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Philosophy outreach through teacher education

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Abstract

Building a university outreach programme is a complex task that requires coordination of funding, regulations, research aims, practical activities and recruitment strategies. This article describes the building of an outreach programme based on the Philosophy with Children practice and the associated changes in the programme's research focus, practical activities and organisation over the first five years. Where did the initial inspiration come from, what form did it take eventually, and what have we learned? The article outlines our strategies and activities and I argue that two shifts in focus made the programme stronger in terms of impact and research. First, instead of sending university students into classrooms, we turned to teacher training programmes. Second, conversations with teachers indicated that the most interesting research questions were not about cognitive gains but about learning environments, teacher roles, facilitation techniques and other topics from educational studies. The article also assesses the strategies and research from the first six years of the programme and how they have demonstrated both challenges and opportunities in Philosophy with Children.

Key words

outreach, philosophy with children, programme organisation, research, teacher education

The programme's inspirations and aims

The Philosophy in Schools programme was founded in 2017 at University of Southern Denmark. This programme is still running and deals with research, development and continuing education within the field of philosophical inquiry and Philosophy with Children. The programme is based on practical experiences from classrooms as well as theoretical and empirical research. Moreover, as this article will show, it is a highly transdisciplinary programme that involves collaborations across fields and institutions. The programme was first envisioned by the author of this article and was designed in collaboration with Søren Sindberg Jensen. Many other people have helped develop the practices, training programmes and research projects over the years, and

although the core staff consists of only a few people, the programme has achieved a broad reach with the help of many contributors whose primary responsibilities lie elsewhere.

As is probably the case in many countries, the practice of Philosophy with Children in Denmark dates back to the '80s (e.g. Jespersen 1988). This practice is part of nationally mandated teacher education for the school subject religious education. Individual teachers have been working with Philosophy with Children for decades and many books by leading practitioners (nationally and internationally) have been published in Danish over the years. However, in Denmark, there has been no national community associated with this practice, and the academic philosophical establishment has been largely unaware of the existence and nature of Philosophy with Children and little (if any) systematic research has been conducted within the field, either by philosophy, educational studies or other empirical sciences.

Sources of inspiration

The initial inspiration for the programme arose in 2012 during my visit to what was then known as the Center for Philosophy for Children at the University of Washington. In addition to showcasing Philosophy with Children as an academic philosophical research area, the Center for Philosophy for Children also boasted an extensive, well-established outreach programme for training university students and philosophers and engaging them in collaborations with schools in the Seattle area. In other words, the Center had implemented a well-established combination of research, education and outreach that could benefit not only the children involved but also university students and staff, schools and society at large.

Another source of inspiration for the programme has been recent international research on the cognitive benefits associated with Philosophy with Children (e.g. Fair et al. 2015; Topping & Trickey 2007). This body of research has garnered academic attention for the field and has established a link between practice and scholarly interest, making it possible to see the potential for relevant research in Denmark as well. More specifically, as school settings differ across countries, it is worthwhile to explore whether the international research results could be replicated in the Danish school context. Together with the ambition of creating an outreach programme for university students, this research direction constituted the starting point for the Philosophy in Schools programme.

Initial aims of the programme

When we first started the programme, we had two goals: first, to set up an outreach programme similar to the one in Seattle, and second, to determine whether results from international research could be replicated in the Danish school context. However, both goals required that we first establish a stable practice of Philosophy with Children that could serve as both the foundation for the outreach activities and the object of research.

Establishing this practice was an important step not only for outreach endeavours but also for research. The many variables interacting in educational settings can make it difficult to draw conclusions in empirical research concerning schoolchildren. For instance, differences in teachers' personalities, abilities and/or approaches can mean that, from an outsider's perspective, what appears to be the same activities based on the same materials could, in fact, conceal significant differences. Therefore, the first step was to ensure that our philosophical activities were as similar as possible across facilitators and schools. As there are various organisations, traditions and approaches within Philosophy with Children, this meant choosing a specific programme and approach, training the facilitators and ensuring that they met the ideals and guidelines of this programme when leading philosophical activities. The organisation chosen was The Philosophy Foundation in London (UK) (for the approach of this organisation and our adaption of it see, e.g. Schaffalitzky 2021, p. 8; Worley 2011). Based on this collaboration, we started establishing a practice involving trained facilitators, who were a mixture of philosophy students and staff.

The first discoveries and a change in focus

We recruited university students and staff for our first training programme and the training took place at University of Southern Denmark with the help of The Philosophy Foundation. Soon after we began training the first group of facilitators, we made an important discovery that changed the programme's direction. We were involved in a collaboration with a local school in which we 'borrowed' some classes for the facilitators to complete their supervised training. The teachers were passively present during the activities, but their reactions were remarkable. They were surprised by the students' behaviours, the facilitation strategies, the peer interactions, and the general learning environment that characterised the Philosophy with Children activities.

One of the things the teachers commented on was that the dynamics of the dialogue differed from the usual classroom engagement. Children who were normally quiet would participate, and some of the children that would normally be very self-confident were more reluctant. Teachers were also surprised how long the children were able to be on task in the philosophical dialogue (I even remember one child in 1st grade pointing out to the teacher that the class managed to stay focused for 45 minutes), and they noticed that the dynamics of interchanges were different. For instance, after a session about migration and national identity in 6th grade with children from very diverse ethnic backgrounds, the teachers commented that this was the first time they had witnessed an abstract discussion of this topic that did not degenerate quickly into quarrels and name-calling.

The teachers also commented on the learning environment as such, saying that it was very different in being 'slow' and staying with the process rather than pressing on to reach conclusions. Inspired by observations and comments like these (see Jensen 2023a, 2023b for further descriptions), we came to believe that the more interesting research questions were not about cognitive gains but concerned peer interaction, learning environments, teacher roles, facilitation techniques, and other topics related to educational studies.

As we did not possess a background in teacher education, we were not equipped to understand why the teachers were so interested in these classroom developments. However, the philosophy department hosting our programme is part of a larger institute that includes educational studies. Thus, colleagues from educational studies helped us discover a connection between the practice of philosophy with children and the dialogic teaching field. Dialogic teaching differs from traditional teaching in that, for instance, teachers initiate and support dialogue in classrooms without assuming the authority and prominence in classroom discourse associated with the classical teacher role (see, e.g. Christie et al. 2007). Educational research has described and supported dialogic teaching for decades (e.g. Alexander 2017; Nystrand 1997). Dialogic teaching aims to support a learning environment that is collective, reciprocal, supportive while simultaneously purposeful and characterised by progression in the content of the dialogue (Alexander 2017, p. 28). However, even when teachers are familiar with dialogic ideals, it is often difficult to realise these ideals in practice (e.g. Sedova, Salamounova & Švaříček 2014). We understood that the teachers recognised that dialogues based on Philosophy with Children involved strategies that could help the teachers meet their dialogic teaching ambitions (for research in support of this view, see, e.g. Alexander 2018; Smith 2017).

Another factor that influenced the direction of the programme was a legal barrier. In Denmark, the law related to universities states that university funding can only be used for research and education at the university level. This meant that it would not be possible to run an outreach programme unless all staff expenses were covered by external funding. When we first set up our programme, Philosophy in Schools, at the University of Southern Denmark in 2017, we were inspired by the Seattle model and considered funding a problem to be solved down the road. However, we soon discovered that it would be virtually impossible to rely solely on external funding. One reason for this was that the interested foundations generally expected recipients to contribute in terms of co-financing, which, in our case, would have gone against university regulations.

This realisation, together with the interest of the teachers, soon paved the way for a different programme model. The teachers in the public school we had worked with were so interested in learning the facilitation techniques themselves that they approached the head of their school, who, in turn, approached the local municipality, which then decided to invest in a teacher development programme across schools in the community. The municipality's decision was not only due to the recommendations of the headmaster and teachers, but because the aims of our activities were very well aligned with the municipality's recently adopted guiding principles for a 'Bildung strategy' concerning personal and social development for all the schools in its area. At the core of the guiding principles were the values perseverance, curiosity, self-efficacy and community. The first course for 16 teachers was followed by an additional course the following year, later spreading to a local private school, a kindergarten and a group of teachers in special education programmes across schools in the area.

Current focus, organisation and research

Six years into its existence, the programme is still based in the philosophy department at University of Southern Denmark. Responsibilities are divided between a manager of the research part and a manager of the practical part; both have obligations outside the programme as well. As only the two managers have a clear affiliation with the programme, it is difficult to state how many people are and have been involved in the programme over the years. A very inclusive count could potentially identify 10 university staff members who are or have been part of the programme. However, it may be more effective to approach the programme as an entity built upon networks and collaborations rather than set members or designated staff.

Research activities are funded mainly through the university research staff associated with the programme, with some additional funding coming from external collaborations. Practical activities, financed entirely by external funds, include teacher education, teaching resource design, workshops and school visits. Communication about the programme is organised via the university web page and social media, where we have shared information about Philosophy with Children as well as news on research and other programme activities.

For the reasons mentioned previously, our initial idea of an outreach programme sending philosophers into schools transformed into a programme that educates teachers in their own schools. Furthermore, our initial research focus on whether philosophical activities entail cognitive benefits for children shifted to questions of the activities' impact on, for instance, learning environments, children's behaviours and interactions, and teacher roles. These changes also led to new collaborations and development projects. The following sections survey the programme's current activities and recent projects and describe our research results so far.

Teacher development, collaborations and material design

Our facilitator training model builds on the model of the Philosophy Foundation. As mentioned above, we need a stable intervention for research purposes, which means that we only conduct research on activities led by trained facilitators who meet certain criteria. The training includes two full days of introductory coursework followed by practical sessions involving supervision, peer feedback, self-reflection and observations of trained facilitators running sessions (for a more detailed description, see (Schaffalitzky 2021, p. 6). At the end of the training, a final assessment of the facilitator determines whether the trainee has a satisfactory grasp of the required facilitation techniques and strategies. Some of the trained facilitators have pursued further coursework and training concerning, for instance, working with session design, supervision or specific topics or kinds of participants.

Since the programme was founded, approximately 30 schoolteachers from 12 schools and 40 university staff and students have completed the training. A reduced version of the coursework and training has been offered to approximately 30 professionals working at the preschool level, and many teachers in upper-secondary education. In addition, people from museums, university colleges and nongovernmental organisations have completed an introductory course. We have also given numerous introductory presentations and workshops for hundreds of professionals at the

preschool, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school levels, including school heads, healthcare personnel and others.

The shift in focus from sending facilitators from the programme into the community towards educating facilitators who are already out there has had several advantages. First, it has vastly increased our potential impact through outreach. Moreover, philosophical topics, questioning and dialogue become part of existing school subjects, not necessarily in the form of additional topics but as another approach to subject knowledge. Literature discussions can be conducted largely as philosophical dialogues, while discussions of social issues can take philosophical dialogues concerning, for instance, justice, participation or rights as their starting point. But the natural sciences also offer many topics (such as numbers or methodology in math or concepts of nature and life in biology) that can be explored in a classroom dialogue.

In addition, the teachers we have worked with (in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school) also blend the dialogic facilitation strategies into their normal teaching in, for instance, chemistry, Danish or math, even if they only run conventional philosophy sessions on rare occasions. This means that discussions on finding room for philosophical dialogue in an already crowded curriculum can be avoided, as teachers can guarantee academic content and quality. It should be noted that, when we first started the programme, we were warned that teachers would not have the time to include philosophical activities. However, we have yet to meet a teacher who is unable to find room within the existing curricula.

Another advantage of the shift towards teacher training is that we have been able to use training activities as the basis of our research. In practice, we include an agreement about research permissions in the contracts we sign concerning development programmes. This meant that we could perform research without first having to secure external funding for intervention activities, as these activities already exist in schools. The final advantage is that close collaborations with school professionals is a rich source of inspiration for studies and focus areas.

Although teacher development comprises a large part of our outreach activities, the programme also entails collaborations with public institutions, academic colleagues from various disciplines, institutions in higher education, museums and nongovernmental organisations. Many of these collaborations have revolved around the development of philosophical dialogues, teaching materials and resources, based on our knowledge of philosophical activity design while aiming at specific areas, such as art, technology and robotics, sustainability and children's rights (e.g. Schaffalitzky

de Muckadell & Nielsen 2021), or specific competencies, such as critical thinking or language acquisition (e.g. Kjærbaek & Schaffalitzky de Muckadell 2019). We have also received private funding to promote philosophical activities through the production of video material and the organisation of inspirational workshops and demonstration sessions in schools.

Moreover, we have been involved in and started networks with researchers and practitioners working with Philosophy with Children. Internationally, we have collaborated with researchers from various institutions and a with a well-established organisation in terms of research, training and facilitation. Nationally, we have cofounded a network that, since 2018, has held an annual open meeting for practitioners and other people working in or interested in the field. The meetings are whole-day events hosted in different places each year, and they draw quite a crowd.

Research results and other outcomes

During the first couple of years, practical efforts to create a stable intervention and build a suitable infrastructure dominated the programme at the expense of research. Furthermore, the change in focus along the way meant that the first research publications came later than we had anticipated. At the current time, the research in the programme has included empirical examinations of children's, facilitators' and observers' experiences, along with quantitative impact measurements and theoretical analyses of concepts, dialogues and teaching materials.

Two of the earliest articles from programme-related research (Jensen 2023a, 2023b) were inspired by conversations with the teachers who were present at our first training sessions in schools. The teachers' surprise regarding the way in which the activities unfolded led to qualitative interviews and surveys on what they had observed in relation to the children and their interactions, which, in turn, produced reflections concerning their own teaching. The key conclusions from these interviews included the observation that the teachers were concerned that the facilitator role would entail a lack of control over student behaviour and content, and the observation that learning to facilitate changed the teachers' perceptions of the activities (Jensen 2023a).

Other findings included that the teachers who had observed the activities saw great potential in this form of teaching (both in general and especially for marginalised students) and that witnessing this approach impacted the way in which they perceived their students and their own roles as teachers (Jensen 2023b). The theoretical

framework used in these articles combined research on Philosophy with Children (e.g. Murriss 2013; Vansieleghem & Kennedy 2011, Worley 2016) with research on dialogic teaching and the traditional teacher role (e.g. Alexander 2018; Wilkinson et al. 2017). As mentioned earlier, the discovery of the potential of an interdisciplinary approach was one of the benefits of sharing a department with scholars from the field of education.

Another early line of research in the programme was concerned with analyses and discussions of guidelines and teaching materials within the field of Philosophy with Children (Bom & Schaffalitzky de Muckadell 2019; Schaffalitzky & Bom 2021; Schaffalitzky & Hejl 2020). A common theme that emerged in the associated articles was the practical difficulty of implementing the dialogical ideals embedded in Philosophy with Children. Empirical research has indicated that traditional teaching is characterised by a learning environment that is monologic rather than dialogic and in which the teacher assumes the role of authority on truth and relevance in the classroom discourse (see, e.g. Lyle 2008). Our case studies of a teachers' guide and of dialogue examples from a best practice report indicate that the traditional approach is so ingrained that it is easy to slip away from the Philosophy with Children ideals, such as supporting dialogue by posing open questions (instead of steering), or helping children substantiate and explain ideas. For instance, in one of the philosophical classroom dialogues we analysed, the teacher made 59 contributions (containing 21 new ideas), while the children made 63 contributions in all and introduced one new idea (Schaffalitzky & Hejl 2020, p. 78).

Similarly, a study of Danish Philosophy for Children pioneer Per Jespersen's guides for philosophical dialogues on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales showed a prevalence of questions that were closed, leading or too complex to be suited to support a philosophical dialogue. Examples include questions such as 'Are there no borders between fantasy and reality for a child?', 'Can Death be sent down to Earth by God?' and 'Would the world change if we were all willing to sacrifice for others? Is this the heart of Christianity?' (Schaffalitzky & Bom 2021, p. 12). Not only are these question designs in contrast to those in the manuals for Jespersen's own stories, they are also in conflict with his explicit ideals for philosophical dialogues and his recommendation that, for instance, 'the manual does not try to take the students to a certain conclusion' (quoted from Schaffalitzky & Bom 2021, p. 9).

A similar theme concerning the challenges of realising the dialogic ideals in Philosophy with Children emerged in our study of teachers training to become

facilitators in our programme (Schaffalitzky 2021). Previous research has indicated that teachers' transition from the traditional to the dialogical teacher role poses challenges and has offered various possible explanations for this (e.g. Alexander 2018; Resnick et al. 2018; Šeďová et al. 2020). Our study of a Philosophy with Children training programme examined teachers' self-evaluations and supervisors' feedback in the training programme to identify the challenges encountered. Among other things, the study found that, for the teachers, a major challenge involved performing the role of facilitator (e.g. letting go of control) and supporting students' reasoning and interactions. As one of the teachers quoted puts it: 'I made an effort to ask open-ended questions and not put words in their mouth—but I have been a teacher for almost 20 years now, and this is difficult for me. I could clearly feel my urge for some kind of "control"' (Schaffalitzky 2021, p. 11).

This study also found that very often supervisors identified shortcomings that the teachers themselves and their peers in the supervised training did not notice. In an example where the trainee did not support student's reasoning, the supervisor comments: 'Remember to ask students to elaborate on their ideas if they do not do it themselves (use, for example, 'why?', 'Would you like to say more?', 'Do you want to elaborate on what you mean by x?'). In this way, you help the students to go in depth in relation to what they say' (Schaffalitzky 2021, p. 11). A key conclusion from this study was that an introductory course needs to be supplemented with supervised training. Even teachers who have knowledge, motivation, supportive peers and opportunities struggle when they return to their classrooms. However, the study also showed that these challenges can be overcome through training and feedback.

Another type of research in the programme has focused on the lived experiences of facilitators and participants. This is a surprisingly understudied topic in both Philosophy with Children and dialogic teaching research more broadly (cf. Barrow 2015; Jackson 1993; Reznitskaya & Glina 2013; Santos & Carvalho 2017; Siddiqui, Gorard & See 2017). There is a large body of research on facilitator/teacher *behaviour* (e.g. Boyd & Markarian 2011; Dysthe 1996; Nystrand & Gamoran 1991) but little on the facilitators' *own perspectives*; thus, due to the importance of the facilitator role, we wished to examine their assessments of dialogue quality, in addition to studying the participants' experiences. We conducted a small case study indicating that facilitators tended to underestimate the positive experiences of the participating children (Schou-Juul, Jensen & Schaffalitzky 2023). This is something we would like to explore further in the future.

When we first decided to focus on children's perspectives, we were surprised to find how little the topic had been examined, especially given that for most people working in the field of Philosophy with Children, children's perspectives constitute a key element. Therefore, we designed a study of online philosophical dialogues during the COVID-19 lockdown and surveyed children regarding their experiences (Schaffalitzky, Jensen & Schou-Juul 2021). The survey answers indicated that the children generally enjoyed the dialogues and saw them as meaningful activities (Figure 1).

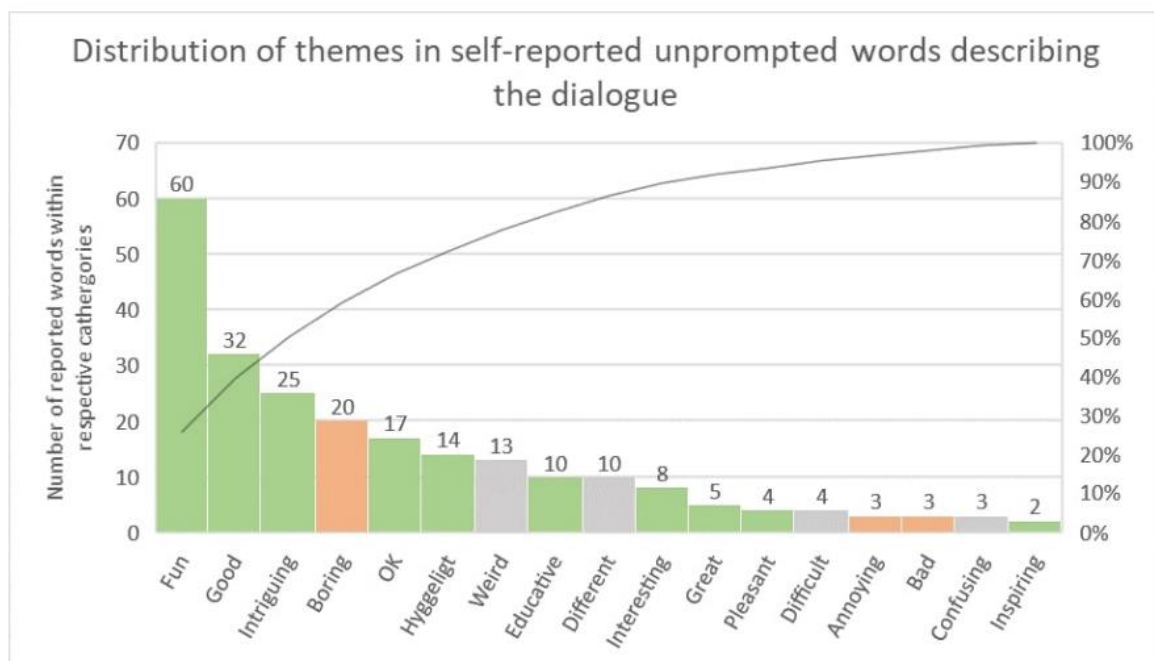


Figure 1. In an anonymous survey, children from six different classes were invited to write three words each to describe how they experienced the online philosophical dialogues they had participated in. The figure shows the distribution of themes (reprinted from Schaffalitzky, Jensen & Schou-Juul 2021, p. 9).

Although the children's perspectives were diverse and complex (some of them surprising), in general, their experiences matched influential descriptions of the ideals of Philosophy with Children and dialogic teaching (see, e.g. Alexander 2017, p. 28; Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan 1980, pp. 80–128).

In addition to these studies, the programme has also conducted theoretical research involving ethical and conceptual analysis (Schaffalitzky 2022; Schaffalitzky & Schou-Juul 2022) as well as empirical studies of, for instance, observers' assessments of children's experiences, online dialogues (Schou-Juul, Jensen & Schaffalitzky, in press), the importance of relations, and the use of props in Philosophy with Children. We

have also collaborated with language researchers studying the effects of Philosophy with Children on language acquisition compared to other kinds of interventions for supporting language development in young children (Kjærbaek & Schaffalitzky de Muckadell 2019). To summarise, the research themes from the programme constitute a broad-ranging contribution to research on activities in Philosophy with Children.

General remarks and assessments regarding the programme

The programme has provided us with many insights, both in terms of strategic decisions and research. The early shift in focus proved to provide practical and epistemic advantages, and our research differs in both methods and topics from most of the studies in the field.

Take aways regarding changes in strategy

The purpose and organisation of the programme turned out differently from what we had initially planned when we founded the programme in 2017. In retrospect, these shifts cost us time and effort, but it is difficult to see how we could have done things differently given the knowledge we had at the time. In addition, the discovery of the rich opportunities for research in the dialogic learning environment can be seen as an instance of serendipity; we encountered this opportunity even though we were looking for something else. Finally, the present programme holds many advantages in terms of opportunities for students, economic viability and impact.

University students can still participate in the programme, and there are ways in which they can work with Philosophy with Children theoretically and/or in schools as part of their coursework in their philosophy study programme. For instance, introduction to dialogue facilitation is now a mandatory part of the philosophy master's curriculum. The only challenge for the programme is that students tend to complete their degrees and thus are not available for longer projects.

It is worth highlighting the several advantages of rethinking the outreach component and working with teacher development instead of sending people into schools. First, the practice part of the programme is economically feasible without risking conflict with the national law that regulates university activities. Second, it provides an object of research—namely, the stable practice that we needed in order to examine the effects of Philosophy with Children. Finally, and most importantly, this model generates a greater impact in schools because we can reach more children through the existing teachers than we could have reached via university students or by ourselves. Because

teachers are integrated in schools, Philosophy with Children can produce changes in school culture through teacher acceptability, ownership and competences. Involving teachers also helps put Philosophy with Children on the map in professional conversations, collaborations and networks among teachers.

Placing teacher development at the centre of the practical part of the programme also helps ensure the quality of Philosophy with Children. Good dialogue facilitation requires tools, skills and competencies, and assuming the role of a facilitator is not something that all teachers do naturally.

Research contributions

The programme has contributed to research in the field of Philosophy with Children in distinctive ways because our research methods are dominantly empirical, and because we have focused on topics that have received little attention in previous literature.

There are examples of empirical research in Philosophy with Children, especially in the form of effect studies on, for instance, gains related to language acquisition (e.g. Tian & Liao 2016), social skills and, (e.g. Siddiqui, Gorard & See 2017), or cognitive benefits (e.g. Fair et al. 2015; Topping & Trickey 2007). However, the majority of research in Philosophy with Children is comprised of theoretical analyses and discussions of philosophical and pedagogical questions pertaining to the field. In contrast to this, our research has primarily drawn on empirical approaches and collection of qualitative data through surveys, interviews, field notes, and analysis of written material such as guidelines and self-reflections. We have thus contributed with empirical studies that are not studies of the effects of philosophical enquiries but are concerned with experiences and perspectives of the participants.

So, in addition to employing methods that have not been widely used in the field, we have also contributed with research topics that have received relatively little attention. As mentioned earlier, surprisingly little research attention has been paid to experiences of children, given that this is something that is deeply valued in the field. We have also come to believe that studying experiences of observers and facilitators (as well as challenges in the realisation of dialogic ideals in guides and teacher education) is of utmost importance in the field. Facilitation skills are essential to the quality of philosophical inquiries, and we need to substantiate tacit knowledge and personal experiences with systematic research to help us realise these ideals.

Our empirical studies have not only provided new insights on Philosophy with Children but also helped substantiate links to current research on dialogic teaching in educational studies. These links benefit the field of Philosophy with Children because they help highlight its merits to researchers and practitioners outside the field and show how traditions and knowledge from this field can inform dialogic teaching research and practice. Suggesting that this conversation is relevant is not a new idea (see, e.g. Alexander 2020; Reznitskaya & Gregory 2013; Smith 2017), but there is great potential in pursuing this bridge building even more in future research.

Future challenges and opportunities

We expect research funding to remain difficult to secure. Hopefully, the very idea of children doing philosophy will no longer be considered outlandish as the field becomes more established and well-known in Denmark, but there is still the structural problem that research will often need funding for both the practical intervention and the studies. This is not something that most external funders in Denmark are used to; rather, they typically provide funding for either research or for practical interventions and impose strict boundaries between these two endeavours. Despite these obstacles, we will find ways to continue our research, strengthen our national and international collaborations, and strive towards greater integration of Philosophy with Children in academic philosophy and other relevant fields. Perhaps we can also return to our initial research questions about cognitive gains and supporting critical thinking through philosophical enquiry.

We are also starting to expand our scope from primary education and lower secondary education to include upper secondary education, preschool settings and learning communities outside formal education (such as museums and after school activities). Therefore, it will be necessary to look for collaborations with teacher training programmes in university colleges. Just as when we realised that it would be impossible for us to conduct philosophical activities in schools as an outreach programme, as was the case in Seattle, we now see that the changes we would like to foster in schools' teaching practices can only be brought about through ordinary teacher education. However, we currently have the research and practical experience necessary to start having these conversations with people working in teacher education.

Is there something we would do differently today if we were to start the programme anew? It is easy to imagine that we could have acted more efficiently and moved straight to where we are now in terms of focus and organisation, but we probably

needed to go through a process to arrive at the current realisations. Nevertheless, articles such as those in the present issue of the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* would have been a great resource, and more knowledge about other programmes would have been a helpful inspiration in terms of research focus, activities and organisational considerations. It takes quite an effort to build a programme based on the Philosophy with Children practice, but the ability to draw on others' experiences would have made the task less daunting.

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