy. He contends that the embarrassingly unanswerable questions which children are wont to ask are generally signs of philosophic puzzlement. While children's language is mostly naive and unsophisticated the claim is that the questions they ask are in essence the same as those of professional philosophers; indicative of a similar desire in children for meaning and understanding. Examples of the type of dialogue referred to here by Matthews occur frequently throughout the precollege philosophy literature. The following examples which are particularly notable have been drawn from Matthews book 'Philosophy and the Young Child' and are included here to further illustrate his point.
(a) Jordan (5 yrs), going to bed at eight one evening, asked, 'If I go to bed at eight and get up at seven in the morning, how do I really know that the little hand of the clock has gone around only once? Do I have to stay up all night to watch it? If I look away even for a short time, maybe the small hand will go around twice.'

In this case Matthews points out how Jordan's puzzlement is inextricably bound up with problems of induction. In other words, the implicit concepts with which Jordan may here be concerned, have to do with what constitutes 'enough evidence', 'enlarging the evidence base', and 'worry about how to extrapolate justifiably from observed periods to unobserved ones'.

(b) A little girl of nine asked: 'Daddy, is there really God?' The father answered that it wasn't very certain; to which the child retorted: 'There must be really, because he has a name!' Matthews brings Bertrand Russell's argument as applied to Romulus to bear upon this problem.

i If 'Romulus' is a name, there exists an entity named Romulus. (A name has got to name something or it is not a name)

ii There exists no entity named Romulus

iii Romulus is not a name

And now:

iv If God is a name, there exists an entity named God

v God is a name

vi There exists an entity named God

---

10 Matthews, Philosophy and the Young Child, p.2.

11 Ibid., pp.3-4.

12 Ibid., p.30.
He explains that the principle needed to justify i and iv is debatable, the debate extending as far back as the pre-Socratic philosophers to contemporary discussion of 'free logics' in which 'empty names' are allowed. In this way, he reveals the extent to which a child's reasoning may be philosophically based and correspondingly admit of philosophical elaboration. Matthews argues that to the extent that children's questions are philosophical, they deserve the appropriate respect and sensitivity of response that philosophically trained teachers can give them. And similarly, in both:

(c) Ian (6 yrs) found to his chagrin that the three children of his parent's friends monopolized the television; they kept him from watching his favourite programme. 'Mother', he asked in frustration, 'why is it better for three people to be selfish than for one?'

and

(d) Some question of fact arose between James and his father, and James said, 'I know it is!' His father replied, 'But you might be wrong!' Denis (4 yrs 7 mths) then joined in saying, 'But if he knows, he can't be wrong! Thinking's sometimes wrong, but knowing's always right!'

he showed that the child's thinking is susceptible of further philosophic discussion, teasing out an appropriate level, considerations such as the principle of utility and the theory of knowledge, respectively. An example drawn from my own teaching experience with a class of 6 year olds may also be apposite. I was in the midst of a lesson on the solar system when two children in the class spontaneously brought forward for consideration the following example of philosophical questioning.

13 Ibid., p.28.
14 Ibid., p.27.
Child 1: 'Who made the world?'
Child 2: 'Oh, you know. God did.'
Child 3: 'Yes, but who made God?'

Matthews' contention is not that every piece of dialogue which appears philosophically rich is necessarily a reflection of genuine philosophic puzzlement. Moreover, he does not suggest that every child has a predisposition for this particular form of wonder. His point is rather that since many children display characteristics of philosophical puzzlement, at least some of which might be genuine philosophical deliberation, then these questions and speculations deserve respect and consideration.

In favour of actually encouraging 'the impulse to philosophize', as he calls it, Matthews argues in the following way:

(i) Some children naturally do philosophy
(ii) Some children naturally do art/music etc.
(iii) Children's art/music impulses are encouraged (not condescended to)

therefore,

(iv) Children's philosophic impulses should be encouraged (and not condescended to) \(^{15}\)

The strength of his argument here, however, depends largely on the extent to which (i) is true. Apart from the selections of children's dialogue Matthew has brought forward in support of this claim, there is an ever increasing body of support to be found in *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children*. Throughout this journal many examples of actual

class dialogues in which philosophical issues are being discussed with both elementary and middleschool children are presented. Here again, the dialogues serve to reveal the extent to which many children are very interested in and capable of delving into the classical problems of philosophy. For example, in Volume 2(1) a very engaging transcript of a dialogue from fifth graders discussing the epistemological questions of evidence, knowledge and truth clearly indicates the interest level and capability of this age group to grapple with such issues. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of this transcript.)

A similar line of argument in favour of encouraging philosophic thinking suggests that because we underestimate children's readiness for philosophy, we do them less than educational justice. Drawing from the work of R.D. Laing and his thesis that children and adults often live up to our expectations of the, Lipman has argued that in treating children as incapable of philosophic deliberation, we are ensuring that they will act that way.¹⁶ The implied recommendation on both accounts that will ensure the fair treatment of children in respect of their philosophic propensities, is the adoption of a more open and positive attitude towards their capabilities. Instead of approaching children with expectations which a priori restrict the extent of their philosophical inquisitiveness and understanding, the recommendation is for an environment which affords the opportunity for both exploration and consideration of the children's ideas.

Is the encouragement of philosophical thinking and/or the encouragement of a confrontation with philosophic issues potentially harmful to children? It is not unreasonable to anticipate the following kinds of objection to philosophy for children: first, the philosophic mode of thought is unproductive; and second, the deeper philosophical issues are disturbing to children insofar as they disrupt established conceptions of reality, etc. In respect of these concerns Matthews advances an interesting viewpoint, one that could be developed to provide a compelling argument in favour of doing philosophy with children. Matthews proposes that the early appearance of philosophic tendencies in children indicates that the search for meaning and understanding which instigates philosophic inquiry is not the exclusive prerogative of adulthood. Rather he views philosophy as being more basic to the life of the mind than has generally been appreciated. For Matthews, children's philosophical questioning is an expression of the same impulse that brings adults to philosophy, and therefore, the search for philosophic meaning is an important, if not necessary, function of the mind. The argument surfacing here and one which admits of further elaboration is that a healthy intellectual progression through childhood is as much dependent on philosophic discovery as it is upon discoveries about the more empirically orientated body of knowledge. If the argument were correct then the appropriate educational response, would be one which encouraged philosophic inquiry at least to the same extent as those curriculum subjects which sponsor definite, readymade answers.

17 Matthews, "Talking Philosophy with Children", p.47.
The issue of readiness with regard to children and philosophy is not yet fully articulate. In the absence of theoretical and empirical elaboration, however, it seems reasonable to conclude from the evidence to date that many children have some sort of readiness of philosophic inquiry. Matthews has been a forerunner in this field of investigation and his findings provide a firm basis for arguing in favour of children's readiness for philosophy. Two problems do emerge, however, with his particular line of research; problems whose resolution would serve to ensure further progress in the field. The first relates to the assessment of readiness, the second to individual differences in philosophic propensity.

(i) Until now philosophic readiness has been determined on the basis of the content of children's everyday and classroom dialogues. That is, children are ready for philosophy if they show signs of philosophic deliberation in their dialogues. This method of determination, however, has two major limitations. On the one hand, it does not provide a means for assessing the extent to which the apparent philosophic display characterizes truly philosophic deliberation as opposed to mere childhood whimsy. On the other hand, it is an inadequate method for making an assessment about philosophic readiness in children who do not make any such overt displays. It may be that for this small percentage of children there is no predisposition for philosophic inquiry, that is, no readiness for philosophy. Other explanations can be provided, however, which equally well account for this absence of overt philosophic display. The child might be, for example, characteristically quiet and unspoken.
Progress in this field of research is, therefore, very much dependent upon the development of techniques more comprehensive in their assessment of philosophic readiness.

(ii) The problem of individual differences in philosophic readiness is twofold. First there is the problem related to teaching a group of children, some of whom display a readiness and some who don't. Second, there is the problem of individual differences in actual areas of philosophic interest. For example, evidence of interest in metaphysical issues does not guarantee an interest in or readiness for issues in the philosophy of science.

The problem concerning teaching those with a readiness for the subject and those without is not a problem peculiar to the subject of philosophy. Without meaning to appear terse, the most obvious solution would seem to involve the division of the group for teaching practice. The problem of heterogenous interest areas, however, is more complex and deserves more attention. It is not the aim of this chapter to elaborate upon appropriate teaching strategies. Rather, I will conclude by suggesting a direction in which these programs might best proceed.

Ideally, the teacher would assess each child for interest areas and degree of philosophic curiosity. Given that the teacher was sensitive to philosophic issues and their ramifications then, a heterogenous group should benefit from most philosophic inquiry. In other words, the success of a philosophy program seems very much dependent upon the teachers ability to select and present those parts of
a philosophy program most suited to his/her students. It is the teachers who are familiar with their students, and it is within their responsibility to tailor a program to the pupils' needs. It seems unrealistic to expect a program to cater to so many different needs particularly without specific knowledge of what they are. Rather, a more generally structured program with specific suggestions for catering to different interest areas seems more appropriate.


SOCRATES. *The Euthydemus of Plato*, 288e-289b.


## APPENDIX 1

AN OUTLINE OF THE PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN CURRICULUM

Figure 1A: Curriculum Outline Through Grades K-12.
(Adapted from Fig.1., p.54, "Philosophy in the Classroom")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K-2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Philosophical Foundations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Acquisition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language Acquisition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Aquisition of Formal &amp; Informal Logic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elementary Philosophical Specialization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advanced Philosophical Specialization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kio and Gus</td>
<td>Pixie</td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Suki</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Metaphysics</td>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Logic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following grade by grade description of the Philosophy for Children curriculum has been constructed from extracts taken from the book 'Philosophy in the Classroom' and a series of course description leaflets published at IAPC, Montclair State College.

### I. The Early Childhood Curriculum

(i) Program: Reasoning About Nature
Grade Range: K-5
Novel: Kio and Gus
Manual: Wondering at the World
Kio and Gus: Kio visits his grandparents' farm and becomes friendly with Gus, who lives with her family not far away. The novel consists largely of conversations. The children are sensitive to language and ideas as well as to the animals, people and things in the world around them. Among the contrasting concepts they wonder about are make-believe and reality, fear and courage, saying and doing, and truth and beauty.

As a result of the intense interest shown by Kio and Gus in animals, in space and time, and in many other aspects of nature, the book serves in the program as an introduction to science, as well as the relationship between language and the world.

Wondering at the World: The stress is on language acquisition with particular attention to the forms of reasoning implicit in children's everyday conversation. Also, there is an emphasis on intensification of perceptual awareness, sharing of perspectives through dialogue, classification and distinction, and reasoning about feeling.

(ii) Program: Reasoning About Language
Grade Range: K-5
Novel: Pixie
Manual: Looking for Meaning

Pixie: Among the goals of the Pixie program are the following:
- to prepare children to study Harry Stottlemeier. Discovery in the following year of philosophy by improving those inquiry skills which make for success when doing the Harry program.
- to stress meaning acquisition and reading comprehension.
- to help students develop facility in handling class and family relationships, as well as rules, reasons and excuses, the Pixie course concentrates upon strengthening the awareness of
relationships (logical, social, familial, aesthetic, causal, part-whole, mathematical, etc.), as well as the competence in dealing with such relationships.

Looking for Meaning: Continues the emphases of Kio and Gus paying greater attention to semantical and syntactical structures, such as ambiguity, and abstract philosophical notions such as causality, space, number, person, class, group.

II. The Curriculum for the Middle-School

(i) Program: Basic Reasoning Skills
Grade Range: 4-7
Novel: Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery
Manual: Philosophical Inquiry

Harry: Harry is the basic text in the middleschool program in philosophy for children. It provides the basic reasoning tools - have the stress is on the acquisition of formal and informal logic. The novel offers a model of dialogue both the children with one another and with adults. Its story is set within a classroom of children who begin to think about thinking, and in the process discover principles of reasoning. They also discover, in the events that follow both within and outside the classroom, that they can apply their thinking effectively to situations in real life. The story is also a teaching model, it points out the value of inquiry, encourages the development of alternative modes of thought and imagination, and suggests how children can learn profitably from one another. Further, it sketches what it might be like to live and participate in a small community where the children have their own interests, yet respect each other as people and are capable at times of engaging in cooperative inquiry for no other reason than the satisfaction of doing so.
(ii) **Program:** Reasoning in Ethics  
**Grade Range:** 6-12  
**Novel:** Lisa  
**Manual:** Ethical Inquiry

**Lisa:** Lisa is a sequel to Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery and focuses upon ethical and social issues such as fairness, naturalness, lying and truth-telling, and the nature of roles and standards. Other issues explored include the rights of children, job and sex discrimination, and animal rights. Lisa is concerned with the interrelationship of logic and morality. The curriculum is designed to help students establish good reasons in justifying their beliefs as well as in justifying certain departures from normal patterns of conduct.

(iii) **Program:** Reasoning in Language Arts  
**Grade Range:** 6-12  
**Novel:** Suki  
**Manual:** Writing: How and Why

**Suki:** Suki is a novel about the same group of children who are now freshmen in high school. Faced with assignments in writing poetry and prose, Harry protests that he cannot write at all. The novel explores the ways in which this writer's bloc is dealt with and overcome. At the same time, it considers such underlying issues as experience and meaning, criteria for the assessment of writing, relationship between thinking and writing, the nature of definition, and the distinction between craft and art.

**Writing: How and Why:** concentrates on the writing of poetry, with numerous exercises and activities. Among other things, the manual is an impressive anthology of hundreds of poems by and for children.
(iv)  Program:  Reasoning in Social Studies  
Grade Range:  6-12  
Novel:  Mark  
Manual:  Social Inquiry  

Mark:  The fictional characters in Mark are now high school sophomores. One of them, Mark is accused of vandalism. In an effort to ascertain who is guilty Mark's class find themselves impelled to inquire into a number of general social issues such as the function of law, the nature of bureaucracy, the role of crime in modern society, the freedom of the individual, and alternative conceptions of justice. Again the manual, puts these and many other concepts into practice through classroom activities and exercises.  

III. The Curriculum for the High School  
Program:  Advanced Philosophical Specializations  
Grades:  11-12  

This curriculum is not yet developed. It is planned, however, to consist of a number of approaches each representing a more advanced area of philosophical specialization. Five separate novels, each with its own manual, is to be constructed in the areas of ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and logic. Each of these will carry on and reinforce the thinking skills and the techniques of applying such skills that had been developed in previous experience to philosophy for children.
APPENDIX 2

BOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS USEFUL FOR THE TEACHING

OF PRECOLLEGE PHILOSOPHY

(i) Literature recommended by Gareth Matthews

In a column entitled 'Thinking in Stories' which appears regularly in 'Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children', Professor Matthews describes the philosophical content of certain children's books. The literature he has identified to date as being philosophically rich includes:

- Frog and Toad Together by Arnold Label
- Albert's Toothache by Barbara Williams
- Hildilid's Night by Cheli Duran Ryan
- Tom's Midnight Garden by Phillipa Pearse
- Leese Webster by Ursula K. LeGuin
- The Real Thief by William Steig
- Ozma of Oz by L. Frank Baum
- The Upside-Down Cat by Elizabeth Parsons
- Morris the Moose by B. Wiseman
- Wally's Stories by Vivian Gussin Paleg
- Raging Robots and Unruly Uncles by Margaret Mahy

An example of the type of analysis he provides is as follows:

In Thinking, Vol.1(1), he discusses briefly Arnold Label's stories, drawing attention particularly to a passage in one of these stories called 'Cookies'. Here Frog and Toad are discussing their will power in respect of resisting freshly baked cookies. Matthews writes:

The notion of will, and the associated notion of will power, are philosophically both vexed and vexing. Some of the vexations have to do with the idea of determinism and whether determinism is compatible with free will. But others have to
do with the idea of weakness of will, incontinence (akrasia) — lack of will power. Frog says that will power is 'trying hard not to do something you really want to do'. There is something very puzzling about the idea of trying not to do what you really want to do. If you really want to do it, you won't really try not to. On the other hand, if you really try not to, it will be because you want not to do it. What Frog (and we) describe as lack of will power begins to look like a case of conflicting desires. Toad wants to stop; but also (and even more strongly) he wants to continue to eat cookies. etc.

Arnold Lobel's gentle and loving mockery of Frog and Toad invites us to reflect upon the phenomenon of weakness of will and to join philosophers from Aristotle (see Book VII of his Nicomachean Ethics) to the present in trying to understand it. The phenomenon is as familiar as it is difficult to be clear about.

(ii) **Recommended Texts for Teaching High School Philosophy**

A. **Centre for High School Philosophy** adopted four approaches to teaching high school philosophy: the **classical approach** which centred on carefully pre-selected reading; the **'issues' approach** which was structured around topics with readings chosen for their illumination of the problem more than for their inherent or classical contribution to philosophy; **life-style approaches** which explored alternative life styles based on major philosophical positions; and, the **'open-process' approach** which sought to develop altogether inductively, letting topics and readings be determined by students either from their own suggestions or from their choice of material suggested by the instructor.

Examples of books used for:

**Introduction to Philosophy**

- 'Invitation to Philosophy', Honer and Hunt (Wadsworth), Chapter 1
- 'Learning to Philosophicize', E.R. Emmet (Pelican), Chapter 1
Classical Philosophy
Aristotle: Ethics, Books I and II
Descartes: selection from Meditations
Dostoevsky to Sartre: selections on existentialism
Plato: Crito, Apology, and the story of the cave from the Republic

Philosophy of Science
'The Structure of Science', E. Nagel (Harcourt), Chapter 1: Science and Common Sense
'Naturalism', A. Danto
The Encyclopedeia of Philosophy
'Science as an Adventure of the Human Spirit'
Selections from Whitehead, Brownowski and W. Weaver

Philosophy of Religion
'The Lost Dimension of Religion', Paul Tillich
'Man's Search for Meaning', Victor Frankl
Film: 'Night and Fog' (Mass Media Ministries)

Logic
'Introduction to Logic', Irving Copi

In addition, the following were used by two or more teachers in the program:
Freud: The Future of an Illusion
Fromm: Marx's Concept of Man
Hesse: Siddartha
Kaplan: The New World of Philosophy
Kaufmann: Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre
Malcolm X: Autobiography
Mill, J.S.: On Liberty
Ruby, Lionel: The Art of Making Sense
B. Philosophy Through Literature: high school philosophy program developed by Ms. A. Merrington.

Course Outline: Introduction - an understanding of what is meant by philosophy

The Nature of the Mind
Appearance and Reality
Free Will vs Determinism
Moral Proof and Principles, Ethics
The Reasoning Process - Informal Logic
The Quest - the universal search for answers and unity

Examples of literature used in the course:

On the Nature of the Mind
'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Riding', Pirsig, Chs. 7 and 14.
'Faith and the Good Thing', Johnson and Charles
'The Celestial Railroad', Hawthorne: The Birthmark, Rappacini's Daughter
'Welcome to the Monkey House', Vonnegut: Slaughterhouse Five
'The Martian Chronicles', Bradbury
'Brave New World', Huxley

On Appearance and Reality
Classical works:
Plato's concepts as shown in 'the Cave' and 'the Meno'
Descartes's theories revealed in excerpts from the 'Meditations'
Statement of the problem by B. Russell

Literature:
'The Turn of the Screw', Henry James
'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass', Lewis Carroll
'The Trial', Kafka
'Steppenwolf', Hesse
'The Tempest', Shakespeare
'The Mysterious Stranger'
'The Man who Corrupted Hadleyburg', Twain

(iii) Programs for Teaching Logic and Critical Thinking in Precollege Education

Schools and colleges are using many different methods to teach thinking skills. The following programs, based on various educational philosophies, have received considerable attention.

The Structure of the Intellect Program: this approach developed by J.P. Guilford, has broken intelligence into 120 discrete skills, 26 of which are said to be critical to success in school. Thousands of separate lessons have been created to teach the skills. The program's headquarters is the S.O.I. Institute in El Segundo, California.

The Strategic Reasoning Approach: is based on the ideas of the late Albert Upton. This approach concentrates upon six problem-solving techniques - analyzing, classifying, breaking the whole into parts, sequencing, seeing relationships and synthesizing. Exercises unrelated to school are used, and the principles are transferred to classroom applications and then to life situations. Innovative Sciences in Stamford, Connecticut markets the lessons.

The Educational Enrichment Program: was developed by Reuven Feverstein and is geared to low achievers. It attempts to tap the intrinsic motivation to learn, using problem-solving tasks to bring out abilities that can be applied to school work. Many of the exercises require little reading so that all children can address the task. Curriculum Development Associates in Washington distributes the materials and trains the teachers.

The Edward de Bono Lateral Thinking Approach: Mr de Bono's theory, disseminated from its headquarters in London, includes breaking out of traditional thinking patterns by trying to devise new ways of looking at problems.
Other programs include:

The Productive Thinking Program: a course in learning to think by Covington, M.V., Crutchfield, R.S., Davies, L. and Olton, R.M. Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Colombos, Ohio. 1974


In a recent paper, Professor Lipman lists thirty thinking skills supposedly taught by the Philosophy for Children Program. He claims that the list is not exhaustive, and for each skill he also cites an example or exercise involving the use of that skill. The examples are taken from the instruction manuals which accompany them. For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to include only the list of thinking skills. For further information: see 'Thinking Skills Fostered by Philosophy for Children', unpublished paper by Matthew Lipman, Montclair State College, N.J., 1983.

The thinking skills he cites in this paper include the following:

- formulating concepts precisely
- making appropriate generalizations
- formulating cause-effect relationships
- making immediate inferences from a single premise
- drawing syllogistic inferences from two premises
- knowing elementary rules of standardization
- knowing the rules governing ordinal and relational logic
- recognizing consistencies and contradiction
- drawing inferences from conditional syllogisms in propositional logic
- formulating questions
- identifying underlying assumptions
- grouping part-whole and whole-part connections
- knowing when to avoid, tolerate or utilize ambiguities
- recognizing vague words
- taking relevant considerations into account
- recognizing the interdependence of ends and means
- recognizing informal fallacies
- operationalizing concepts
- giving reasons
- recognizing the contextual nature of truth and falsity
- making distinctions
- making connections
- working with analogies
- discovering alternatives
- constructing hypotheses
- analyzing values
- instantiating
- constructing definitions for familiar words
- identifying and using criteria
- taking differences of perspective into account
A P P E N D I X 4

FIFTH-GRADERS DISCUSS EVIDENCE,
KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH


First time on tape - 4-5 minutes giggling.

Ron - Let's talk about some of the words that have come up in previous classes. Words like "certainty, evidence ..."

Shaun - "Proof."
Ron - "Proof."
Wendy - "Knowledge."
Beth - "Belief."
Ron - "Knowledge, belief."
Craig - "Convince."
Ron - And "convince." I didn't think we'd come up with that many. Let's stay with these. These are important words that have come up recently in our discussions. These words might stand a little more definition.

Gail - Who's got the dictionary. [Pause] I got it.

Ron - Wait. Let's see what definitions, what relations among words we can come up with.

Beth - You want to be wrong.

LAUGHTER

Ron - No, I just want to find out what we mean when we use the terms. These are ordinary words, right? We should be able to unpack ..., to say what we mean when we use these terms.

Beth - You always take the hard way.
Ron - I'm sorry (jokingly). It will be fun.
Shaun - Hey, recorder How y' doing.
Ron - O.K., how about "proof".
Holly - What about "proof".
Ron - Can I prove to you something that is false. Can I prove to you $2 + 2 = 5$.

Holly - You can prove it, but I wouldn't believe it because I know it's not true.
Beth - But then you wouldn't be proving it. I mean I'd know it was false and you'd know it was false and it wouldn't be a proof.
Holly - So if we both knew it was false then it would not be proved.

Mitch - What about if you were proving it to ten people and make believe some people knew it was true and some people knew it was false. Then could you prove it?

Beth - If some people knew it was true ...
Ron - Isn't that a different case. Weren't we talking about it being false.
Mitch - Right. It is false for some people, but it is true for other people.

Ron - Remember the discussion we had on contradiction. A sentence can't be both true and false at the same time. $2 + 2 = 4$ is either true or false. Can't be both, right?

Mitch - Right.

Ron - Right. You did agree before. You can change your mind if you want.

Mitch - O.K. What about if ... If ... what Beth said was something ... Beth said something would not be a proof because I know it was false and you know it was false.

Ron - Beth is saying ... Beth said that you can't prove something that everybody knows is false. Or really you can't prove something that is false.

PAUSE

Ron - That's a pretty big change, an addition you made there? No?

Beth - What.

Ron - Well first you said you can't prove something that everybody knows is false. Then you said you can't prove something that simply is false. — Whether people know its true or false doesn't seem to matter then.

Beth - O.K.

PAUSE

Ron - Well, what do you want to say now.

Beth - The second one. It doesn't matter whether anybody knows or not.

Ron - O.K. Anybody else have anything to say.

PAUSE

Ron - I bet there's a lot more we could say about proof. But maybe we have enough to begin comparing things. If you prove something, what you prove must be true. Right.

SERIES OF NODS, SMILES ETC. — As I remember it.

Ron - Is there any difference between evidence and proof.

EVERYBODY SAYS NO.

Ron - Do you ever get nervous when everybody agrees. Or when something seems obvious. When you think you have the right answer right away. PAUSE Think about Harry. He thought he had the answer in Ch.1. Poor Harry is still looking. It's now what, Ch.7, Ch.8? You guys agreeing so quick makes me nervous.

WHAT SEEMS TO BE A UNIVERSAL NO FOLLOWED BY MUCH LAUGHTER. A kind of joke is being played here, I suspect.

Ron - What is ... Give me some examples of evidence.

Stacy - I have evidence that this glass, that someone, that Jim drank from this glass.

Craig - You didn't see him.

Gail - She doesn't have to see him. She could know from other stuff.

Mitch - Like his fingerprints on the glass.

Shaun - Or if somebody else saw him. An eyewitness.

Ron - Anything else — Another example of "having evidence for."

Shaun - I have proof for and I have evidence for this: The Dodgers will win the pennant.
Ron - Aw, you can't have proof for that. Obviously, the Dodgers won't win. Only kidding. Only kidding. But seriously we agreed that you can't have proof for something that is false. Right? So you can't prove that the Dodgers will win if in fact, they lose. I wonder, also, if you could prove that the Dodgers will win even if the Dodgers do win. I mean could I prove it now? Anybody?

NO RESPONSE.

Ron - We said that belief, I mean, we said that proof gives you a kind of guarantee of truth. Now, say, I pick up this glass and I say "Jim used this glass to have a drink of water because the glass is ½ full now and Jim's fingerprints are on the glass." Two questions (1) Do we have evidence to support our claim that Jim drank water from the glass.

Stacy - We can't say for sure that Jim had the glass because his fingerprints ...

Craig - His fingerprints are on the glass.

Jim - Somebody else could have put my fingerprints on the glass. They could have a machine that steals fingerprints, comes and gets them in the middle of the night. Or like a camera. Takes a picture of your fingerprints and puts them on the glass.

PAUSE

Ron - You're saying it's possible to sort of forge fingerprints. Counterfeit fingerprints.

Jim - Yeah.

CONVERSATION VERY LOUD, HARD TO MAKE OUT ON TAPE.

Six minutes of discussion and anecdotes on the art of stealing fingerprints. Class agrees that it is possible but highly unlikely that anyone would want to "forge" Jim's fingerprints.

Ron - O.K. Say they really were Jim's fingerprints.

Mitch - Then Jim's guilty.

Craig - Just because Jim's fingers are on the glass doesn't mean he couldn't have just handed the glass to Stacy.

Wendy - ... Then

Stacy - I didn't do it, honest. I promise. I didn't even see the class.

Ron - Just make believe.

Mitch - But Stacey's fingerprints are not on the glass.

Gail - How do you know?

Mitch - (to her) Are they on the glass?

Ron - No, I don't think so.

Mitch - Then she wiped them off.

Debbie - How could she just wipe off hers and not Jim's? You can't do that. You can't even see the fingerprints to wipe them off.

Beth - But even if Jim's fingerprints are on the glass, it still doesn't prove that Jim drank something else or he could have just held the glass.

Ron - So, we haven't proven our case against Jim. But what can we say about Jim's fingerprints. Does that, the fingerprints, count as evidence.

Debbie - They're sort of evidence but they don't prove.
Proof gives you a guarantee. Evidence doesn't.

O.K. What does evidence do.

Well, if someone gives you a bunch of real good evidence ... I wish you liked Sherlock Holmes ...

What do you do?

Do you believe them then?

Sometimes. Sometimes I don't. No matter what the evidence.

That's interesting. Let's get right back to that after we finish this. A lot of good evidence may not cause you to believe ..., but doesn't it give you some really good reasons for believing?

Yeah.

And a little ... some really "shaky" evidence might just give you a little reason to believe.

But if it was really shaky, you wouldn't believe it.

Right, but if it was really shaky evidence, if it was evidence, couldn't that give you some, just a little reason to believe.

Yes, but not enough to make you believe.

I see you and Holly want to do "belief". O.K. But first we, you, said that proof gives a kind of guarantee of truth while evidence only gives us some reason to believe something is true. O.K. Now what about belief.

What is the relationship between evidence and belief. Can I believe something for which I have no evidence?

No.

Yes. Evidence is something which will make you believe something.

O.K. That's one point. But look at my question. Can I believe something for which I have no evidence. Jim says evidence makes you believe something. That's one point. I also want to know if you can believe without having evidence.

Evidence can help you have a belief but it can't make you believe. I can believe anything I want to. I can believe with no evidence at all. I can believe that Jim drank from the glass ...

That's evidence.

His fingerprints are the evidence.

That's believing when I have evidence. But I could also believe ...

That there are little invisible orange men that live on top of your head ...

What?

I'm trying to say, to help you with an example ...

That doesn't help.

What I meant was you might want to say "I believe that there are little orange men living on top of my head even though I have no evidence for that claim."

Then I'd be crazy.

Unless you saw little orange footprints.

That would be evidence.
You could present all the evidence in the world and if I didn't want to believe it, I just wouldn't believe it.

You could believe... I'm not here right now.

 Aren't there two questions involved here. First, could Stacey or anyone else simply make-up their minds not to believe. Second, could Stacey or anybody simply not believe.

Sometimes there might be a lot of evidence that, say your team lost the ball game but you still might not believe it. You might not believe that your team lost.

Is that what you mean or do you mean that you don't believe you should have lost.

Well, sometimes... You mean like the other team cheats? ... O.K. sometimes, yeah, you don't believe that you should have lost but... and other times like you're thinking about the game and you believe that you really won.

What happens to the evidence here.

What do you mean?

I take it you (1) your team really did lose and (2) there are scorecards, reports from friends, etc. a good deal of evidence to support the claim that your team lost. What happens to that evidence?

You can sometimes just ignore the evidence.

Ignore it?

Yeah forget about it or say it's not good enough evidence. Like a mirage you could be in a desert and 'see' a mirage and know you're in the desert and so not really believe what you are seeing.

Everybody understand that? That was pretty complicated. Do you understand that?

You know there aren't real mirages. So when you think you see one, you don't really believe it.

Anybody ever see a mirage?

In the movies on T.V.

What about in person.

Say a guy came here and he looked just like George Washington, and he knew all sorts of stuff about George Washington, and he said he was George Washington. Would you believe him?

No.

Why?

Because George Washington is dead.

So you reject one set of evidence statements... I mean, you have on the one hand some evidence to support a belief that this guy is really George Washington. He looks just like the picture, he says he is etc. On the other hand, you have heard that (a) George Washington is dead and (b) even if he was still alive, he would have to be over 250 years old.
Beth - They're both evidence. The first and the second one. But the second one, if you don't know is stranger. So you don't accept, you forget about the first.

Ron - O.K. That's good. But now I'm getting mixed up. I feel like Harry. What is the relationship between evidence and belief. We said, I think, that evidence doesn't make you, doesn't force you to believe. What does evidence do?

Holly - It sort of helps you to believe. Like it says its O.K. to believe something.

Ron - Like a kind of support? Like the more, the stronger the evidence, the greater the chance that you'll be right in what you believe.

Holly - Right.

Ron - That seem right to everybody?

Ron - Could you try and connect some of the words that we've used together.

GOES TO THE BOARD

Ron - How about evidence. How does evidence relate to truth?

Shaun - You can have evidence for something that is true and evidence for something that is false.

Ron - So evidence can't guarantee truth.

Shaun - Right.

Ron - But the stronger the evidence, the greater the likelihood of truth.

Shaun - Yeah, but still no guarantee.

Ron - What about belief. Does belief guarantee truth?

PAUSE

Ron - Can I believe something that is false?

Debbie - Yes.

Ron - So belief does not guarantee truth.

PAUSE

Ron - Does it seem to you that one thing keeps leading to another?

SERIES OF GROANS

Ron - I'm getting tired too. We'll stop now. But just think about this for the next class. How does knowledge fit in with all these other words. Does knowledge guarantee truth? Can I know that it's raining when it's not really raining. Also, could I know that it's raining (when it's really raining) but not believe that its raining.

INAUDIBLE

Ron - See you next week.