Dissonance: Disagreement and Critical Thinking in P4/wC[1]

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ABSTRACT

I begin with two beliefs about the value of P4/wC that are widely held in P4/wC practice: a) that P4/wC is good because there are no right and wrong answers and b) that P4/wC is good because it develops critical thinking/reasoning skills. I identify a problem that follows from the holding of these two beliefs: that, under one construal, if there are no right and wrong answers then there can be no possibility of criteria necessary for the development of proper, formal critical thinking, which is an evaluative and eliminative process. I explain how a working 'weak' definition of 'critical thinking' is insufficient and that a 'stronger' definition is needed. I provide such an understanding by appealing to a distinction between 'internal' and 'external' critique. My claim is that disagreement is not sufficient for critical thinking to be taking place in critical philosophy sessions, as this may be no more than the sharing of opinions or expressions of disapproval. What is needed is attention to the internal structure of arguments that have been offered during philosophical discussions.

KEYWORDS

P4/wC, critical thinking, disagreement, no right and wrong answers.

RESUMEN

Comienzo con dos creencias sobre el valor de Fp/c/N que se mantienen ampliamente en la práctica Fp/cN: a) que Fp/cN es buena porque no hay respuestas correctas e incorrectas y b) que Fp/cN es buena porque se desarrolla el pensamiento crítico y las habilidades de

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[1] When I use the term 'P4/wC' I am using it widely to refer to all practices of doing philosophy with children or in schools.

razonamiento. Identifico un problema que surge de compartir ambas creencias: que, por un lado, si no hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas, entonces no cabe posibilidad alguna de que haya criterios necesarios para el desarrollo de un pensamiento crítico propio y formal, que es un proceso evaluativo y eliminativo. Explico cómo una definición "débil" de "pensamiento crítico" es insuficiente y que se necesita una definición "más fuerte". Lo explico apelando a una distinción entre crítica "interna" y "externa". Mi afirmación es que el desacuerdo no es suficiente para que el pensamiento crítico tenga lugar en las sesiones de filosofía crítica, ya que esto puede no ser más que el intercambio de opiniones o expresiones de desaprobación. Lo que se necesita es prestar atención a la estructura interna de los argumentos que se han ofrecido durante las discusiones filosóficas.

PALABRAS CLAVE
Fp/cN, pensamiento crítico, desacuerdo, respuestas incorrectas y erróneas.

INTRODUCTION

I will begin this paper with two claims[2]:
1) It is widely held that P4/wC is good for developing critical thinking/reasoning skills.
2) In addition to 1, it is widely held that P4/wC is good because 'in philosophy there are no right and wrong answers'.

If one holds to both claims, this can lead to an important problem with regard to how critical thinking is understood in P4/wC. One possible tension is that if there are no right and wrong answers in P4/wC (in the sense that 'right' and 'wrong' have no place in philosophical discussions because, unlike other subjects, assertions made are only opinions) then there can be no criteria for critical thinking. This is a problem, given that critical thinking entails evaluation (including evaluation of truth claims, logical consistency and entitlement to draw certain inferences) for which criteria is needed.

Claim 2 is vague, deliberately so. This and other phrases such as 'No one can be wrong in philosophy' or 'You can't be wrong in philosophy' are often said by students taking part, teachers and some P4C practitioners. It is not clear exactly what is meant by these phrases. When one of these phrases is used, it could be that the speaker intends to express one, or a combination, of the following propositions:
1) It is impossible to establish any truth in a philosophical/P4C enquiry. (Metaphysical)
2) The objects of investigation have no final/settled answers. (Epistemological)
3) All opinions shared are of equal value. (Axiological)
4) There is only 'one's own truth' in philosophy – all contributions are expressions of opinion only. (Relativist/Subjectivist)

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[2] In order to support these claims I will direct the reader to page 1 of a Google search on 'p4c no right and wrong answers':
https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=p4c+no+right+and+wrong+answers&oq=p4c+no+right+and+wrong+answers&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i59.13883j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
If one clicks through each of the links one will see either one or both of these beliefs being expressed (or words approximating to these two beliefs) in most if not all of the links (Jason Buckley's piece – the first link – identifies a similar problem to the one I am identifying in this piece). I am not claiming that these properly represent the theory behind P4/wC practice(s), merely that these are – correctly or incorrectly – *widely held* beliefs about P4/wC.

However, the important thing for the purposes of this paper is not so much what is *meant* by these kinds of phrases (and sometimes it might only be used to encourage students to speak drawing upon meaning 3 above) but how they *could* be heard by the students. It is precisely because the phrases are vague that the onus is on the students to interpret them, probably as one of the above four meanings or as a confused combination of more than one of them. I think that in most cases, what is meant with these phrases is not something precise, but rather something confused. By contrast, I would like to suggest that there is, at least, one way that a philosophical enquiry may be understood to contain 'right' and 'wrong' answers: in a logical way. It may be established that what one says either a) leads to a contradiction, or b) does not lead to a contradiction or c) there may be good grounds for thinking that an inference drawn is or is not justifiable (e.g. 'Just because… doesn't mean that…').

Disagreement

The language of disagreement is prevalent in P4/wC practice in classrooms. Many children, whether or not they have been instructed or advised to do so, and quite understandably, will often resort to the following default sentence structure: 'I agree/disagree with… because…'[3] Some practitioners and teachers may feel satisfied that this is sufficient that their class is engaged in *critical thinking*, however, being critical is more than saying 'I disagree… because…'. One reason for this misconception is that teachers are not, as part of their teacher-training[4], taught any formal critical thinking, so many teachers are working with a weak definition of 'critical' such as 'disagreeing with someone else'. But there are many ways to disagree and not all of them are 'critical' in the formal sense. Take this example:

A: 'I think that we should always help each other when we can.'
B: 'I disagree, I don't think we should.'

The second speaker (B) is expressing disagreement with the first (A), but they are not yet employing any critical thinking. One may suggest that this is an example of the *first step* for the development of critical thinking because the student is assertive enough to verbalise aloud his/her disagreement and that this takes courage. I would agree that this is indeed a first step towards critical thinking, but I would also say that there is still missing an important structural dimension to this example for us to consider it to be critical thinking proper. Intellectual courage may well be considered an important part (though not quite necessary, for instance, if the agent experiences no fear or anxiety in speaking out) of critical thinking, but it is not sufficient for the reasons I will go on to give. One might think that B's response is not critical because there is no *reason* given. This might suggest that the first definition I claimed teachers work to is something of a straw man; it is reasonable to assume that teachers might define 'critical' as 'disagreeing with someone *and providing a reason*'. So, let's suppose a reason *is* given:

B2: 'I disagree, I don't think we should, because it's up to people to help themselves.'

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[3] You may think that I have a practice like CoPI in my sights, but, in fact, a CoPI practitioner is trained to have an eye on the logic of the discussion. A well-trained CoPI facilitator will facilitate the inquiry so that the right kind of disagreement (*dissonant* and not simply *diverse* – see below) is engaged with by the participants.

[4] Very often they are also not taught any formal critical thinking on P4/wC training courses either. This is often because of limited time on such courses and that to train teachers in critical thinking properly requires a good deal of time and practice.

Though a reason has been given, there is still no formal critical thinking going on. This disagreement has done nothing other than express a *difference of opinion*. B2's 'because' is functioning here to answer the *why of motivation* and not the *why of justification*.

A word to the whys:

There are at least four functions of 'why?'/'because':

> *Causal* – where an explanation is sought or given
>
> *Purpose* – where the overall aim or goal is asked for or given.
>
> *Motivation* – where someone asks for a psychological explanation, or where one is given, for why they said what they said. E.g. 'Why did you disagree?' 'I disagreed because he and I always disagree'

If the aim of a P4/wC session is no more than to share opinions then this would be sufficient, but it would not be meeting the second claim, that of developing critical thinking/reasoning skills.

So, as I have shown, one may disagree without engaging critically, and conversely, two people may agree and engage with each other critically. For instance, they may agree that 'immigration needs to be controlled' but not offer the same reasons, and they may even think that the other's argument offered in support of the claim is flawed; they may agree but not for the same reasons.

What's more, sometimes the words 'agree'/'disagree' are used where it can be misleading to do so. For instance:

A: 'I think Marmite is delicious!'

B: 'I disagree: I think it's disgusting!'

There is a sense in which one may offer reasons for why one thinks Marmite is disgusting (e.g. 'It's gloopy' or 'It's too salty'). And though reasons in themselves do not constitute critical thinking (see above), they do provide an opportunity for critical thinking – or *invite* it. So, it depends on what it is that is intended to be expressed with the statement, 'I disagree: I think it's disgusting.' If I were to say it, I can't disagree with you *that* you like the taste of Marmite: if you do, you *do*. And if I *am* able to disagree that you *genuinely* like the taste of Marmite, such as, that you are saying so to impress someone, then I will not be able to do so on the basis that *I* find it disgusting. So, in cases like this, disagreement can be misleading.

Internal and external critique

I would like to draw a distinction between what is commonly called *internal* and *external critique*[5]. Internal critique is critique of an argument's validity (structure) and external critique is to do with whether or not one approves of/assents to the conclusion or whether one thinks that the conclusion is true or false. According to this analysis, one can agree with the conclusion of a poor argument (e.g. 'The answer to the question 'What is 2 +

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[5] I first encountered this distinction in an unpublished talk/paper given by Oscar Brenifier on a similar theme at a SOPHIA network meeting in which he credited the distinction to Hegel. When I asked him if I could cite him he said, characteristically, 'Don't' worry about citing me, I never invented anything.' I have been unable to find a specific reference directly sourcing the idea to Hegel but the distinction does seem to be in common usage.

2?' is 4, because 4 is my lucky number' – the conclusion is, '2 + 2 = 4') and one can disagree with the conclusion of a good (valid) argument (e.g. 'All sausages are vegetarians, all vegetarians have been to the moon, so all sausages have been to the moon' – the conclusion is: 'all sausages have been to the moon').

So, there are three relevant ways that *disagreement* may function in the context of discussion with implications for critical thinking:

1) It may be an expression used to indicate that the speaker is to share a *new* or *different opinion*.
2) It may signal that someone is about to provide an *external critique*. (Implicit critical thinking)
3) It may signal that someone is about to examine the structure and content of what has been said by the speaker, with whom they disagree, in other words make an *internal critique*. (Explicit critical thinking)

In the case of 1, which is a common way that 'I disagree…' is used in classrooms of young children, I would contend that no critical thinking is taking place. Only when one critiques *what has been said* and/or when one critiques *the structure in which what has been said has been said,* implicitly or explicitly, is critical thinking taking place. And in the case of 2, critical thinking will not necessarily follow or be present following the disagreement, this will need to be facilitated either by the group itself or by a facilitator.

A word about the structure of statements

'X is F' is a predicative statement; it attempts to say something that is true of X. This kind of statement has a truth-value: either it is true, or it is false. It implies that if someone says, 'Marmite is disgusting' then they are making a truth-claim in virtue of the structure of the claim X is F. And truth-claims allow for genuine disagreement: 'either 'X is F' is true or it is false, so let's examine the reasons for thinking whether 'X is F' is true or false in order to establish what belief we should hold about it'. The problem occurs when the expression 'X is F' is used to express a non-predicative proposition, such as 'I prefer X'. Children – and many adults too – do not always have a firm grasp of how predicative statements function and will often use predicative forms of sentence to express non-predicative thoughts or opinions. So, in cases where someone wishes to express the proposition, 'X has a preferential attitude towards F' ('I prefer Marmite because…') but uses the form 'X is F' ('Marmite is disgusting because…') it may appear that there is an implied truth-value to the claim when actually, according to the intention behind the expression anyway, there is none. This is not trivial because it is this kind of structure that incites passionate responses in others (think of 'God does not exist' – putting to one side now whether or not existence is a predicate). It cannot be true that 'Marmite is disgusting' but it can be true that 'I like Marmite', or that 'I think Marmite is disgusting' or that 'it is my opinion that Marmite is disgusting' (the *fact*, in these cases, is my *attitude* towards Marmite, not that Marmite *is* disgusting). My claim is that, often in philosophy with children discussions, something like this is happening. This leads teachers, facilitators and observers to conclude that genuine disagreement is occurring or even that genuine critical thinking is taking place when it may not be.

Here's an example: during a discussion about what the children think the picture book *The Rainbow Fish*[6] is about, one 7-year-old child says, 'I think it's about friendship', and then another says, 'I disagree, I think it's about happiness, because the rainbow fish wasn't

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[6] The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister (North South Books 2007)

happy until he shared.' The use of the word 'disagree' and the presence of a reason, may for some, be enough to suggest that these children are critically engaging with each other. But it can, of course, be both: the story may well be about friendship *and* happiness with no conflict between these two beliefs. So, as I have already demonstrated, one may disagree and provide a reason but not be engaging critically.

Controversy, diversity and dissonance

I have previously argued that (dialectical/critical) philosophy begins with controversy. In summary: When an individual, or a group, recognize that there are good reasons for thinking *X and not-X* then there is a genuine controversy. The sensitivity to this controversy motivates the individual or group towards an investigation through reflection, reasoning and questioning together around the perceived problem. I have also previously argued that, though (dialectical/critical) philosophy *focuses* on reflective positions, it *begins* with intuitions (pre-reflective positions either held by the individual or that are widely-held) about the object of inquiry, and that a genuine philosophical controversy is characterized by the presence of conflicting intuitions, where it seems right to hold on to both conflicting intuitions. *It is the co-presence of plausibility and conflict that leads to many dialectical philosophical problems*[7]. For example, 'Time is constant because it ticks around a clock at a constant speed' / 'Time is not constant because when I am having fun it goes quickly but if I'm bored it takes ages'. The problem consists in the following implied contradiction, *that time is and is not constant* (which, by the way, progress can be made with regards to, usually, in these kinds of examples, by drawing distinctions between different notions of 'time' such as (a) 'time-measuring devices' and (b) 'the phenomenon that a time-measuring device is designed to help us track').

If progress can be shown to be possible in a philosophical discussion, this shows us another way that we can understand a philosophy discussion to have 'right' and 'wrong' answers: where we are able to provide good answers to the question through thinking tools such as distinction-drawing. I have also previously recommended that the path to a group of children recognizing a problem *as a problem* – a necessary starting point for doing philosophy – begins with *diversity*: invite as many ideas as possible and intuitive conflicts are more likely to occur. However, I would now like to suggest that diversity is not sufficient for genuine critical thinking in philosophy, there also needs to be *dissonance*. Diversity means 'variety', and a variety of ideas will not necessarily entail (even if it makes more likely) the *right kind* of ideas for philosophical conversation (think of *The Rainbow Fish* example above: each child may have a different word to describe what the story is about none of which may conflict with the other words). The right kind of ideas comes from *dissonance*. by 'dissonance' *I* mean that the ideas in some way *compete* with each other – where they do not sit comfortably with each other. So, if idea A is thought to be right then idea B (held either by another or the same person) must be wrong, or at least in need of revision or refinement, and vice versa. What this means is that when conducting a philosophical conversation with children or adults, among the requirements for it to be a genuine critical philosophical conversation are that the ideas present should be *dissonant* and not merely *diverse* and that disagreements should be more than the sharing of differing opinions; they need to be *critical disagreements*. A facilitator seeking only diversity will ask, 'So, is there anybody who has something different to say to what's been said before?' or merely allow

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[7] Thank you to Steven Campbell-Harris for this sentence formulation.

another speaker. Whereas the facilitator seeking dissonance will ask *dialectical*[8] questions such as, 'So, we've heard from a few people who think X (e.g. 'It is the same ship [once the parts have been gradually replaced].' Is there anybody who thinks not-X [e.g. 'It's not the same ship…']?' or 'Is there anybody who thinks *both* [e.g. '*In a way* it is the same ship and *in a way* it isn't the same ship…']?' or they may ask, 'What would someone say if they disagreed with that? And what reasons might they give?' or 'Is there anything wrong with this? Let's write it up and have a closer look.' etc.

I would like to emphasise that this is not a reductive thesis: Of course, both approaches, seeking diversity and dissonance (and others), are to be welcomed in a philosophy session, but my claim is that the facilitator's questions should not be *limited* only to the first kind: the facilitator of a philosophy session is not looking only for differences of opinion or even disagreement but the *right kind of differences of opinion and disagreement*.

Back to Marmite

So, imagine someone says, 'Marmite is delicious'. Let's consider some alternative responses to this:

Response A: I disagree; you like Marmite: you have it every morning for breakfast.

Response B: I disagree, it's lovely!

Response C: I disagree: you can only say whether it's delicious *to you*. It might be disgusting *to me*.

Response D: (an exchange)

Felicia: You can't say 'Marmite is delicious', you have to say: 'I like Marmite'.
Leo: Yes, I can: 'Marmite is delicious'. See: I just said it!
F: That's not what I meant. I meant: you can't say 'Marmite is delicious' because it's not delicious to *everybody*. If, what you said: 'Marmite is delicious', then it has to be delicious to *everybody*.
L: No, because some people might not like it.
F: But then it wouldn't be true – what you said – that 'Marmite is delicious', it would only be true that *some* people like it and *some* people don't.
L: What?! I don't get that!
F: Look: 'Marmite is delicious' is the same as… I don't know… 'Henry is tall'. Henry is tall *for everyone*!
L: Not for Luke in 6B.
F: That wasn't a good example. Erm… it's the same as… er… '*That bottle is made of glass*'.
L: But Marmite isn't made of glass!
F: You don't understand…

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[8] 'Dialectic' is used here to mean the systematic investigation and evaluation of opinions by the use of conversation, questioning and replies. The use of formal critical thinking ensures that the investigation is *systematic*.

Response A is complex, because the speaker doesn't disagree with the statement, 'Marmite is delicious', they dispute the *sincerity of the claim*. This is a legitimate objection about the psychology of the claimant, but not internal to the claim (see distinctions in box: 'A word to the whys' above).

Response B is not a genuine disagreement in the sense that I have identified as significant in this paper. The word 'disagree' can, of course, be used meaningfully in this sentence, loosely and colloquially, but the disagreement simply expresses a difference of preference, so it represents *diversity* but not *dissonance*: they are not competing opinions with inherent tensions; that is to say: both the statements may be simultaneously true whilst resulting in no conflict. So, here, though the word 'disagree' has been used, it is not the sort of disagreement that would constitute or lead to critical thinking.

Responses C and D are more interesting from a critical thinking point of view. C is a counter-argument that challenges what the first speaker said without examining the structure of the argument; the problems with the claim are left implicit. This is a very common form of critical thinking in classrooms and there is a clear role for a facilitator here in helping the class unpack what has been left only implicit. D is an example of explicit critical engagement from Felicia that challenges what follows from the claims made by Leo (where it is assumed that Leo said the original statement 'Marmite is delicious'). This shows a greater degree of sensitivity to *internal critique*. At one point, Leo critically engages, too, by providing a counter-example to her example of 'Henry is tall'. *Counter-example* is a common way that children critically engage with each other, this move being very intuitive to children. The depth of critical engagement is more sophisticated from Felicia because of her sensitivity to the structure of Leo's reasoning. Notice also, that Leo engages critically with Felicia, successfully providing a counter-example, however, he does not understand her overall position. This is very common in classrooms of children doing philosophy: they can engage with the philosophical conversation piecemeal but often will not have a synoptic view of the discussion as a whole. Being able to take a synoptic view of the conversation is where a facilitator has a clear role in a philosophical discussion, and, I would argue, it is something the facilitator *should* be able to attain in order to properly facilitate a philosophical conversation. This implies that not all teachers or philosophers would necessarily be good philosophy facilitators; the best facilitators will be those that, in addition to other qualities, are good at taking a synoptic view of the conversation as a whole.

Below is a plausible series of contributions that help me delineate progress towards proper critical thinking. First of all, here are two different opinions (without reasons) around the question 'Should people help each other?':
A: 'I think people should always help each other.'
B: 'I think that people don't have to help each other.'

However, even where a reason is provided or disagreement is expressed it does not mean that critical thinking is necessarily taking place:
A2: 'I think people should always help each other because it's nice to help each other.'
B2: 'I disagree. I don't think people have to help each other because they can do what they want.'

The last example is no more than the sharing of different opinions and this short exchange shows how *the presence of reasons* is not sufficient for critical thinking to be taking place. For it to be *critical* the disagreement has to be critical analysis of *what was claimed* with consideration of *the structure of that claim*. What's more, the disagreement has to be *relevantly linked* to the previous claim.

A3: 'I think people should always help each other because it's nice to help each other.'
B3: 'Just because it's *nice* to help each other doesn't mean that we *should always* help each other'.

Now, this (B3's response) is properly and relevantly connected and we can express the critical aspect in terms of a specific critical thinking skill: in this case *the identification of a false inference*: a false inference is where X does not follow from Y, but person F has assumed that it does. Although, I think, we can say this is the kind of exchange that shows a sensitivity for those aspects of discourse (relevance and structure) that can be described as 'critical', B3 has still not provided a *reason* for why we should see this as a false inference, they've merely *asserted* that it is one. Either the students or the facilitator should question further in order to elicit a reason for this conversation to be an example of critical thinking: E.g. 'And why do you think that is?'.

The student/group, depending on their age and ability, may or may not be able to answer this question; they may, for example, simply reiterate: 'Coz you don't have to just because it's nice' Or, they may go on to say something like, 'Sometimes it's *nice* to help but it's *wrong*; sometimes we need to be 'cruel to be kind'.' And they may go on to provide an example (in this case a counter-example), especially if another student or a good teacher/facilitator asks them to. However, whatever happens, already we have reached a point where we can see that the aim of the session and of the teacher/facilitator is to ensure that the discussion *moves in a genuinely critical direction* and that proper opportunities for critical thinking have been made open and apparent. I think, whether or not this particular exchange goes further, this is sufficient for us to be able to claim that critical thinking is taking place. If it were a P4/wC (or similar) session and the student merely reiterated, then the exchange would probably stop at this point, but if, for example, it were a critical thinking A level course, then the teacher may expect more, saying something like, 'You need to try to *explain why* it doesn't follow, or you need to provide a clear counter-example, such as an example of a situation where it might be nice to help someone but where it's not the right thing to do.' One of the challenges of developing critical thinking skills in children is not just that the facilitator is aware of what's needed from a critical thinking point of view, but that this sensitivity is in some way *transferred to the students* so that they can, autonomously, begin to see what is needed to be done to progress the discussion in a genuinely critical way.

From the examples provided above we can see how we might be able to identify and suggest some practical facilitation strategies for helping a group become more 'critical'. Facilitation responses such as, 'What is it about what X said that you agree/disagree with?' or 'Which bit of what X said do you agree/disagree with?' or 'When you said 'Just because… it doesn't mean that… can you explain why it doesn't mean that…?' or 'Let's write that up: 'Everything is a thing so that means that holes are a thing'. What do the rest of you think about this?' These kinds of facilitation responses help to bring attention to the arguments (premises and conclusions), the structure of statements and the relationships (logical and otherwise) of statements and claims to one another, attention to which is essential for a genuinely critical appraisal of not just *what* is being said but *how* what is being said is being said (formally: the validity of any argument). If the children have been explicitly taught critical skills, such as counter-examples, distinction-drawing and inference-making, then questions such as these may be asked to facilitate the students' own critical analysis: 'Are there any counter-examples/distinctions to be drawn?', 'Did anyone hear any inferences being made?' or 'Did anyone hear any false inferences?' and so on.

Conclusion

It should now be clear the extent to which disagreement may be identified or associated with critical thinking and the extent to which it may not. My concern is that the *discourse of disagreement* is equated, wholesale, with genuine critical engagement. Finer distinctions, however, between *kinds* of disagreement need to be drawn, because, as we have seen, participants in a discussion may very well say that they 'agree' or 'disagree' with their peers without (a) genuinely disagreeing and (b) without any genuine critical engagement necessarily taking place.

One implication of this paper is that for genuine critical philosophy to be taking place during a P4/wC session the facilitators need to have a good grasp of formal critical thinking to be able to successfully help it towards a more critical, evaluative goal. If P4/wC is a programme aimed at developing reasoning skills in children (an aim I claim is held by many practitioners), and if teachers should be trained to an expert level in that which they teach/facilitate, then it would follow that teachers and facilitators of P4/wC should be trained in both formal and informal logic, the latter being concerned with argumentation, something the children will use and engage in whether or not they have been explicitly taught to do so. I should point out, however, that my claim is not that philosophy is reducible to critical thinking, only that it is a necessary, or at least important, part of philosophising, and *certainly* to those practitioners that accept the assumption that philosophy helps to develop critical thinking skills. In many cases, the level of understanding possessed, of what critical thinking is and what it entails, will very often be insufficient for those facilitating P4/wC to be able to properly meet the aim many of them hold dear: namely, to develop critical thinking/reasoning skills in their students.