THE EFFICACY OF THE LIPMANIAN APPROACH TO TEACHING PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract:

How does one best stimulate among children and youth the nurturing of caring, higher order thinking, which Matthew Lipman extols and seeks to realize via his Philosophy for Children program? For Lipman, this is achieved principally through philosophical dialogue in a community of inquiry characterized not so much by participants' shared quest to reach a fixed destination, but by a process guided by "procedural rules, which are largely logical in nature," and which are imbued with "reasonableness, creativity, and care". This, he believes, will best lead to the gaining of a deeper understanding of inquirers' differing views that in turn enables them to accept and even embrace differences of opinion. Yet, I will contend in this paper, the type of process Lipman espouses, in which one allows an argument to be pursued wherever it happens to lead, must also be somewhat eschewed and supplanted with a discernible method on order to achieve the laudable ends Lipman has in mind, namely of enabling youth to "become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, more reasonable individuals". To Lipman, an ipso facto outcome of dialogue of the sort he endorses is that as students become inured to asking each other for and seeking out reasons and opinions, they develop the capacity to listen carefully to each other and build upon and develop one another's ideas; but I will make the case that this skill of careful listening, combined with the development of ideas, needs to be informed by a critical-sceptical method, if the ambitious and laudable democracy-enhancing aims of the Lipmanian Philosophy for Children program are to be optimally achieved.

Key words: method; process; community; thinking; rules

La eficacia de la aproximación lipmaniana para enseñar filosofía para niños

Resumen:

¿Cuál es la mejor manera de estimular en los niños y jóvenes el cultivo del interés por los demás, capacidad de pensamiento de alto nivel el cual Matthew Lipman aclama y busca realizar a través de su programa de filosofía para niños? Para Lipman éste se logra principalmente a través del diálogo filosófico en una comunidad de indagación caracterizada no tanto por la búsqueda que los participantes comparten de llegar a una destinación fija, como por el proceso guiado por las "reglas de procedimiento, que son principalmente lógicas en naturaleza", y las cuales están imbuidas con "raciocinio, creatividad y cuidado". Este proceso, Lipman considera, conducirá de mejor manera a la adquisición de un mayor entendimiento de las diferentes posturas de aquellos que indagan, lo que a su vez les permite aceptar y hasta recibir a brazos abiertos las diferencias de opinión. Sin embargo, sostendré en este artículo, el tipo de proceso que Lipman adopta, en el cual uno permite que cualquier argumento se profundice a donde sea que éste nos conduzca, debe también ser un tanto rechazado y suplantado con un método discernible para así poder lograr los fines meritorios que Lipman tiene en mente, los de posibilitar a la juventud a "volverse individuos más atentos, más reflexivos, más considerados, más razonables". Para Lipman, un resultado ipso facto del tipo de diálogo que él adopta, es que mientras los estudiantes se habitúan a hacerse preguntas los unos a los otros y a buscar razones y opiniones, éstos desarrollan la capacidad de escucharse atentamente y a construir y desarrollar sus ideas recíprocamente; pero yo plantearé que la combinación entre la habilidad de escuchar con atención y el desarrollo de ideas, necesita estar informada por un método crítico-escéptico para que las ambiciosas y laudables metas Lipmanianas del programa de filosofía para niños, que prometen ser reforzadoras de la democracia, sean lo más eficaces posible.

Palabras clave: método; proceso; comunidad; pensamiento; reglas

A eficácia da aproximação lipimianiana ao ensino da Filosofia para Crianças

Resumo:

Qual é a melhor maneira de estimular entre as crianças e os jovens o cultivo pelo cuidado, capacidade de pensamento de alto nível, o qual Matthew Lipman clama e procura realizar através do seu programa de Filosofia para crianças? Para Lipman, isso se consegue principalmente através do diálogo filosófico na comunidade de investigação, caracterizada não principalmente pela exploração compartilhada entre os participantes para chegarem a uma destinação fixa, mas pelo processo guiado pelas "regras de procedimento, as quais são fortemente lógicas por natureza", e nas quais estão contidas "razoabilidade, criatividade e cuidado". Este processo, Lipman considera, vai guiar melhor a aquisição de uma melhor compreensão dos diferentes pontos de vistas daqueles que indagam, o que, por sua vez, lhes permite estar aptos a aceitarem e mesmo adotarem diferentes opiniões. Ainda, argumentarei neste artigo que o tipo de processo sustentado por Lipman, no qual permite-se que um argumento seja seguido para onde quer que ele nos conduza, deve ser em certo modo rejeitado e suplementado com um método discernível para chegar aos admiráveis fins que Lipman tem em mente, especificamente o de possibilitar à juventude de "tornar-se mais cuidadosa, reflexiva, considerada, indivíduos mais razoáveis". Para Lipman, um resultado *ipso facto* do diálogo como aqueles que ele adota é que na medida em que os estudantes se habituam a perguntarem uns para os outros e a procurarem razões e opiniões eles desenvolvem a capacidade de se escutarem cuidadosamente e de construir e desenvolver suas ideias reciprocamente; mas eu remarcarei que essa habilidade da escuta cuidadosa, associada ao desenvolvimento de ideias, precisa ganhar forma com um método crítico-cético, para que as ambiciosas e elogiáveis metas de reforçamento da democracia propostas pelo programa de Filosofia Para Crianças de Lipman sejam alcançadas.

Palavras-chave: método; processo; comunidade; pensamento; regras

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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

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In 1974, Matthew Lipman founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, or IAPC, in Montclair, New Jersey. Under the inspired helm of Lipman, who passed away on December 26, 2010,

> Philosophy for Children became [a] nation-wide movement […] The movement also spread around the world, with local and national organizations in over forty countries, and regional associations in Europe, Latin America and Australasia. Lipman's curriculum has been translated into dozens of languages, and in 1985 the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children was founded in Copenhagen. (Oyler, 2010)

According to the website of the IAPC, it continues to dedicate itself to :

> publishing curriculum materials in Philosophy for Children for use in grades K-12. The curriculum is designed to engage students in exploring the philosophical dimensions of their experience, with particular attention to logical, ethical and aesthetic dimensions (2011)

The IAPC further aims through its curriculum to "reinforce the social aspects of dialogue such as listening to each other and building on each other's ideas". In this way, students can better "maintain a sense of where the discussion is going so that they can 'scaffold' rather than direct it. They share their own sense of wonder about the issues and their willingness to learn from the community" (2009). As Lipman notes in *Philosophy in the Classroom* (1980), which provides a theoretical framework for his comprehensive curricula, the purpose of the Philosophy for Children program is "to help children learn how to think for themselves" (p. 53), via "improvement of reasoning ability; development of creativity; personal and interpersonal growth; and development of ethical understanding" (p. 78).

For Lipman, it is in the arena of formal education, starting in primary school, that emphasis should be placed on cultivating 'higher order thinking;' which to him is the principal means or tool for appraising our world and testing our world view, for coming to a keener understanding of those values that one holds dear, and concomitantly assessing whether they are those that one *should* hold most dear. Lipman asserts in an essay, "Caring as Thinking," in the journal *Inquiry* (1995) that higher order thinking is tantamount to a form of thought that contains "such regulative ideals as truth, meaning and value," and so comprises "critical thinking as the truth-seeking aspect and creative thinking as the meaning-seeking aspect" (1995). The form that is particularly concerned with the values dimension is classified by Lipman as caring thinking, which he defines as "thinking that values value" (1995).

> Thinking in values is always 'intentional' in the phenomenological understanding of that term, in the sense that one who values (or thinks valuationally) is always directing his or her thinking at something. Thus, thinking that values rational beings is respectful thinking. Thinking that values what is beautiful is appreciative thinking. Thinking that values what is virtuous is admiring thinking. If it values what is sentient, it is considerate thinking. If it values what needs to be sustained, it is cherishing thinking. If it values what suffers, it is compassionate thinking. If it values the fate of the world and its inhabitants, it is concerned thinking. In general, we can say that thinking that values value is caring thinking. (1995)

Lipman places three types of thinking under the umbrella or auspices of higher order thinking –critical, creative and caring thinking.

> if we want to know what the components are of 'higher-order' thinking, we would not be mistaken if we replied that they were 'critical thinking, creative thinking and caring thinking,' for these are ways of expressing how we think when we are thinking well. When we are thinking critically, we are applying to our thinking the rules, criteria, standards, reasons and orders that are reasonable and appropriate to it. When we are thinking creatively, we are inventing ways of expressing ourselves and/or the world

> around us; we are trying to go beyond the ways we have thought in the past; we are imagining details of possible worlds and proposing unprecedented innovations. When we are thinking caringly, we attend to what we take to be important, to what we care about, to what demands, requires or needs us to think about it. (1995)

Hence, higher-order thinking, to Lipman, is by no means free or devoid of values. To the contrary, he asserts, "It has ethical and aesthetic aspects from which it is inseparable. To think about what can be done in the world is to have to take into account the environmental impact of so doing (1995). Moreover, Lipman stresses that "caring is not a causal condition of thinking" but rather is "a mode or dimension or aspect of thinking itself. Thus, caring is a kind of thinking when it performs such cognitive operations as scanning for alternatives, discovering or inventing relationships" (1995).

How does one best stimulate the caring, higher order thinking that Lipman so laudably extols? How does one demonstrate 'thinking well?' How does one best scan for alternatives, discover or invent relationships?

For Lipman, this is achieved through dialogue. In *Thinking in Education* (2003), Lipman makes this distinction between conversation and dialogue:

> In conversation, first one person has the ascendancy and then the other. There is reciprocity, but with the understanding that nothing is to move. A conversation seesaws between the protagonists; it contains moves, but the conversation itself does not move. In a dialogue, on the other hand, disequilibrium is enforced in order to compel forward movement. […] Each step forward makes possible a further step forward; in a dialogue, each argument evokes a counterargument that pushes itself beyond the other and pushes the other beyond itself. A conversation is an exchange: of feelings, of thoughts, of information, of understandings. A dialogue is a mutual exploration, an investigation, an inquiry. (2003, pp. 87-88)

In making such compelling distinctions, though, Lipman takes for granted that his audience will understand that he is referring to dialogue that is

philosophical in orientation – that explores such themes as experience, truth, identity, knowledge, meaning, inquiry, values. To him, the strategy or 'move' of argument and counter-argument largely sets it apart from other types of exchanges, and makes it exploratory and investigative in bent. Yet such a dialogical strategy seems more akin to moves in a chess game – while there are untold combinations, they are nonetheless set within fixed parameters that do not invite or even permit evolution – and would not necessarily or *ipso facto* push an argument or evolve it 'beyond the other.' If this is so, then dialogue, as he sets it forth, is not tantamount to "a mutual exploration, an investigation, an inquiry" (p. 88). Even if one grants (as I do) that Lipman believes method is implicit within his dialogical schema, I still would assert that a clear-cut type of method and type of philosophic dialogue is required, if Lipman's ends are best to be achieved. Still, what makes Lipman's tenet of employing argument and counterargument compelling is the concomitant rule that once an inquirer has been presented with an argument that is 'better' than his, he should accept the new argument and adjust his view accordingly, as guidelines in such books of his as *Philosophy in the Classroom* set forth (1980, pp. 83-130), and also those of his protégés and principal collaborators Ann Margaret Sharp and Laurance Splitter in *Teaching for Better Thinking* (Sharp & Splitter, 1995).

Yet such a strategy, and rule within it, can arguably impede Lipman's laudable ends. If one, for example, posits a philosophical perspective on any given question and does one's level best to support that view, inviting others to scrutinize as well as to propose compelling objectives and potential alternatives, one has the possibility of coming to the discovery that *all* views have an element of truth, that all (or elements of all) are in a sense right or correct. One might then seek to blend together a number of 'right' views, or at least come to the understanding that, even upon rigorous scrutiny, it may well be the case that more than one proffered perspective is quite tenable and warrantable, and that

what differs among them is that they present varied social, ethical, affective, aesthetic, humanistic, and political components to the inquiry.

To Lipman, it is the community of inquiry itself that should be valued above any particular method of dialogical exchange, and that should be seen as the principle fomenter of caring thinking; it is the community of inquiry itself that engenders democratic dispositions. He characterizes this community as "the middle term between scientific method and democratic practice" (2003, p. 36). It is almost as if saying that the community of inquiry, as he sets this forth, is not only a guarantor that there will be a dialogical method, but that implicitly it will be methodical in the most fruitful way in terms of mining one's beliefs and values, and will necessarily be democratic in terms of instrumental means and ends.

In *Thinking and Education*, Lipman maintains that "the notion of following an argument where it leads has been a perplexing one ever since Socrates announced it as the guiding maxim of his own philosophical practice" (2003, p. 85). Following philosopher, sociologist and psychologist George Herbert Mead, he contends that this maxim should be the driving force of inquiry (p. 85). But this maxim does not endorse method per se. Rather, the implication is that an argument 'naturally' takes a certain course, and that we should be obliged to facilitate this, and so not impede its progress. Further, following George Herbert Mead, Lipman asserts that what is paramount in a community of inquiry is an individual participant's demonstrated "internalizing the processes of the group. […] They understand the process only when they understand the rules of the game, the roles of each participant, and the meaning that the game has for the group as a whole" (1980, pp. 23-24). However, with no discernible method to undergird the rules and roles in ways that allow new and unexpected meanings to unfold, it is possible for such an inquiry to become little more than a game of logic, dominated by argument and counter-argument. In such an instance, logic itself both becomes the backdrop and assumes center stage: the first idea offered

to a question might necessarily have to be followed with a counter-argument that somehow 'follows' from this first idea, no matter how unpromising this first idea is in terms of offering new vistas for interrogation. Once an argumentative process has started, governed by the rules or game of logic, in which all ensuing comments must follow from and revolve around the initial idea or argument offered, a new perspective that might not 'logically follow' what has been said so far, but that might take the dialogue down a radically different path, might be frowned upon, even though the premises on which it is based, and the consequences that might result from such premises, might lead to lines of interrogation and potentially new epistemological discoveries far richer than those driven (and constrained) by the current line of inquiry. It is difficult to see how a democratic community of philosophical inquiry is best realized if one is coerced to speak when one would rather not, or if one has to follow a logical game of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, rather than introduce perspectives that might abet a methodical philosophical inquiry but not square altogether with the rules of logic.

Additionally, above and beyond the question of whether the historical Socrates ever in fact announced this maxim as a guiding one or otherwise, much less practiced it, it begs other questions: What does it mean, to follow an argument where it leads? What method should be used to ensure that this is the case? Does an argument follow the lead of method, or vice versa? Can some methods impede this process? Lipman claims that "the progress of a community of inquiry is guided by the Gestalt quality of the unique, immediately experienced inquiry situation" (p. 86). He says this quality is "more readily possessed than described, but were it not present and acknowledged, the participants would lack any standard of *relevance* or *irrelevance*" (p. 86).

Yet I would assert that an argument's relevance is evidenced by the fact that it generates a response, that it is being examined, scrutinized, evaluated by a community of inquiry – and that this is so regardless of any Gestalt quality,

discerned, possessed, described, or otherwise. Further, where it leads is driven by method – not by the mere posing of argument and counterargument, which may lead to regressive, or later non-progressive, movement: if any at all. It is driven by the types of questions one asks when presented with normative responses – not just questions in the form of counterarguments, but, among other things, questions that probe the assumptions made in any normative statement, since a question itself often can be seen as one type of normative statement. Such probing questions seek to elicit a deeper and more thoughtful response from an inquirer, and to tease out differences of kind and degree in the value-laden concepts embedded in the statement. Moreover, when the perspectives of others are sought, a method – in counterpoint to one that above all else seeks counterarguments per se – might strive to find not just compelling objections, but alternative views, or alternative ways of interpreting views already proffered, and this method may not be primarily argumentative in bent. Further, rather than asserting that one should follow an argument wherever it leads, one may instead recognize that any given perspective presented may well lead down multiple pathways, and likely does; and that inquirers constantly are making choices from among an 'embarrassment of riches' about where to lead it, and where it should be allowed to lead them, in any particular inquiry. I would argue in fact that a 'progressive' dialogue might often be one in which we strive to look at any given issue from as many perspectives as our reasoning and imaginative skills can conjure, examining within the constraints of time what speaks for and (if anything) against each. On the other hand, if one conducts a discourse with the guiding premise that one must follow an argument where it leads, with the further stipulation that the most effective way to do this is via offering a counter-argument, one may be setting forth rules for discussants that come at the expense of harnessing fully their critical and creative capacities for active, exhibitive, and assertive judgment, given that there have been such restrictively prescribed procedural parameters (tantamount to constraints) on how one must respond.

Lipman's exemplary *Thinking in Education* treats more with the processual and procedural nuances of philosophical dialogue than method per se – more with 'what happens,' and with 'what should happen', if a certain protocol is imposed, rather than what *can* happen, if there is a method that demands the testing of hypothesis based on supporting one's view with what one deems cogent evidence, the entertainment of questioning by others as a means of further developing and supporting one's view and discovering whether it stands up to such scrutiny (at least to a degree) and the concomitant consideration not only of objections but also of alternative perspectives that in some cases one may find equally tenable and choose to addend to one's own.

Lipman is on firmer ground in declaring the overarching need for types of dialogically-spearheaded or -induced forms of care and empathy that we must cultivate in order to make well-considered judgments. Even so, instead of placing, as he does, scientific method, community of inquiry, and democratic practice on a continuum, arguably they would be even more ideal if they were inextricably interlaced, each with no more or less precedence than the other.

Lipman notes that one of his own principal influences, John Dewey, himself believed the scientific method could be applied not just to science but "to art, to logic, to education, and to many other areas of learning" (2003, p. 34). Lipman juxtaposed this "flexible, adaptable method of [community] inquiry" with what he viewed as the "inflexible deference of classical humanism" and its rigid dogmatism. According to Lipman it was rejecting doctrine in favor of experimental inquiry that, in essence, prepared us "to be participants in a society likewise committed to inquiry as the sovereign method of dealing with its problems" (p. 34). Without this experimental bent society was not, in Lipman's (or Dewey's) view, fulfilling the central goal of a democracy. While some, he says, are dismissive of method and process, averring that content must come first; Lipman believes method and process are a type of content, and must precede the discovery of types of solutions to problems, leading us to become

more reasonable, more adept, at making sound judgments on individual and collective scales (p. 48). Given that Lipman is in much of his scholarly work such a strong advocate of method, at least in broad-brushed terms, it is surprising that he does not stress it more in practice in the Philosophy for Children program.

Lipman operated from the premise that philosophical inquiry was best inculcated and nurtured in children, and consequently strove to establish classroom communities of philosophical inquiry. He argues that all inquiry necessarily is "self-critical practice, all of it is exploratory and inquisitive," though some aspects of it "are more experimental than others" (2003, p. 83). For a genuine community of inquiry to form (in a classroom or anywhere else), he argued, it must strive to arrive "at some kind of settlement or judgment," albeit partial or tentative (p. 83). This is because a commitment to working towards an agreed shared outcome is an important precursor to moving an inquiry forward and thus prevents the discussion going around in circles; whether or not the outcome is realized.

Importantly, Lipman notes that the community of inquiry is characterized not so much by its quest to reach a fixed destination, but by process – a process guided by "procedural rules, which are largely logical in nature," and which are imbued with "reasonableness, creativity, and care" (p. 84). I would suggest, however, that this type of process, in which one allows an argument to be pursued wherever it happens to lead, must also have a method, not just rules; no matter how much logic might be its guide. A method might have prescriptive rules, but rules are not necessarily developed methodically, and often are totally arbitrary. A procedural rule in a dialogue may be one with a dictate, such as 'speak only when spoken to,' or 'do not interrupt when someone else is talking,' and it may even be deemed to help see to it that a dialogue proceeds methodically. Or such a rule may have been developed peremptorily, just because whoever was in charge of rule-making could make whatever rules he

wished, and could not have cared less if it impeded or facilitated the flow of a dialogue.

Education for Citizenship

Lipman asserts that the current educational system in the United States "does not encourage children to reflect or to think thoroughly and systematically about matters of importance to them," and so it essentially "fails to prepare them to satisfy one criterion that must be satisfied if one is to be not merely a citizen of society, but a good citizen of democracy" (p.113). I am in full agreement with Lipman's views on this, and with his philosophical characterization of the ideal ends of inquiry in terms of fomenting democratic citizenship. I further agree that thinking and action are not to be separated; it is not just that they are entwined; rather, thinking is a form of action. Additionally, I concur still more that helping youth "become more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, more reasonable individuals" (1980, p. 15) as the central aim of a community of inquiry, as he puts it in *Philosophy in the Classroom* (1980), is itself a direct contribution to creating an engaged citizenry, just as or more than taking on any specific civic project. Yet out of that agreement I may be more compelled than ever to ask: how can one develop a method that enables such characterizations, and the ideals and ends they espouse, more fully to be realized?

To Lipman, an ipso facto outcome of dialogue is that students become inured to asking each other for and seeking out reasons and opinions; they develop the capacity to listen carefully to each other and build upon and develop one another's ideas. Arguably, however, this skill of careful listening combined with the development of ideas needs to be informed by a critical-skeptical method that also demonstrates that some ideas are not as tenable as others, and some may not prove worthy of being built on, whereas others richly deserve further and deeper scrutiny.

Lipman holds that the best exchanges are those in which the facilitator plays a minimal if any role at all, in which students regularly offer their viewpoints, and in which a question is asked (in the case of the program he has developed, by the students rather than the teacher-leaders) that is prompted from reading a text. He also in large part gauges the success of an exchange by whether all students take part, and makes it a requisite rule that they participate. Indeed, Lipman asserts in *Philosophy in the Classroom* (1980), that to the extent that children "fail to put forth an effort to follow the dialogue and make a contribution that seems relevant and meaningful, they are not participants" (p. 23) Yet even if all children and youth were forced to make a spoken contribution, it is notoriously difficult to determine definitely whether their contribution is relevant and meaningful. I have witnessed dialogues between teachers and students in which students' perspectives at times are so imaginatively constructed or formulated, in which the way they utilize language is so different than how an adult would go construct or frame a view, that their offerings are deemed irrelevant or counterproductive, when precisely the opposite is the case. In effect in such instances, the teacher rather than the student has blocked rather than facilitated the pursuit of a rich philosophical train of thought. One wonders whether Lipman would consider the teacher or other adult facilitator a 'participant' in such an instance.

Yet one of Lipman's principal influences, the Columbia University philosopher Justus Buchler, argues that while pervasive participation may be one "index of vitality," an even more important one is the quality of what is said, rather than the quantity (1993, p. 527). Some of the most meaningful exchanges, in his view, might be ones in which far from everyone expresses a thought out loud (p. 527).

> so far as the *individual* student is concerned, not the group, 'participation' in the discussion does not necessarily take the form of oral activity. Every class exhibits wide differences in the emotional makeup of its members, and

> the shy, reticent, or modest student may profit greatly from discussion by others […] The student who participates through reflective activity alone is not shirking the collaborative obligation of the group as the chronic absentee is. Such students are, as it were, creative auditors in the community of query. The problem of self-confidence is one that they must solve for themselves and the teacher can help by lifting from them the tension that comes with external pressure. The 'responsibilities of communal participation' must not, therefore, be construed as a yoke; they can be fulfilled in more than one way. (1993, p. 528)

In my estimation, Buchler's insights here can be extrapolated and applied effectively to virtually any type of community of philosophical inquiry; whether one with participants convening in an institutional setting like a classroom, or one in a coffeehouse.

What is most important, to Buchler, is that conditions are created in which a genuine query can occur; this to him designates "probing in the widest possible sense, that is, probing which can be directed toward making or acting no less than toward stating" (p. 525). To be sure, the 'product' of such probing discourse need not be definitive, and hence "need not take the form of an assertive conclusion. It may be an enumeration of possible views, or a fuller definition of a problem, or a growth of appreciative awareness. It may be more of an envisioning or of an exhibiting than of an affirming" (p. 529). Each exchange will likely and necessarily take a different shape and in turn shape a different 'product.' This, to Buchler, requires dialogical or "discussion method" (p. 530). Further, Buchler suggests that those facilitating such discourse "have to be not only positive contributors but exemplars" of the methodological inquiry taking place (p. 53), and strive both to "implant the spirit and experience" of the discourse among all those taking part, so that it become ever more deeply ingrained (p. 525).

Buchler holds that a dialogue is itself a type of product regardless of whether a definitive conclusion or consensus is reached. As he puts it in an essay on "What is discussion?"

> Where we can speak of a conclusion at all, it may be developed only after many hours, and then with qualifications befitting the circumstances. But regardless of this, a product is inevitably established in any given hour of discussion. For the product need not take the form of an assertive conclusion. It may be an enumeration of possible views, or a fuller definition of a problem, or a growth of appreciative awareness. It may be more of an exhibiting than an affirming… (1993, p. 529).

By this standpoint, no dialogue, no inquiry or investigation, has an absolute beginning, much less a definitive endpoint or terminus.

Sarah Davey, in an essay in *Analytic Teaching* entitled "Consensus, Caring and Community: An Inquiry into Dialogue," asserts that in a Lipmanian "community of inquiry it is not always important to aim for consensus. Proponents of philosophy for children have invariably argued that conflict of opinion drives the community of inquiry, or even that conflict should be celebrated as a means to understanding" (2004, p. 19). Davey further finds that, in the case of Lipman's program, the "community of inquiry is comprised of co-inquirers, which is a form of partnership. Unlike the friends looking outward, these partners-in-dialogue face each other in much the same way as the lovers do, but not necessarily because they are fond of each other. Rather, they care for the relationship they share together, which is to follow the inquiry where it leads and collaboratively engage in self-correction" (p. 44-45). Though Lipman's community of inquirers appear to be engaged in searches for truth, and though his program is replete with procedural rules, the overall premise of Lipman's program is that gaining a deeper understanding of participants' differing views enables them to accept and even embrace differences of opinion.

There are promising implications for democracy with implementation of Lipman's Philosophy for Children program, according to Davey: if all members of a community of inquiry are genuinely heard, that in and of itself may prove to be the greatest contribution of all to democracy, particularly if those members have a chance further to develop their views, and to consider those of others. Such an exchange, though, ideally should be part of an overarching methodical yet organic process that holds promise of transforming one's outlook, or at least of casting one's outlook in a different light. But the rules-based protocol for Philosophy for Children does not facilitate this. For instance, the rule that all children should share a commitment to the inquiry can in fact turn out to be overly prescriptive. Many participants may not be able to discern the level of commitment they might want to make until the dialogue has progressed somewhat. It seems to me that they should be allowed to suspend or reserve judgment on precisely what their commitment should be. Quite often, in my experience, those who are the most aloof at the outset of a dialogue are often, by the end, the most 'committed,' the most immersed. Something will have been said along the way that jars a response from them, that brings them to immerse themselves in it and ultimately make a commitment to the inquiry to an extent that may far exceed those who seemed 'most committed' as it first got underway. Commitments, at the very least, can wax and wane through the course of a dialogue. The fact that all those on hand remain in the room from beginning to end represents a commitment of sorts; moreover, even if someone does not make a single statement, they may be listening intently to all that is said, and that may well be tantamount to quite a high level of commitment.

Lipman would seem to hold that rules themselves are tantamount to driving deliberative method, but this confuses and confutes such dialogical pre-conditions as tolerance, openness, commitment to the inquiry with nuts-and-bolts methodological precepts. Both extremes, when devoid of sound (much less explicit) methodological means for conducting the dialogue itself, and when the

rules are not explicitly geared towards ensuring that the methodological undertaking flourishes optimally, may inhibit this transformative element from fully manifesting itself.

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