Taking it slow: enhancing wellbeing through Philosophy for Children

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Rhiannon is also a doctoral student, focussing specifically on Philosophy for Children (P4C). Her research interests lie in the potentially transformational impact of P4C on pre-service teachers, the children they teach and ultimately the whole school community, with a focus on wellbeing and affective gains. Her research aims to investigate how embedding Philosophy for Children in Initial Teacher Education might prompt a fundamental shift in, not only the emerging teacher-formation of the student, but also their personal philosophy and indeed their approach to a more holistic form of education.

ABSTRACT

We live today in times of accelerating change, where speed is often equated with progress and success. There is a growing desire amongst educators to counter this current bias towards performativity and results/data driven education. One example of this is a growing interest in what is termed 'Slow Schooling' or 'Slow Pedagogy' – which advocates that children not only

learn better at a slower pace, but also report a decrease in stress. In the current climate where there are increasing numbers of young people suffering from mental health issues, there is a concern that these needs are not adequately addressed in education. This chapter suggests that one possible approach to addressing and dealing with this current situation is to embed Philosophy for Children (P4C) into a school's pedagogy, values and curriculum.

KEYWORDS

RESUMEN

Vivimos tiempos de cambios acelerados, en los que la velocidad a menudo se identifica con el progreso y el éxito. Existe, además, un deseo creciente entre los educadores de contrarrestar esta obsesión mediante la performatividad y la educación orientada a resultados. Un ejemplo de esto es el creciente interés por lo que se denomina 'Lenta escolaridad' o 'Pedagogía lenta', que aboga por que los niños no solo aprendan mejor a un ritmo más lento, sino que también disminuyan su nivel de estrés. En el contexto actual, con un número creciente de de jóvenes con problemas de salud mental, existe la preocupación de que estas necesidades se ignoren desde el sistema educativo. Este capítulo sugiere que un posible enfoque para enfrentar, desafiar y potencialmente lidiar con esta situación, es integrar Filosofía para Niños (FpN) en la pedagogía, los valores y el currículo de una escuela.

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Introduction

We live today in times of accelerating change, where speed is often equated with progress and success. There is a growing desire amongst educators to counter this current bias towards performativity and results/data driven education. I propose that one potential solution might be to return to, or indeed perhaps embrace for the first time, a slower pedagogical approach to education, which research shows can encourage a more holistic form of education as well as an improvement in pupil and teacher wellbeing. This approach, commonly termed 'Slow Schooling' or 'Slow Pedagogy', advocates that children not only learn better at a slower pace, but also report a decrease in stress. In the current climate where there are increasing numbers of young people suffering from mental health issues, there is a concern that these needs are not adequately addressed in education. My suggestion, which will be explored throughout this chapter, is that Philosophy for Children (P4C) might be seen as aligned with slow pedagogy, and that embedding P4C into a school's pedagogy, values and curriculum could be one possible approach to address and deal with this current educational climate.

This chapter explores current research on wellbeing and slow pedagogy in education and what P4C might have to offer this field, as well as illustrating the proposal with data gathered from some small scale qualitative research I carried out, that examined children's reflections on the potential benefits of introducing P4C into primary education. The study's main focus was on whether children would *independently* identify that P4C had had impact in more affective areas, that could be linked to wellbeing, rather than the more traditionally reported cognitive gains. Thus, through this chapter I wish to pose two questions: firstly, what does current research into wellbeing and slow pedagogy have to offer those who would engage with philosophical

enquiry; secondly, from the results of the study, did the children perceive any change to their wellbeing as a result of engaging with P4C?

<div align="center">**Wellbeing**</div>

Wellbeing resonates as a central discussion to P4C due to a growing awareness of the number of young people that suffer from mental health issues, and a concern that these needs are not being adequately addressed in education (Alexander & Armstrong, 2010; *The Children's Society,* 2015*)*. In particular, the current focus on achievement in the UK could be argued as a key driver for an ethos and curriculum that prioritises 'speedy' results, often at the expense of the more holistic elements; which are paramount in the development of the child (Adams, 2013; Clarke, Bunting, & Barry, 2014).

The concept of 'wellbeing' has long been part of educational discussions. I would argue that an integration of wellbeing into primary education is not only opportune, but crucial in an era when every year; 'up to one in five children are using mental health services' (Hallam, 2009:133); with surveys reporting children as young as eight describing themselves as 'stressed out by relationships and school' (Füredi, 2004:112). Seen by Layard (2007) as Britain's most pressing social problem, these wide-ranging concerns have placed children's wellbeing high on both political agendas and public interest (Adams, 2013).

Defining wellbeing is problematic for education, due to the 'bewildering array of terms and labels to describe work in this field,' with 'emotional literacy, emotional intelligence, positive mental health, and emotional well-being' amongst the most common (McLaughlin (2008:353 - 4). Eaude (2009) adds that wellbeing is usually associated with 'feeling good about oneself, self-esteem, being aware of one's own and other people's emotions' (p187). Although an

eclectic range of definitions can lead to 'conceptual sloppiness' (Morrison & Ecclestone, 2011:203), McLaughlin (2008) clarifies that this distinction is often to do with the context in which wellbeing is being referred to: for example the term 'emotional literacy' is used often by those in education and 'positive mental health' by psychologists.

For the context of my research I seek to interpret wellbeing as the non-cognitive or affective outcomes of education, which include aspects such as; self-esteem, confidence, empathy, and meaning making, to name but a few. I appreciate in doing so, this may give the appearance of wellbeing as an affective/cognitive binary, however the intention is to proffer a useful starting point for what is known to be a complex term. This position is supported by Siddiqui, Gorard, and See (2017:9):

The list of such personal qualities is long and could include social and communication skills, resilience, determination, motivation, confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Various collective terms are used in the literature such as non-cognitive skills, soft skills, personal characteristics, personality traits, life skills, social and emotional skills. For consistency and clarity, we use the term non-cognitive outcomes (of education). Champions of wellbeing in education have stressed how it can permeate all aspects of school life and learning (Clarke *et al.*, 2014; Eaude, 2008; McLaughlin, 2008). In the current educational climate, England's preoccupation with testing has engendered a climate of stress, impact on children's self-esteem and feelings of being unable to cope, arguably presenting an education system where 'the product' (i.e. test results) is the focus rather than education of the child *per se* (Holt, 2002; Narayanan, 2007).

Nowadays, it is being increasingly argued that the aim of education should not only be the obtainment of cognitive knowledge and skills, but also non-cognitive outcomes. Opdenakker and Van Damme (2000) question whether schools are able to have as much influence on the non-cognitive outcomes of their pupils as on their achievement, stating that 'there is some evidence that schools [that are] effective in enhancing achievement are not necessarily effective

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in enhancing the well-being of their pupils' (p166). If the concern being offered here is that, as the current system stands, schools are not managing to influence both cognitive and affective outcomes, I would suggest that it is imperative that we look afresh at our approaches to education, to see if indeed there might not be a way to incorporate both, perhaps, as I am suggesting through embracing a slower pedagogical approach.

There is criticism levelled at the concept of wellbeing as a foregrounder to education. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009b) and Füredi (2004) equate programmes which encourage wellbeing as a form of therapeutic education. Their proposal is that educators have moved from critical engagement with knowledge to an over-emphasis on emotional well-being (Ecclestone, 2011; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a). They argue that this has resulted in a 'hollowed-out curriculum as an instrument for 'delivering' a plethora of attributes, skills, values and dispositions' (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a:385), suggesting this to be a profoundly dangerous existence for education to be based upon. Füredi, in his foreword to Ecclestone and Hayes (2009b), sees the main outcome of emotional education is 'to disempower young people' in addition to distracting schools from providing 'a genuine intellectual challenge' (pvii). Critics argue that although 'a therapeutic ethos in education appears benign and empowering' (Ecclestone, 2004:112), they see wellbeing evolving from a perception of the child as diminished or fragile (Ecclestone, 2004; Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a; Füredi, 2004). Whilst there are many who would argue that childhood might be seen as in decline (Adams, 2013), the image of the child as 'broken' and as a consequence wellbeing as therapy, is strongly refuted by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000:7) who state that 'treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best.'

At odds with wellbeing being portrayed as a purely therapeutic endeavour, The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (Atkinson, 1998) strongly recommended less subject teaching in lieu of a more holistic approach to education (Alexander & Armstrong, 2010). The

shift in seeing wellbeing as an educational outcome challenges the discourse of education as process by which young people are to accrue a body of knowledge (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009a). For many educators, knowledge is but one part, subscribing to a more holistic view of education, which frames the academic curriculum around the development of the social, cultural, spiritual and personal (Adams, 2013; Clarke *et al.*, 2014; Korthagen, 2004). My advocating the benefits of a return to a more holistic view of learning, which encompasses wellbeing, is not meant to be at the detriment to knowledge, but to enhance the potential for knowledge learning. My argument is that wellbeing should be seen as learning in its own right, both as part of the curriculum, as well as integral to the principles or values of education.

That is not to say that there are no concerns or potential issues with the teaching of wellbeing. One such concern is raised by Eaude (2009), who posits that there can be a danger of over-focusing; 'for happiness and emotional well-being to be explicit ends in themselves, they would tend to promote introspection and a sense of vulnerability' (p185). I would suggest however, that wellbeing integrated into a holistic approach to education could allay these concerns, becoming part of a strategy to help children develop in resilience and resourcefulness (Claxton, 2002; Dweck, 2010), with schools creating 'environments that support the young person's natural resilience in the face of the daily adversities of human existence' (Dawkins et al., 2004:10). Eaude (2008) states the necessity of striking a balance between too much support, which could leave a child dependent and too little which could leave some vulnerable. The aim is not to encourage introspection that could leave a child wallowing in negative emotions, rather to create opportunities to enable children to become confident with dealing with their emotions. Eaude adds that the effects of wellbeing should be seen as 'by-products of children flourishing as a result of sensitive relationships and the types of activities through which children's resilience and sense of agency are reinforced' (2009:185).

There is a current focus in the UK around how to develop resilience in children. I would argue that P4C provides genuine opportunities for children to develop their own personal resilience. The Community of Enquiry (CoE), whilst engendering a feeling of safety and security for the children, I would argue, also encourages an atmosphere of criticality and creativity. The environment promotes an atmosphere that welcomes and actively searches for multiple and contrasting viewpoints. There is an expectation that opinions that have little or no reasoning to support them *should* be challenged. An understanding and acceptance that children will be challenged and disagreed with (naturally with respect as part of Caring thinking), facilitates an opportunity to explicitly encourage a development of robustness and resilience that might otherwise be lacking in children and young people in the current framework of our curriculum.

When I began my journey as a practitioner of P4C, after approximately six weeks of engaging in enquiries, I asked the children in my class to reflect on their impressions of it. One pupil, who was extremely able, told me that he loved P4C, because it made his brain go "*durr*". When I queried his meaning, he said that up until this point in his education (he was 10), everything had been easy. He felt that he had never been challenged by anything and, in his opinion, he had never had to think very hard to do anything. He continued, that P4C had been the first thing he had experienced that could not be done easily. Whilst this had led to periods of frustration, not being able to articulate his thoughts or opinions, he loved the challenge and continued to embrace it. The ability to be challenged in one's thinking, and face challenge with a positive outlook, I would argue, helps to develop resilience in children and is a foundation for any distinction on what it means to be educated.

Equally, I would suggest that P4C further ensures a sense of agency, as mentioned by Eaude (2009). In this learning space, children lead the direction of the enquiries from the initial

question formation, thus placing the ensuing dialogue around their own interests, concerns or 'wonderings'. This in turn also supports the notion of the children having a voice and being heard, central to the work of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989).

Whilst educational policy has traditionally been driven by a focus on the economic benefit for individuals, society, and indeed the nation (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2017), it could be argued that a more aspirational vision of education would value non-cognitive outcomes for their own sake. Brighouse (2008) advocates a vision of education and expounds on the educational and schooling implications for taking wellbeing, or 'human happiness', seriously (p58). He claims that education 'should aim to improve children's prospects for leading flourishing lives' (Brighouse, 2008:60), and refers to Layard's "Big Seven": 'Financial Situation, Family Relationships, Work, Community and Friends, Health, Personal Freedom, and Personal Values' (2005 cited in Brighouse, 2008:61). Brighouse stresses that he does not equate happiness with flourishing, and clarifies that:

> Flourishing is a richer property than happiness, sensitive to many more features of a person's life than just her inner states. Flourishing involves **people making meaning, making sense, of important aspects of their lives and the totality of their life** (2008:62, emphasis mine).

Brighouse's definition and vision of 'flourishing' is a quality that I would argue has great affinity with what I am calling 'wellbeing', that is; non-cognitive or affective outcomes of education, such as; self-esteem, confidence, empathy, and meaning making.

In my experience, P4C can help children to co-construct meaning, not just about themselves and their lives, but about the people around them, and even of the world at large. The link between flourishing, or wellbeing, and meaning-making, I would argue, is significant with regard to P4C and the Community of Enquiry. As Kizel (2017:91 - 92) writes:

The search for and finding of meaning also allows children to uncover their full humanity by enabling them to recognize their uniqueness—i.e., their otherness from those around them and, by the same token, the otherness of others, together with their responsibility towards others ... Meaning is therefore a means of determining responsibility, philosophical communities of inquiry enabling young people not only to discover the meaning of life but also the purpose and road this bestows opens up for them.

Kizel (2017) proposes that the CoE is relevant in this process because it 'creates relationships within and between people and the environment' (p87). He suggests that the more the CoE engages with 'social, cognitive and emotional' relations that are relevant to the world of the children, 'the more they enable young people to search for and find meaning' (Kizel, 2017:87). Whilst an exploration of the definition of 'meaning', and how this is realised in P4C, could be the subject of a whole new chapter, in my opinion meaning-making is often central to one's identity, relationships and sense of wellbeing. In addition, it could be argued that this is a key ingredient of a more holistic view of education. As Lipman stated: 'Schools that consider education their mission and purpose are schools that dedicate themselves to helping children find meaning relevant to their lives' (1980, cited in Kizel, 2017:93).

One of the things I love about P4C is its potential for awakening a social consciousness or responsibility in not only the children, but also in the student teachers I work with. Kizel (2017) proposes that in the CoE, the process of meaning-making can be an 'incentive to motivate children to be socially involved' (p95). He refers to Lipman's work and the underlying principle that the CoE can help to develop children's 'sense of self and community' and suggests that 'Philosophy is thus a motivating force not only for self action but also for social and environmental activism, helping to transform personal competency into social good' (Kizel, 2017:95).

How then do I see P4C as potentially contributing to pupils' wellbeing? It is first necessary to consider the markers or indicators of wellbeing. As previously mentioned, Layard identifies the seven key factors influencing our levels of happiness, of which I would propose that four could be argued as being actively engaged regularly within P4C and the CoE – namely: 'Family relationships, Community and Friends, Personal Freedom, and Personal Values' (2005 cited in Brighouse, 2008:61), although it could be argued that depending on the nature of the enquiry, the remaining three: Financial Situation, Work, and Health, could easily form part of a CoE. Similarly, Opdenakker and Van Damme (2000), when specifically discussing children's wellbeing, encapsulated eight indicators: 'wellbeing at the school, social integration in the class, relationship with teachers, interest in learning tasks, motivation towards learning tasks, attitude to homework, attentiveness in the classroom and academic self-concept' (p172). From these eight indicators, all bar relationships with teachers and attitude to homework were specifically mentioned by numerous children in my research, as areas they felt had been impacted upon as a result of engaging with P4C. Furthermore, Humphrey (2013) describes wellbeing as inextricably linked to Social and Emotional Learning; the process of 'explicitly developing skills such as empathy and self-regulation in children' (p1). In my own experience and in the views of the children as part of my research, empathy and self-regulation were frequently cited as impact of engaging with P4C.

Slow pedagogy

A possible strategy to ameliorate the stresses that face children and young people might be a rethinking of how we approach education. In the current educational climate in England, where 'slow' often has negative connotations, this chapter will now seek to explain how embedding philosophical enquiry as part of a slower pedagogical approach might enhance wellbeing in children as a positive educational connotation.

11

My interest in possible connections between P4C and slow pedagogy were initially sparked because of a comment that a teacher made to one of my pre-service teachers in their PGCE year. When the student asked if they could introduce the class to P4C, the teacher responded that he would only allow this if the student could explain categorically how the P4C enquiry would support student progress in that particular lesson. Whilst it might be possible to evidence progress in the very first P4C enquiry, my reflections were that P4C might sit more comfortably as part of a slower pedagogical approach, as endorsed by the Slow Movement (Hartman & Darab, 2012), where practitioners and advocates have a longer term, more holistic view of education and educational gains.

The current view that seems to proliferate in society today is that the faster we do something, the more acclaimed it is. Research in schools shows that both staff and pupils identify issues concerning time as a potential threat to wellbeing (Dawkins, Boardman, & Jennifer, 2004; Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2012), with 'the pressure to proceed from one targeted standard to another as fast as possible, to absorb and demonstrate specified knowledge with conveyor-belt precision, an irresistible fact of school life' (Holt, 2002:265). There is a growing desire amongst educators to counter this current bias towards performativity and results/data driven education. One example of this is a growing interest in the above-mentioned Slow Movement, which began in the 1980s as a reaction to the hurried pace of life (Hartman & Darab, 2012). Whilst this movement initially was concerned with advocating a better attitude towards food consumption and enjoyment in reaction to the Fast-Food industry, the Slow Movement has embraced other areas of life; leading in 2002 to a call for 'Slow Schooling' or 'Slow Pedagogy' (Hartman & Darab, 2012:58; Honoré, 2009; Payne & Wattchow, 2009:15).

Honoré (2009) reports that a growing body of evidence suggests children learn better at a slower pace, resulting in children who are 'less anxious, more eager to learn and better able to

12

think independently' (p252). Narayanan (2007) posits countering 'Acceleration and Speed' with 'Slowness and Wholeness' (p1). In particular, he discusses 'consciously embracing the core value of slowness – both as way of being and as a way of learning' (p6). His argument is that a slow pedagogy frees the learner from the constraints of the school day, releasing them to learn at the 'metronome of nature, giving them time to absorb, to introspect, to contemplate, to argue and rebut and to enjoy' (Narayanan, 2007:6).

Critics of slow pedagogy are primarily those who espouse a preference for a rigorous academic education, focussed on knowledge-acquisition, rather than what they see as 'a diminished curriculum for diminished individuals' (Ecclestone & Hayes, 2009b:164). However, Payne and Wattchow (2009:17) discuss how this tendency towards 'fast, take-away, virtual, globalized, download/uptake versions of pedagogy' potentially might restrict children to viewing education as 'snapshots rather than the fuller picture, let alone engaging in reflection' (Hartman & Darab, 2012:56). This 'speedy pedagogy' can, I would argue, result in superficial learning, focussing more on short-term memory retrieval, rather than deep and long-lasting learning that is connected to a more permanent change over time. For me, learning is more than just the 'acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught' (Oxforddictionaries.com, 2017) and resonates more with definitions of learning as proposed by Gagné (1985), where he suggests that learning affects a change in disposition that persists long term and is not purely to do with growth, or as posited by Bingham and Conner (2010:19):

> We define learning as the transformative process of taking in information that -when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced - changes what we know and builds on what we do. It's based on input, process, and reflection. It is what changes us.

Hartman and Darab (2012) support slow pedagogies and describe the characteristics of what they call 'slow scholarship' as 'engaging with ideas through deep reflection, experiential

learning, and reflexivity, ultimately resulting in critical insight, creativity, and innovation'(p58). They advocate that the 'freedom and time to engage in thinking, to immerse oneself in experiential encounters, to synthesize information and reflect upon it—this is how new ways of knowing are formed' (Hartman & Darab, 2012:59).

At the heart of slow pedagogy, or slow learning, is the belief that the learner has agency rather than being a passive recipient of knowledge. It celebrates taking time to go deeper, to deliberate and foster genuine and sophisticated understanding. Advocates of slow pedagogy would argue that this makes the learning richer, deeper and more meaningful. Honoré (2009:14 - 15) supports this, summarising that:

> Fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity-over-quality. Slow is the opposite: calm, careful, receptive, still, intuitive, unhurried, patient, reflective, quality-over-quantity. It is about making real and meaningful connections - with people, culture, work, food, everything.

Interestingly, Bracey states that schools that are focussed on performativity often lack in developing personal characteristics related to virtue and morality, 'these are as remote from the activity of fast schools as is gastronomic pleasure from fast food' (2001 in Holt, 2002:268).

So how then might P4C support a slow pedagogy philosophy? Sharp, Oscanyan, and Lipman in their book *Philosophy in the Classroom,* proposed that the aim of a thinking skills programme such as P4C was to help children become 'more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate and more reasonable individuals' (1985:15). These qualities or dispositions are not achieved in a hurry. P4C gives children, students and teachers an opportunity to step off the carousel that a data driven, and test oriented school system dictates, to engage in deeper, more meaningful encounters, that by their nature need time to develop, improve, and internalise. It is interesting that when you study what Narayanan (2007) suggests are optimal learning

14

arrangements to 'foster and promote slowness'(p7), there are elements that resonate with P4C. For example, using a circle as an optimal learning environment; which Narayanan suggests represents symbolically 'the spirit of unity and equality within the learning community' (p7); also themes or topics for study which are not prescribed but are emergent. Narayanan advocates that these topics should be selected from student talk, through dialogue with the community – a clear resonance with the recommendation in P4C that the enquiry should stem, wherever possible, from a question created by the children, not the teacher/facilitator. A final connection is suggested by Narayanan:

> all learning is the result of direct first person conscious experience. This method or tool focuses on the transformation of the self and the awakening of the mind rather than on the transfer of knowledge and the acquisition of skills' (p7).

I would argue that this view not only supports a more holistic view of education, but also attunes itself to the Community of Enquiry (CoE) and the aim of developing creative and critical thinking skills/ dispositions. Teachers and schools have readily offered qualitative feedback as to the potential non-cognitive/affective benefits of P4C. For example, a key conclusion of Gorard, Siddiqui, and Huat See (2015)'s research was that 'Teachers and pupils generally reported that P4C had a positive influence on the wider outcomes such as pupils' confidence to speak, listening skills, and self-esteem, wellbeing and happiness' (p28). Indeed, more recently Siddiqui *et al.* (2017) carried out research in 16 schools (with 1099 children) specifically looking at this area. However, it can be challenging to substantiate these affective gains, thus the starting point for my own research was a desire to move from the anecdotal to the informed. Specifically, I was keen to explore how the children perceived the impact of P4C, and indeed whether they would *independently* identify any impact that could be said to be related to affective benefits or what might be termed wellbeing.

15

I gathered my data from fifty-seven children (two Year Six classes, 10 – 11 years of age), in a junior school where philosophical enquiry is embedded. The research approach I used was the qualitative method of Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (see Asmus & James, 2005; Chapple & Murphy, 1996; Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1971). There were several factors that influenced my selection of NGT as my research method. At the heart of my research was ensuring that I heard the voice of the child, as my research specifically aimed to foreground the idea of democratic practice in schools – sometimes referred to as Rights Respecting Education – strongly linked to the UNCRC (UNICEF, 2012). The methodology of NGT is widely recognised to be an solidly democratic research method, which empowers participants through valuing and considering all views equally, thereby also harmonious with the aims of P4C. The children were asked to consider, discuss and rank the perceived impact they thought P4C had on them, their class and their school.

As expected, cognitive areas *were* identified by the children. However, from the ten themes identified by Class A, only three had a clear cognitive focus, with the remaining seven areas focusing on affective impacts of P4C. In the case of Class B, eleven themes or groupings were designated, of which only four were cognitively focussed.

Key headlines from my research showed children identifying that P4C had impacted significantly on their personal development and understanding of the world, with concepts such as happiness, empathy, confidence, and self-belief, recorded by the majority of the children. Children remarked that P4C had seemed to make, not only them as individuals, but the class as a whole, and even the whole school community, happier. The children attributed this to having more time to talk to others, as well as P4C having made them more passionate about learning. The children found listening to each other's opinions enjoyable, but also being able to express their own feelings to everyone, or share their own personal moments, if they wanted

16

to, stating that this helped them understand their own emotions better. Siddiqui *et al.* (2017) state that 'enhancing the enjoyment of school for young people … should also be a part of the policy agenda for education' (p12), and is in stark contrast to the warnings raised about the current level of stress and mental health concerns in primary schools (Füredi, 2004). This identified impact of enjoyment of learning and increased motivation towards school links to both Opdenakker and Van Damme (2000)'s indicators of wellbeing, as well as Honoré (2009) and Narayanan (2007)'s claims regarding impact from a slower pedagogical pace.

A key factor for many children was that P4C had helped them to not only respect each other's ideas, but also to understand other people better, which they felt had developed and improved their empathy. Humphrey (2013:1) describes developing social and emotional skills such as 'empathy and self-regulation in children' as central to wellbeing.

The identification by the children that P4C had helped to develop their confidence and self-belief is encouraging, considering Holt (2002) and Narayanan's (2007) warnings of low self-esteem and an inability to cope, that they suggest is a common experience for many children in our schools. The children in both classes described the impact as being not only in terms of having the confidence to speak out and express themselves clearly, but also having the confidence to challenge each other if they disagreed with opinions that were being expressed. This was also seen in Siddiqui *et al.* (2017:9)'s research, which reported that P4C could impact on areas such as 'resilience, determination, motivation, confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy'.

Many children in the two classes commented on the fact that P4C had helped them to understand the world better and how it works, also to understand the differences in the world, both in peoples' thinking but also in their circumstances – leading some children to comment that it had made them reflect on how lucky they were to have a home, food and a family. I would propose that there are links here with Brighouse (2008) and his work on 'flourishing' as

17

helping children to understand 'important aspects of their lives and the totality of their life' (pp61 - 62), as well as Kizel's (2017:91 – 92) aforementioned research on P4C helping children to make sense of the world and of their own humanity and purpose.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the rising tide of children's mental health issues in the UK (Edwards, 2015; Fraser & Blishen, 2007) is affecting ever younger children, and must be of concern to anyone involved in education. Parents, teachers and schools around the country are actively engaged in looking for ways to halt this trend, and consequently interest has grown around the role of wellbeing as an educational issue. Many schools are trying out new initiatives aimed at increasing children's emotional health. However, I would suggest that a successful approach in addressing, challenging and potentially dealing with this current situation that our children find themselves in, is to embed P4C into a school's pedagogy, curriculum and vision.

Through ongoing discussions with teachers, tutors and students, there has been an overwhelming consensus that the current environment in schools promotes and prioritises speedy results and that adopting a slower pedagogy could potentially garner positive outcomes in all areas of wellbeing. Narayanan (2007:7) suggested that the pressure felt by schools to modify and adapt in this climate of accelerating change is not sustainable, adding that it can result in:

> a disconnect between the means and ends of education. The larger democratic ideals of social justice, of interdependence and of co-evolution through cooperation and collaboration are being increasingly marginalised in favour of greater accountability through testing, the drive towards nationalised curriculum, which suffers from a 'one size fits all' mindset.

18

Brighouse (2008:71) further stresses that 'understanding that the ultimate goal of education must be to facilitate the flourishing of the children in their care, … can help policymakers, administrators, and teachers to resist these forces to some extent, and to promote an ethos, adopt a curriculum, and manage the day-to-day pace of school life better, to serve the children under their care.'

At the start of this chapter I suggested that I would attempt to address two key questions, namely; what current research into wellbeing and slow pedagogy had to offer those who would engage with philosophical enquiry; and secondly, whether the results of my research would demonstrate any links to wellbeing as identified by the children as a result of engaging with P4C. I propose that many of the characteristics of the Community of Enquiry fostered through engagement in P4C, could be argued to support the aims and ideals of slow pedagogy and could in turn lead to increased wellbeing amongst children. Furthermore it could potentially stir in them, and in the teachers that facilitate P4C, the social consciousness or responsibility referred to by Kizel (2017:95). Kizel (2017:92) claims that P4C can enable the children or young people we work with 'not only to discover the meaning of life but also the purpose and road this […] opens up for them'. In my mind this sounds like a better purpose or goal of education, and one worth striving for, than the data-driven alternative that proliferates today. Reflecting on my own research I would suggest that the children in both classes clearly identified many areas of impact from P4C, which could be linked directly with wellbeing and slow pedagogy, significantly more than the cognitive impact.

My proposal is that P4C can be seen to facilitate a particular pedagogy across the school curriculum and indeed community; to encourage deeper learning, moments of slowness, and reflection, that will enhance both pupil and teacher wellbeing. As a result, I would further argue

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the need to explore potential links between P4C, slow pedagogy and wellbeing and how

teachers can be supported to recognise and encourage these links in their practice.

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