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# Evaluation of Philosophy for Children (P4C) Practices in Preschool Education According to Teachers' and Academics' Opinions[1]

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**Abstract**

The aim of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) education program, designed to structure preschool curricula on a philosophical basis, is to foster students' attentive, critical, creative, and higher-order thinking skills through collaboration. This research was carried out to evaluate the implementation of Philosophy for Children (P4C) in preschool education through the perspectives of teachers and academicians, employing a case study design as part of qualitative research methods. The participants of the study were selected with the purposive sampling method, who were officially registered for the P4C application and content development training for children organized at Bursa Uludağ University in the fall semester of 2022-2023 and who received training in different periods, and teachers from different regions of Turkey and academicians who were knowledgeable about the application. The research was conducted with 26 teachers and 11 academicians. The opinions of teachers and academicians regarding P4C applications were collected with semi-structured interview forms. Data were analyzed using content analysis with the MAXQDA software. The findings indicated that the P4C approach helps preschool children develop higher-order thinking skills, empathy, self-expression, 21st-century skills, and problem-solving abilities by supporting children's holistic development. All participants agreed that P4C practices should be effectively incorporated into preschool curricula.

**Keywords:** Preschool Curriculum, Philosophical-Based Teaching, Philosophy for Children

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## Introduction

In the 21st century, with the increasing digitalization and convergence of students with rapidly advancing technology from a very young age, there is a growing curiosity about exploration in this direction. Consequently, there is a desire to bring a qualified perspective to education, starting from the preschool period up to the highest levels, to foster healthy societies (Kenar, 2012). In this context, there is a recognized need to enhance awareness in education and integrate diverse methods and techniques into curricula beginning from the preschool period.

The preschool period plays a fundamental role in children's cognitive and emotional development (Ahioğlu & Lindberg, 2011, p. 2). The Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach is regarded as an effective tool for this purpose and a significant educational domain that contributes to students' cognitive and emotional growth. Developing thinking skills during this period is believed to support children in becoming conscious individuals and enhancing their academic success (Özkan, 2020). Thus, it is expected that introducing the foundations of philosophy to children from an early age—through proper questioning and inquiry skills—will be effective in fostering critical thinking, reasoning, and sensitivity to ethical values.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) practices provide opportunities for children to ask the right questions, engage in inquiry, express their thoughts in the process of understanding the world, and develop flexible thinking skills (Colwell & Lindsey, 2003; McCall, 2017). In this regard, it allows them to compare their perspectives with those of their peers. Furthermore, by enhancing their ability to ask questions based on concepts, philosophical thinking can equip children with the skill of asking meaningful questions.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) serves as a foundational tool in supporting critical thinking and analytical skills, fostering flexible, collaborative, and critical thinking abilities in children (Fisher&Happe, 2005). Analytical skills such as questioning, constructing arguments, and making logical inferences enable children to think consciously, while the development of reasoning and problem-solving skills facilitates the integration of critical thinking into daily life. Logical thinking provides a solid foundation for children to understand and solve complex problems, as well as to cultivate the ability to create their own opinions (Taş, 2017). Through discussion and thought processes, children also learn to articulate their worldviews clearly, which enhances their self-confidence.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) plays a significant role in fostering sensitivity to ethical values. Reflecting on concepts such as good and evil or right and wrong helps children understand their social responsibilities while encouraging their curiosity and courage to ask questions (Colwell & Lindsey, 2003; McCall, 2017). Thus, P4C enables children to develop a positive attitude toward learning and a deeper understanding of their surroundings.

Thinking education demonstrates that students' mental abilities can be enhanced, increasing the thinking skills of children at every educational level (Topping & Trickey, 2007). Mental training is essential for children to accurately evaluate their environment (MEB, 2007). In this process, teachers play a critical role as key actors in education and bear significant responsibilities.

Teachers are expected to broaden and develop children's thinking by providing appropriate cognitive stimuli. Recently, there has been growing interest in teaching methods that strengthen students' listening, speaking, and thinking skills, as well as their ability to work harmoniously with others and support their mental and emotional independence. These methods require teachers to move away from being the sole source of knowledge and instead act as facilitators of learning (Direk, 2002: 24). The aim of facilitating philosophical thinking is to enhance children's abilities, encouraging creative thinking and action. Creating such an environment is the teacher's responsibility (Bush, 2017: 36).

In conclusion, it can be said that Philosophy for Children (P4C) in preschool education is an effective pedagogical tool that not only strengthens thinking skills but also enhances children's emotional intelligence. Philosophical thinking can contribute to children forming their own worldviews and growing into individuals sensitive to societal values. While aiming to develop thinking skills, the foundations of P4C also enrich children's emotional intelligence, equipping them with critical thinking, reasoning, and sensitivity to ethical values—skills they can utilize throughout their lives.

## Significance of the Research

One of the primary functions of education is to raise awareness in individuals, help them recognize their potential, and equip them with basic and advanced skills to facilitate their lives. Particularly in today's era, the existence of individuals who are aware of the implications of scientific and technological advancements, can leverage these developments effectively, and go beyond them to break new ground is of utmost importance. Although P4C is not actively included in preschool curricula, qualitative, experimental, and mixed-method studies in the literature date back several years and offer suggestions for classroom practices (Karakaya, 2006; Kefeli & Kara, 2008; Okur, 2008; Demirtaş, Karadağ & Gülenç, 2018). However, this study emphasizes the unique contribution of combining academics' and teachers' perspectives. Its uniqueness lies in its focus on integrating philosophical approaches and using philosophy-based questioning skills in education. It fosters inquiry skills grounded in philosophy, explores cause-and-effect relationships, and encourages making distant associations. It also supports discovery, restructuring, and seeing beyond concrete actions. The study enables students to experience the meaning language brings to life through reading and listening skills. It highlights the connection between language and thought in mental and behavioral development. These findings reflect the opinions of teachers and academics on the subject.

In the educational philosophy of the Turkey New Century Maarif Model, learning environments are proposed where students construct knowledge, focus on understanding, and engage in questioning and critical thinking, avoiding rote memorization approaches where students are passive recipients. Philosophy for Children education, inspired by the Socratic method of inquiry, aims primarily to teach thinking. It seeks to structure basic concepts and thinking processes through interconnected texts, taking into account students' developmental characteristics. In this context, there is a recognized need to enhance awareness in education and integrate various methods and techniques into curricula. Stemming from this need, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach aimed at developing thinking skills, based on the opinions of academics and teachers.

**Purpose of the Research**

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate Philosophy for Children (P4C) practices in preschool education according to the opinions of teachers and academics. In line with this purpose, answers to the following sub-questions were sought:

1. What are the contributions of P4C practices to students according to academics' and teachers'opinions? According to academics' and teachers' opinions, what developments are observed in students during the P4C process?
2. According to academics' and teachers' opinions, how applicable P4C practices in preschool curricula?
3. What are the opinions and suggestions of academics and teachers regarding the applicability of P4C practices in preschool curricula?

**3.2. Population and Sample of the Research**

The participants of the study consisted of teachers who voluntarily enrolled in the P4C practices and content development training officially organized at Bursa Uludağ University during the fall semester of 2022-2023 and who had taken the training at various times. The study reached 26 teachers and 11 academics.

The study group was determined using purposive sampling methods, specifically maximum variation and criterion sampling. To ensure maximum variation, preschool teachers working in private and public institutions across different regions of Turkey, as well as academics knowledgeable about P4C, were included. The primary criterion for the study group was having knowledge of and/or training in P4C approach.

The rationale behind purposive sampling is to select information-rich cases for an in-depth study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This study created an appropriate environment through purposive sampling and conducted preliminary preparations accordingly, aiming to form a study group that accurately addresses the research problem.

Criterion sampling considers pre-determined criteria set by the researcher, playing a key role in identifying consistent codes, themes, and results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This approach enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by ensuring consistency between themes and outcomes.

Demographic characteristics of the participating academics are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participating Academics**

| Code | Gender | University | Seniority | In-service training experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A1** | Female | D.University | 30 years | 30 years |
| **A2** | Male | E.University | 29 years | 9 years |
| **A3** | Female | E.B.Y.University | 26 years | 5 years |
| **A4** | Female | B. University | 21 years | 3 years |
| **A5** | Male | B.University | 20 years | 6 years |
| **A6** | Female | İ.University | 17 years | 2 years |
| **A7** | Male | B.U.University | 15 years | 15 years |
| **A8** | Female | D.E.University | 14 years | 4 years |
| **A9** | Female | H.University | 10 years | 10 years |
| **A10** | Female | H.University | 10 years | 3 years |
| **A11** | Female | M.University | 10 years | 2 years |

As shown in Table 1, 11 academics participated in the study, with 3 being male and the rest female. When citing their opinions, codes such as A1, A2, and A3 were used. The academics' seniority ranged from 10 to 30 years, and their in-service training experience varied between 2 and 30 years.

Demographic characteristics of the participating teachers are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers**

| Code | Gender | University | Seniority | In-service training experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T1** | Female | A.University | 5 years | 1 year |
| **T2** | Female | A.University | 1 year | 1 year |
| **T3** | Female | A.University | 12 years | 1 years |
| **T4** | Female | B.U. University | 21 years | 3 years |
| **T5** | Female | S.University | 5 years | 1 year |
| **T6** | Female | İ.University | 12 years | 1 year |
| **T7** | Female | D.University | 16 years | 15 years |
| **T8** | Female | O.University | 1 year | 1 year |
| **T9** | Female | A.University | Not working | 1 year |
| **T10** | Female | İ.University | 5 years | 1 year |
| **T11** | Female | P.University | 16 years | Various fields |
| **T12** | Female | A.University | 12 years | 3 years |
| **T13** | Female | İ. M. University | 26 years | 12 years |
| **T14** | Female | A. University | 19 years | Various fields |
| **T15** | Female | A.University | 18 years | 4 years |
| **T16** | Female | A.University | 5 years | 1 years |
| **T17** | Female | B.U.University | 12 years | Various fields |
| **T18** | Female | R.University | 20 years | 12 years |
| **T19** | Female | İ. M. University | 5 years | 1 year |
| **T20** | Female | A. University | 15 years | 4 years |
| **T21** | Female | Y. University | Not working | 1 year |
| **T22** | Female | A. University | 8 years | 4 years |
| **T23** | Female | A.University | 13 years | 5 years |
| **T24** | Female | A.University | 15 years | Various fields |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T25** | Female | G.University | 14 years | 4 years |
| **T26** | Female | A.University | 2 years | 1 years |

When examining the demographic distribution of the participating teachers, all 26 were female. Their seniority ranged from 1 to 26 years. In-service training experiences varied, with 14 teachers having experience in various fields and others ranging from 1 to 12 years. Teachers primarily became aware of the topic through various sources in the last five years, with some gaining knowledge after starting their professional careers and others through research. The least common source of awareness was social media, indicating that the topic is not widely promoted in daily life and requires greater visibility. Some teachers, due to their research-oriented nature, reported having followed articles and publications on the subject since the early years of their careers, expressing a particular interest in philosophy.

## Method

### 3.3. Research Method

This research was conducted using a case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, to evaluate Philosophy for Children (P4C) practices in preschool education based on the opinions of teachers and academics. A case study systematically interprets data from real-life experiences, analyzes information, and identifies focus areas for future studies (Davey, 1990).

While cases are often associated with people, a program, institution, organization, or event can also be considered a case (Dörnyei, 2007). In this study, P4C practices were treated as a single case and conducted using a holistic single-case design. Additionally, it possesses characteristics of an descriptive case study (Yin, 2003; 2014).

### 3.4. Data Collection

The research data were collected through semi-structured interview forms consisting of open-ended questions developed for stakeholder groups regarding P4C practicess in preschool education. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at various schools and universities. Audio recordings were made, and interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes on average.

For this purpose, a dialogue-based interview method, commonly used in qualitative research, was chosen for data collection. Scientifically structured interviews can utilize structured, semi-structured, or unstructured formats depending on the researcher's objectives. In structured interviews, the boundaries are clearly defined by the researcher, with predetermined questions and acceptable response options (Polat, 2022). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a pre-determined purpose. The researcher established specific themes and prepared questions accordingly, with flexibility to adjust questions if significant information emerged during the process (Mertkan, 2015).

The interview questions, including sub-questions for each category, were prepared with expert input. Measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of this case study design are detailed below.

### Validity and Reliability

Several measures were implemented to ensure the study's validity and reliability:

**Reliability**: To enhance reliability, the researcher detailed the entire process (sample selection, data analysis, and reporting) and actively participated, allowing participants to share their field experiences authentically (Creswell, 2003). Raw data were re-coded by the researcher at different times and reviewed by expert researchers (e.g., a Professor and an Associate Professor). In addition to manual coding, the MAXQDA software was used to increase reliability in identifying codes and themes.

**Validity**:

**External Validity**: Research questions were developed after a holistic review of P4C-related studies. When compared with existing research outcomes, the questions were found to be consistent and generalizable (Başkale, 2016).

**Internal Validity**: The findings aligned meaningfully with the theoretical framework underpinning the study.The authenticity and truthfulness of opinions from participants knowledgeable about P4C contributed to both validity and reliability. Throughout the study, reliability measures included the researcher clarifying their role, defining participants clearly, providing detailed explanations of data collection and analysis methods, storing raw data for external review, presenting data directly without interpretation, submitting interview questions and themes to expert review, and collecting data thoroughly and purposefully. Validity measures included removing one question from the interview form after a pilot study due to overlap, conducting multiple interviews with some participants, gathering detailed data through face-to-face interviews, reporting data comprehensively, using direct quotes from participants, ensuring internal consistency of findings, and describing the purposive sampling method, interview settings, and research processes in a way that allows comparison with other samples.

### Role of the Researcher

To enhance professional development in preschool teaching and contribute to the research, the researcher completed training in "Philosophy for Children (P4C) Facilitator Training," "P4C Content Development Training," and "Communication Techniques." Training in MAXQDA software was also undertaken to support the analysis process. As a preschool teacher, the researcher had the opportunity to implement P4C in the field and observe teachers and academics during face-to-face interviews while they applied the approach.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

In this study, data were analyzed using content analysis with the 2022-2023 version of MAXQDA software. MAXQDA is a tool that enables comprehensive reporting by analyzing various data sources, such as interviews, focus groups, online surveys, websites, and audio-visual recordings. It is widely used by researchers working with qualitative and quantitative data (Çelik, 2023). Data from interviews with the study group were examined through content analysis and descriptive analysis using semi-structured interview forms. Content analysis aims to describe data and uncover underlying truths, organizing similar data under specific concepts and themes for interpretation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The analysis process involved transferring data to a digital environment, compiling participant responses under each question, uploading data to MAXQDA, reading and coding the data, grouping codes into themes, reviewing codes and themes, and presenting and interpreting the findings.

## Findings

This section presents the findings from interviews with academics and teachers regarding Philosophy for Children (P4C) practices in preschool education.

### 4.1. Findings from Academics' and Teachers' Opinions

### Contributions of P4C Practices to Preschool Students

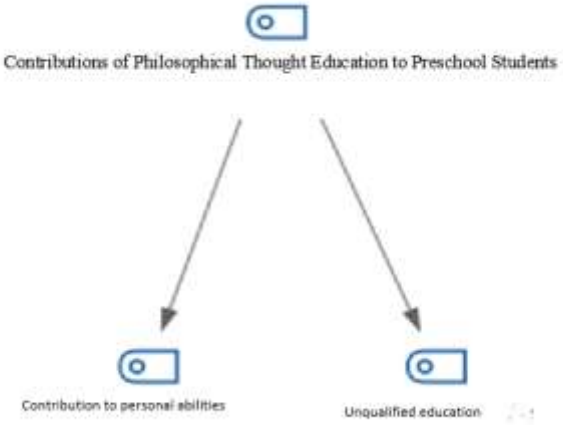
The question "What are the contributions of philosophical thinking education through P4C in preschool education?" was adopted as the main theme. Contributions of P4C to preschool students were derived from various codes based on academics' and teachers' opinions.

### Contributions of Philosophical Thinking Education to Preschool Students According to Academics

The category of contributions according to academics consists of codes related to personal skill development and unqualified education. The representation of categories and codes is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Contributions of Philosophical Thinking Education in Preschool*




As for contribution to personel abilities academics mentioned about developing thinking skills of preschool students. Direct quotes regarding these codes are as follows:

"As P4C founder Matthew Lipman stated, a child begins thinking as soon as they start speaking. Small thinking experiments that tap into children's curiosity and exploration can unlock their philosophical thinking. Meeting philosophy and thinking education from an early age is a necessity considering 21st-century skills." (A7)

"Preschool is the most critical period in a child's life, a time to acquire and apply life skills. During this phase, children are both curious and inquisitive. The foundations of thinking skills can be laid through P4C and become permanent behaviors. If we want society to consist of individuals who use thinking skills, we must start with philosophy and thinking education in preschool." (A8)

"I think the earlier children encounter P4C, the better. They should develop questioning, flexible thinking, and critical thinking as skills from an early age. This way, as adults, they can question before accepting, notice stereotypes, and critically evaluate their prejudices." (A11)

About unqualified education direct quotes from academics regarding these codes are as follows:

"I have doubts about the quality of many field studies. I observe activities conducted under the guise of philosophy and thinking education that are harmless but also lack benefits. However, apart from practical issues, I believe it's an area worth focusing on and developing. I've observed positive developments in my own work, but I think implementing it in preschool isn't as easy as claimed." (A2)

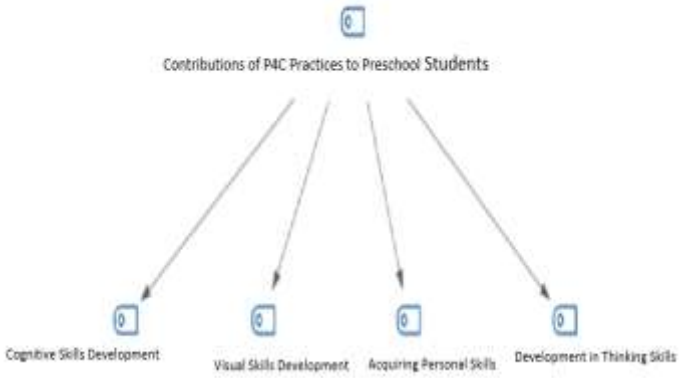
"I view philosophy and thinking education for preschool students positively. I believe practices can enhance scientific process skills, respectful communication, interpersonal skills, reasoning, problem-solving, and the ability to integrate their inner world with their environment to offer innovative solutions, contributing to various life skills. However, it must be done carefully in preschool, using the right resources and implementers." (A5)

**Contributions of P4C Practices to Preschool Students According to Teachers**

The main theme of contributions according to teachers comprises codes such as development in thinking skills, visual skill development, personal skill acquisition, and thinking skill enhancement. The representation of categories and codes is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Contributions of P4C Practices to Preschool Students According to Teachers*




As represented in Figure 2, teachers metioned about contributions of P4C practices to preschool students for some skill development.Direct quotes from teachers regarding P4C contributions are as follows:

"I doubt that a session based solely on questioning and expressing thoughts would enhance thinking skills." (T2)

"It develops children's communication, language, and social skills, as well as their cognitive abilities. They realize that questioning and curiosity are natural and necessary." (T3)

"Like Creative Drama, I think P4C is one of the approaches that fosters skills. It enables gains like flexibility and the ability to change one's opinion when necessary." (T4)

"Compared to the past, current curricula include more inquiry-based content, encouraging a positive pursuit of scientific advancements. These can be further developed based on students' curiosity, interests, and cultural contexts. Preschool curricula offer various gains, such as human and animal rights, environment, health, society, citizenship, digital society, and proper use of digital resources." (T5)

"While curricula provide a framework, it's often limited to written resources. Books with simple images and discussions to expand their content enhance students' creativity and process skills. P4C practices contribute to this." (T5)

"I believe developed content, textbooks, materials, visuals, and practices go beyond curriculum gains, offering advanced opportunities to foster inquiry, argumentation, and critical thinking skills." (T6)

"Gains not in the curriculum but which I think it supports include viewing problems from different perspectives, developing assertiveness, foresight, learning to think, and expanding mental boundaries." (T7)

"It supports students' development in 21st-century skills like critical thinking, collaboration, care, respect for others, effective communication, empathy, problem-solving, self-understanding, self-expression, sensitivity to others' issues, and flexible thinking." (T8)

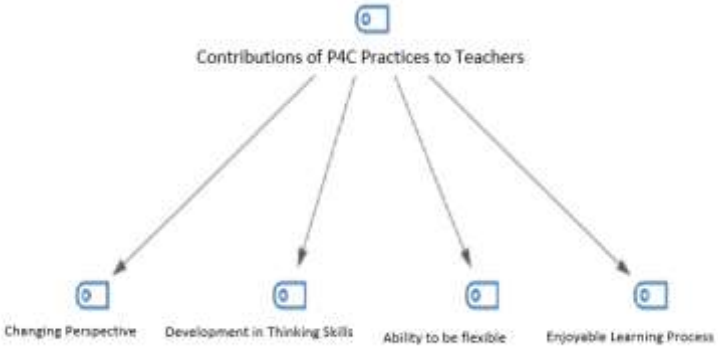
"Beyond curriculum gains, P4C fosters discussion skills, problem-solving, empathy, analysis, collaboration, relationship-building, cause-and-effect reasoning, self-confidence, and communication skills." (T9)

**Contributions of P4C Practices to Implementers (Academics and Teachers)**

According to academics, the category of contributions to academics includes codes such as changing perspectives, developing thinking skills, flexibility, and an enjoyable learning process. According to teachers, contributions to teachers include codes like flexible thinking skills, diverse perspectives, guiding, observation, inquiry, and critical thinking perspectives. Participant opinions are as follows, with categories and codes represented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Contributions of P4C Practices to Teachers*




As represented in Table 3, It has been concluded that the applications contribute to the development of students' philosophical thinking skills in the process, as well as the development of higher-order thinking skills of preschool teachers who take an active role in the application process, and that their flexible thinking skills develop and that they become aware that they can be developed by revealing ideas. Direct quotes from teachers regarding contributions are as follows:

"A facilitator, unlike a teacher, sparks curiosity and opens paths for exploration. It aims to help find knowledge rather than provide it. As a teacher, P4C shows me that different methods work and that learning can be lively, exciting, and enjoyable." (T1)

"It also develops the teacher's thinking skills. Professionally, it can make them feel they're doing enough for students. Seeing children's growth brings happiness." (T3)

"I can say it fosters flexibility skills." (T4)

"One of the most significant gains for me is the ability to view events, situations, or concepts with a childlike simplicity and clarity. Sometimes, as adults, we overcomplicate things. I think we need a child's perspective to step back and see clearly." (T7)

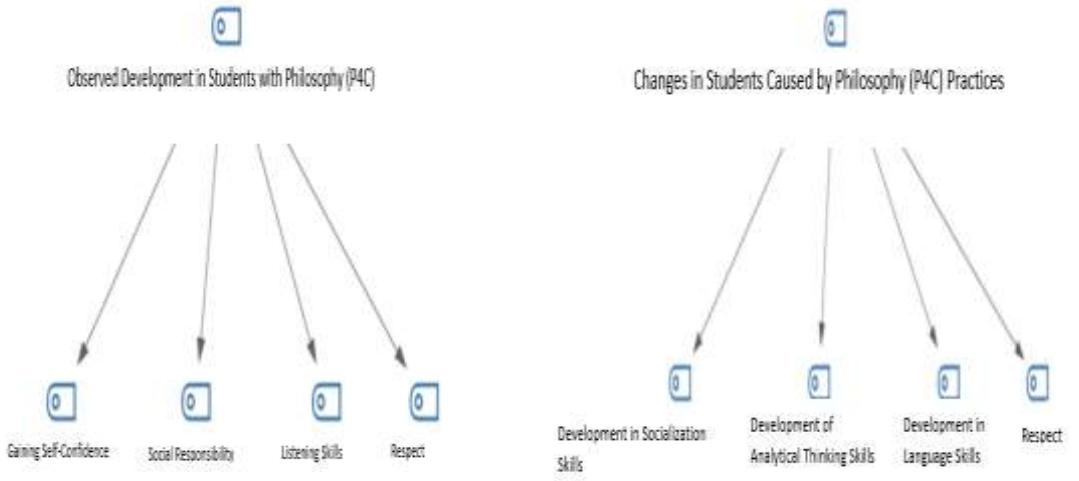
"As a teacher, it enriches, develops, and deepens my thinking about a topic, concept, or problem through diverse definitions and perspectives. It enhances my ability to propose different solutions, strengthens possibilities, and brings out my critical and creative thinking skills, increasing my sensitivity to collaborative and careful thinking." (T9)

**Developments Observed in Students During the P4C Process According to Academics and Teachers**

Following participants' general thoughts on P4C, their opinions on developments observed in students in classrooms where it was applied were collected. Under this theme, academics highlighted codes like self-confidence, social responsibility, listening skills, and respect. Teachers emphasized codes such as socialization skill development, analytical thinking skill development, language development, and respect within the category of changes caused by P4C in the learning-teaching process. Teachers' opinions on these codes are as follows, with categories and codes represented in Figures 4 and 5.

**Figures 4-5**

*Developments Observed in Students with P4C According to Academics and Teachers*




When figures 4-5 have been analyzed, it has been shown that respect was emphasized by both groups; students becoming more respectful individuals was seen as a common outcome of P4C. Social skills were also emphasized by both groups. While academics describe this as social responsibility and listening skills, teachers consider it as a socialization skill. They agreed that students' social interaction skills have improved. Direct quotes are given as follows.

"Self-confidence, ability to speak, seeking answers." (A1)

"They participate more. They can provide solid reasoning when expressing their ideas." (A4)

"They gain listening skills. When they enter the 'thinking pit,' they start saying things like, 'I'll think about this.' They continue discussing concepts and providing more examples, actively engaging in the process. Initially, they're more tied to the stimulus, but later they participate in inquiry and strive to master responses." (A5)

"In the first weeks, discussions were more argumentative, but by the end of the year, they became calmer, more understanding, and involved developing counterarguments and reasoning—enhancing analytical thinking skills." (T1)

"I observed increased attention spans and communication skills." (T2)

"Greater interest in concrete concepts around them and more effort to think about their content." (T4)

"It positively affects their language development, enabling clearer self-expression." (T1)

According to teachers, the most frequently repeated code in the category of changes caused by P4C in students was the development of socialization skills:

"Initially, children were shy. Over time, I observed they no longer hesitated to express themselves." (T2)

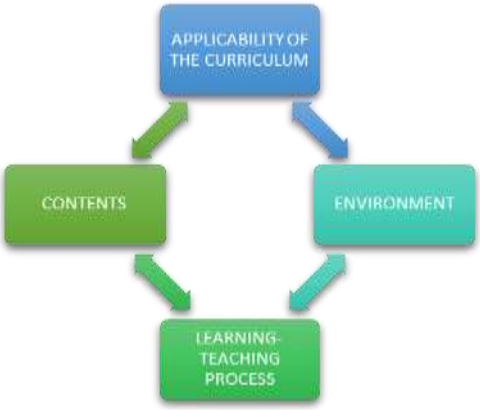
"Students who didn't speak or were shy started talking more, participating actively in class, showing increased interest and self-confidence." (T3)

**Applicability of P4C in Curricula**

The question "What are your opinions on the applicability of P4C in curricula?" was adopted as the main theme for participants. Opinions were grouped into categories of content, process, and environment, with various codes. The visual representation of this theme is presented in Figure 10.

**Figure 6**

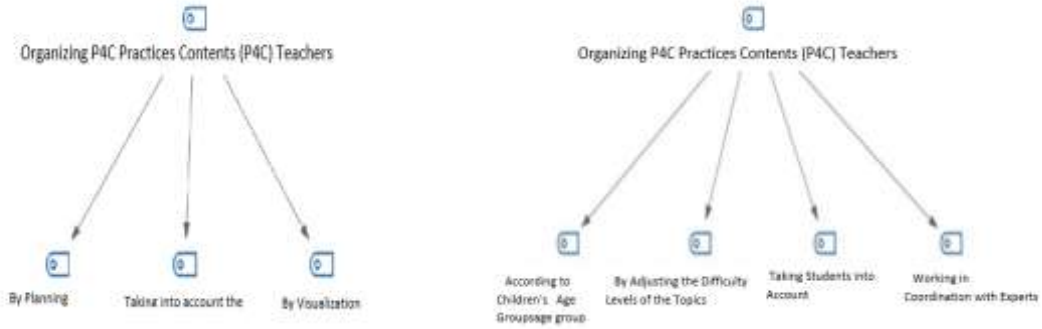
*Applicability of the P4C Curriculum Arrangement of P4C Practices Content*




According to academics, the category of arranging P4C content includes codes like planning, considering age groups, and visualization. According to teachers, it includes codes such as tailoring to children's age groups, adjusting difficulty levels, considering students, and collaborating with experts. Participant opinions are as follows, with categories and codes shown in Figures 7 and 8.

**Figures 7-8**

*Arrangement of P4C Practice Content*




As it's presented in Figure 7-8, according to academics and teachers' opinions of planning the lessons and the curriculum should be created according to some characteristics mentioned in following direct quotes.

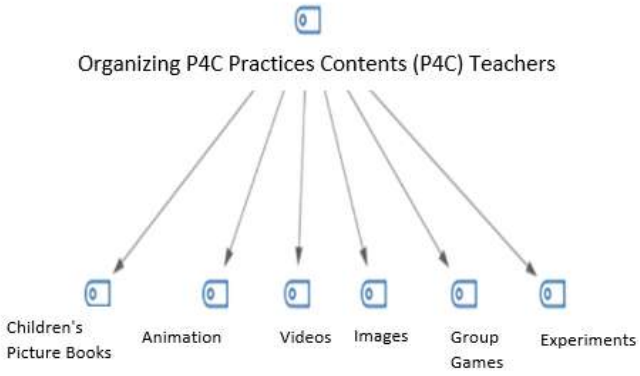
"A lesson plan should be created that considers preschool children's age, interests, talents, and developmental characteristics to foster critical, creative, collaborative, and careful thinking skills, supporting their developmental areas." (A6)

"The Ministry should collaborate with experts to integrate it into curricula and provide sample practice teacher handbooks. Preschool teachers should use these in daily plans. For example, concepts can be taught through P4C." (T3)

Additionally, participants frequently emphasized the importance of materials like illustrated children's books, animations, videos, visuals, group games, and experiments in arranging content for different age groups, prompting a deeper examination of materials. Categories and codes are shown in Figure 9 as follows.

**Figure 9**

*Organizing P4C Practices Contents*




It has been analyzed in Figure 9 that the most frequently mentioned opinion in the category of materials used in P4C practices centered on illustrated children's books:

"Children's books like *One for You, Two for Me*, *Good-Hearted Giant Memo*, *The Never-Ending Thing*, and *Carl and the Meaning of Life* can be examples. When read with interactive methods and thought-provoking activities, they guide critical thinking." (T7)

"I use interactive books, reading activities, and question-answer methods." (T9)

"Books and videos—both visual and auditory." (T7)

"Visuals, videos, experiments, etc., should appeal to multiple senses because children in this period are in the preoperational stage, making such methods more functional for understanding and learning." (T3)

"I observed that concrete materials have a greater impact on students. Thus, I find it more beneficial to use animations, cartoons, posters, creative drama, and group games for these groups." (T1)

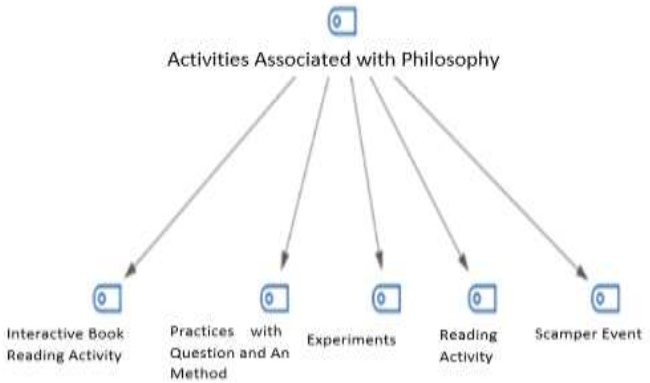
"Experiments really capture children's interest. They gain inquiry skills, and observing and applying experiments fosters research, questioning, and curiosity, enhancing social and mental skills." (T3)

**Activities Used in the P4C Process**

The quality of the process is determined by the activities conducted. Participants provided detailed insights into process activities, with categories and codes shown in Figure 10.

**Figure 10**

*Activities Associated with Philosophy*




As respresented in Figure 10 about the activities, the most frequently repeated code in the category of activities associated with philosophy was interactive book reading. Teachers expressed their views on this issue as follows:

"Interactive book reading with question-answer methods can be an example." (T13)

"I apply interactive books, reading activities, and question-answer methods." (T2)

"In the *Start with Boots, Live with Books* project for preschool, I participated. We received training on quality book selection and P4C. We read P4C-content books. For *One for You, Two for Me*, we prepared a word wall with unfamiliar words from the book, used visuals, role-playing, drama, and experiments to encourage diverse thinking." (T13)

**Environment for Effective P4C Implementation According to Academics and Teachers**
The category of the environment for effective P4C implementation, according to academics and teachers, includes similar codes such as low class size, a healthy classroom environment, and ensuring participation. Participant opinions are as follows:

"The number of student participants shouldn't be too high; time and space should allow every child to speak. If some students can see the stimuli but others can't, it can cause issues, so the physical setup is important." (A5)

"For P4C, the classroom should be suitable for sitting in a circle. Very small spaces can make students uncomfortable." (A8)

"The environment for preschool P4C should be bright, comfortable, spacious, and arranged in a U-shape or circle." (A5)

"The environment should be quiet. Students should be able to see the educator, and class size should be small to ensure every child gets a chance to express themselves." (T12)

**Arrangement of the Learning-Teaching Process for P4C Practices According to Academics and Teachers**
Participants similarly emphasized that P4C should be actively integrated into the entire preschool curriculum and agreed on the need for an additional program. Direct quotes from participants are as follows:

"It should be included. It should be given briefly once a day, and every preschool teacher should be trained and implement it." (A1)

"Rather than being an add-on, a philosophical learning and teaching approach should be developed for everything done with children. Philosophy is too important to be confined to an extra lesson—it should be done with philosophical sensitivity in all activities." (A2)

"It absolutely should be included. It's perfect for children's curious, question-asking phase, so it should be in the program twice a week." (A3)

"I think it should be a separate lesson, not within regular class hours. Linking it to a specific lesson feels forced. It should be treated as a supportive approach." (A4)

"At times, I struggled with implementation—getting their opinions was challenging, but I noticed it helped me grow. It might be a disadvantage for parents; as children express ideas more clearly, parents might complain, seeing it as a drawback—like 'they've grown up too fast.'" (A5)

"I think it should be implemented across all levels, not just preschool, and used in classrooms." (A6)

"I wish courses weren't expensive so more people could gain competence." (A7)

"It can be included with professional hands and proper practices—not just 'we did it.' Results must be observed and expressed through students' views and feelings, which is itself a philosophy." (A8)

"If a teacher can create opportunities for philosophical thinking based on students' interests and needs, it doesn't need to be formally in the program. But sadly, not all teachers have this awareness, based on my experience from teacher training." (A9)

"From an early age, expressing ideas, reasoning, speaking in groups, and active listening." (A10)

"It must be actively included. It's vital for fostering creative, critical, careful, and collaborative thinking skills in all subjects and gains, significantly enhancing educational quality." (A11)

"Classroom practices greatly improve students' vocabulary, verbal communication, effective language use, listening, and patience skills." (A12)

"I think the P4C approach should be actively part of preschool programs. When in the program, it can be applied systematically and regularly, but it shouldn't standardize teachers—it should allow flexibility in implementation." (A13)

"The best approach is embedding it throughout the curriculum. A single class hour risks losing its benefits if not done well. The facilitator should spend enough time with the children to know them. A teacher coming once a week just for P4C wouldn't be effective. I believe preschool teachers should be competent to apply P4C in all activities." (A14)

"It should be active—integrated into all lessons or, if not possible, given specific time as a special program. Ideally, the school should adopt this vision overall." (A15)

"It should be linked to all curricula and also be a separate lesson. Thinking happens through concepts, and all disciplines have key concepts to question. A separate program with philosophy's core issues should be prepared, and teachers trained to implement it." (A16)

**Opinions and Suggestions of Academics and Teachers on P4C Applicability in Preschool**

Finally, participants were asked, "What are your opinions on activating P4C practices in preschool education and including them in the program? What path do you suggest?" Their statements and suggestions are provided below:

"It absolutely should be included. It suits children's curious, question-asking phase, so it should be in the program twice a week." (A3)

"I think P4C should be actively part of preschool programs. It can be applied systematically within the program, but it shouldn't standardize teachers—it should allow flexibility." (A13)

"It should be linked to all curricula and be a separate lesson. Thinking occurs through concepts, and questioning them is crucial across disciplines. A separate program with philosophy's key issues should be prepared, and teachers trained accordingly." (A16)

"It should be active and even added to teacher training curricula at universities. Short-term or remote training for current teachers won't fully achieve P4C's goals. If added to the program, texts and methods must be provided as guides." (T9)

"It should be applied. Developing inquiry and critical perspectives in young students prepares them for their educational lives, which is necessary." (T15)

All academics and teachers agreed that P4C should be actively included in preschool programs, whether as a class hour, workshop, group activity, social club, or elective course. Their suggestions for qualified implementation under proper guidance are as follows:

"More stimuli should be developed, and facilitators should create their own materials rather than relying on ready-made ones. Mistakes are often made in material selection for groups, so care is needed. P4C sessions should continue with a group for at least 3-4 months." (T1)

"The Ministry should collaborate with experts to integrate it into curricula, provide sample handbooks, hold workshops, observe teachers during implementation with feedback, offer curriculum-linked books, and train parents. It should be at all levels." (T3)

## Results and Discussion

This study, aimed at evaluating Philosophy for Children (P4C) aproach in preschool education based on teachers' and academics' opinions, concluded that both groups were sufficiently knowledgeable about P4C, with consistent views. The common conclusions reached regarding P4C implementation in the learning-teaching process are summarized as follows: All participants demonstrated high awareness of the P4C approach. Participants' knowledge and long-term field experience with P4C fostered their flexible thinking skills and awareness that ideas can evolve through expression, benefiting not only students' but also their own thinking skill development. Both academics and teachers noted that P4C significantly impacts children's worlds, enhancing cognitive and thinking skills,

language skills, empathy, self-expression, 21st-century skills, communication, problem-solving, and listening skills. P4C was found to enhance facilitators' research and inquiry skills. Social skills were also highlighted by both groups. While academics describe this as social responsibility and listening skills, teachers consider it as a socialization skill. They agreed that students' social interaction skills have improved. It's an important outcome that respect as a value was emphasized by both groups; students becoming more respectful individuals was seen as a common outcome of P4C. While teachers stated that P4C provided analytical thinking and language development, it's concluded that academics did not focus on these aspects. Perhaps teachers may have noticed these skills more clearly because they directly observed students' practical gains in the classroom. Overall, P4C enhances critical thinking, theory of mind, creativity, cognitive, and social skills, proving an effective model for preschool education by fostering analytical thinking, empathy, and collaboration.

Although it is a concept used abroad since ancient times, there is a limited number of studies in Turkey due to its lack of active participation in the curriculum. Avcı (2023), one of the few studies conducted in Turkey, that performs also obtained that participating teachers in the research, Philosophy for Children (P4C) the philosophical activities they performed in their classes within the scope of their practices as a result of investigations, the ability to generate thoughts in students and curiosity with the ability to express/express the thoughts they produced improvements in self-esteem, self-confidence development and creative skills they expressed what they observed. As a result of Avcı and others (2021) found that the educational activities based on the Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach were very effective in terms of the development of thinking and communication skills in students, and on the other hand, they contribute to achieving gains in important value areas such as empathy, tolerance and respect in their project. Işıklar and Abalı-Öztürk (2022) found improvement of problem-solving skills of experimental group of 5-6 aged children conducted with P4C approach. In another study conducted with middle school students, Türksoy (2020) determined that Philosophy for Children (P4C) education positively affected conceptual success, critical thinking skills, thoughts about scientific research and attitudes towards practice.

According to the participants' views, materials for P4C should be simple, illustrated, with short sentences delivered through play, enriched with engaging visuals, tailored to children's age, interests, talents, and developmental characteristics, and framed around basic human elements like sharing and friendship. Facilitators and students can use any object, situation, or event to explore concepts interdisciplinarily, supported by gains. The classroom and learning environment for P4C should be open, moderately sized, spacious, allow movement, have circular seating or cushions, limit participant numbers, and avoid distracting materials—highlighting the importance of physical space in education. P4C aligns with preschool gains in cognitive, affective, language, social, and physical domains, with notable developmental changes observed from the start to the end of the period.

Contributions to preschool students included enhanced thinking and personal skills, raising awareness of two critical life aspects. Both academics and teachers gained flexible thinking and communication skills through P4C, showing consistent awareness. Previous studies support these findings. Karadağ and Demirtaş (2018) found that a P4C-based critical thinking program improved preschool children's critical thinking skills, with positive teacher feedback. Taş (2017) observed that a 14-week P4C program positively affected 48-72-month-olds' theory of mind and creativity. Şavşet (2016) noted that inquiry-based activities over 5 weeks enhanced 51-70-month-olds' cognitive development and knowledge retention. Okur (2008) found that a P4C program with drama and storytelling improved 6-year-olds' social skills (assertiveness, cooperation, self-control). Francisco Javier and Merçon (2017), inspired by Foucault, reported improvements in self-criticism, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and curiosity after a year of P4C with children. Gasparatou and Kampeza (2012) confirmed P4C's positive impact on preschoolers' critical thinking skills. Malboeuf-Hurtubise and others (2021) observed a significant effect of the P4C intervention on mental health difficulties, controlling for baseline levels in their experimental research.

Academics and teachers suggested that P4C should be actively included in preschool programs due to its awareness-raising benefits, with teachers receiving appropriate training and implementing it philosophically, regardless of method or material. They further emphasized that P4C should be offered as a separate lesson across all levels, applied professionally and systematically within the curriculum, while allowing teachers flexibility without strict standardization. Given that P4C practices contribute

significantly to students' multifaceted development, it would be appropriate to implement it as a course across all educational levels. In this regard, the inclusion of P4C in curricula beginning from the preschool period may provide substantial benefits for students' holistic development.

## Recommendations

Differentiating the learning environment and using diverse teaching methods beyond lecturing enhance success. P4C's structure requires constant student activity and teacher-student interaction, benefiting from strategies like collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, comprehension, and reflective thinking. The following recommendations are offered for researchers and practitioners:

- ✓ P4C practices should consider student differences to foster conceptual teaching and analytical thinking. Experimental studies with longer-term P4C implementation are recommended to test effects.
- ✓ To raise creative, inquisitive, communicative, self-confident, and innovative individuals, P4C should be integrated into preschool and all disciplinary programs, from philosophy to arts, literature, history, math, and geography.
- ✓ Teachers need quality training and in-service programs to enhance P4C knowledge and skills, supported by education faculties. Material shortages in P4C were notable; teachers' skills and resources like games, creative activities, and audiovisual tools should be bolstered to increase student engagement.
- ✓ More qualitative studies should identify preschool teachers' needs for thinking skills and P4C pedagogical tools.
- ✓ To raise awareness and guide future work, broader studies and a P4C awareness scale for teachers/academics could be developed.

**Limitations:** This study has certain limitations regarding the participant group, such as the gender imbalance (all female teachers), potential sampling bias, and the reliance on self-reported perceptions.

### Research and Publication Ethics

In this study, all rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", have been carried out. Ethical approval was carried out This study was conducted after obtaining the necessary ethical permissions from the Strategy Development Department of the Ministry of National Education and the Aydın Adnan Menderes University Social Sciences Institute in 18.01.2023 dated and 31906847/050.04.04.08 numbered document.

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1. Contribution rate statement of researchers: First Author 50%, Second Author 50%.

2. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author. This study is a part of MA thesis of the first author under the supervision the second author.

### Credit authorship contribution statement

1st author: Writing, Methodology-Interviewing, Analyzing the data, Review, Conceptualization.

2nd author: Superviser, Methodology-Analyzing the data, Editing, Conceptualization and Correspondance of the article.

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