

What Challenges and Opportunities pertain to introducing Philosophy with Children in Schools to foster migrant Children and Youth's wellbeing?

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Abstract

Education is a vital factor in the well-being of migrant children (Newbigging & Thomas, 2011). However, when taking on a child-centred perspective (Fattore, Mason, & Watson, 2016), we see that migrant children and youth are likely to face adults at school who, in the terminology of Karin Murriss, have an epistemic challenge of hearing their voice (Murriss, 2013), because monologic/IRE forms of teaching maintain to dominate primary education, despite decades of criticism (Alexander, 2018; Dysthe, 1997; Lyle, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2017). Research indicates that dialogic teaching can enhance the epistemic status and authority of migrant children (Baraldi, 2015). It has further been argued that Philosophy with Children/Philosophy for Children (PwC/P4C), being a particular form of dialogic teaching (Reznitskaya, 2013), can have a positive impact on the school life of minority/minoritized children and youth, including migrant children and youth, as research indicates that PwC/P4C can be a means of social and democratic change, inclusion, and improvement of language skills and emotion knowledge (Giménez-Dasí, Quintanilla, Ojeda, & Lucas-Molina, 2017; Green, 2009; Lin & Sequeira, 2017; Ndofirepi & Cross, 2015).

In this paper, I will argue that the case is strong for introducing PwC teaching practice in schools for the sake of fostering the wellbeing of migrant children and youth. However, it is important to bear in mind several potential challenges of introducing PwC in schools, which, when left unresolved, might reduce or negate the positive impact of PwC teaching. In particular, these challenges pertain to 1) the difficulties of facilitating a dialogue, 2) the lack of competences and resources in teachers and school. The discussion is based on a literature review and fieldwork in Danish schools on PwC teaching practice and minority students, which I have carried out within the framework of the Philosophy in Schools project at the University of Southern Denmark.

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