PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN AS A TEACHING MOVEMENT IN AN ERA OF TOO MUCH LEARNING[1]

Charles Bingham[2]
Simon Fraser University, Canada

Abstract
In this article, I contextualize the community of inquiry approach, and Philosophy for Children, within the current milieu of education. Specifically, I argue that whereas former scholarship on Philosophy for Children had a tendency to critique the problems of teacher authority and knowledge transmission, we must now consider subtler, learner-centered scenarios of education as a threat to Philosophy for Children. I begin by offering a personal anecdote about my own experience attending a 'reverse-integrated' elementary school in 1968. I use this anecdote to show the detrimental aspects of the turn to learning—and the concomitant turn away from teaching—over past five decades. I go on to detail what I call "the logic of learning." The logic of learning has five components: 1) That learning has a theory, or 'logic,' in other words, that learners can be figured out. 2) That learning is instrumental, or that people need to learn things in order to acquire something that will be obtained after the learning is complete. 3) That learning concerns normation, or, some people get learning 'right' while others do not. 4) That teaching is the same as instruction, so that teaching always means delivering knowledge to students. 5) That authority should reside as a possession of the learner, and thus authority is understood as a thing rather than a relation. I show that these elements of the logic of learning stand in the way of the goals of Philosophy for Children, and that opponents of Philosophy for Children have used these elements to assail the Philosophy for Children project. I continue by describing a relational understanding of authority. I demonstrate the importance of relational authority and relational teaching as key components of Philosophy for Children. In conclusion, I argue that Philosophy for Children needs to spearhead a movement of relational teaching.

Keywords: Relationality; Learnification; Authority; Philosophy for Children

Filosofia para crianças como um deslocamento para o ensino em uma era de muita Aprendizagem

Resumo
Nesse artigo, contextualizo a abordagem da comunidade de investigação e a Filosofia para Crianças, dentro do atual contexto educativo. Especificamente, argumento que, enquanto a literatura acadêmica em torno da Filosofia para Crianças teve a tendência de criticar os problemas da autoridade docente e a transmissão de conhecimento, devemos considerar os cenários educativos sutis que têm a centralidade no aluno como uma ameaça à Filosofia para Crianças. Começo apresentando uma anedota pessoal de minha própria experiência como aluno da escola primária em 1968. Uso essa anedota para mostrar o aspecto prejudicial dessa virada em torno do aprender – e o concomitante afastamento do ensinar – nas últimas cinco

[1] A version of this article was delivered as a Key Note address at the 2015 International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children conference, Vancouver, BC, Canada.
[2] E-mail: cwb@sfu.ca

décadas. Continuo detalhando o que chamo de "a lógica do aprender", que tem cinco componentes: 1) O aprender tem uma teoria, ou uma "lógica", que os estudantes podem descobrir; 2) O aprender é um instrumento que as pessoas precisam aprender a fim de que adquiram alguma coisa após a finalização do processo de aprendizagem; 3) O aprender diz respeito à "normalização", ou algumas pessoas aprendem certo enquanto outras não; 4) Ensinar é o mesmo que instruir, pois ensinar sempre significa dar conhecimento aos estudantes; 5) A autoridade deveria se estabelecer como uma posse do aprendiz, então a autoridade seria entendida como uma coisa mais do que como uma relação. Mostro que esses elementos da lógica do aprender são um impeditivo para os objetivos da Filosofia para Crianças, e que os opositores da Filosofia para Crianças usam esses elementos para criticar este projeto. Continuo descrevendo uma concepção relacional de autoridade. Demonstro a importância da autoridade relacional e do ensino relacional como componentes principais da Filosofia para Criança. Finalmente, concluo que a Filosofia para Crianças precisa encabeçar um movimento a favor do ensino relacional.

Palavras-chave: relacional; aprendização; autoridade; filosofia para crianças

Filosofía para Niños como Movimiento de Enseñanza en una era de demasiado aprendizaje

Resumen
En este artículo contextualizo el enfoque de Comunidad de Indagación y el programa de Filosofía para Niños en el contexto educativo actual. Sostengo que, mientras la literatura acadèmica en torno al programa de Filosofía para Niños tiene la tendencia de criticar los problemas de autoridad del maestro y de transmisión de conocimiento, al contrario, debemos considerar escenarios educativos más sutiles centrados en el alumno como una amenaza para la Filosofía para Niños. Comienzo ofreciendo una anécdota personal como alumno de una escuela primaria integrada en 1968. Utilizo esta anécdota para mostrar los aspectos perjudiciales del giro hacia el aprendizaje y el concomitante alejamiento de la enseñanza de las últimas cinco décadas. Detallo aquello que llamo "la lógica de aprendizaje", que tiene cinco componentes: 1) el aprendizaje tiene una teoría o "lógica", en otras palabras, que puede ser descubierto el aprendiente. 2) El aprendizaje es un instrumento que la gente necesita aprender cosas para adquirir algo que será conseguido una vez que el aprendizaje se complete. 3) El aprendizaje tiene que ver con "normalizar" o algunas personas aprenden correctamente y otras no. 4) El aprendizaje es similar a la instrucción, por lo que enseñanza siempre significar dar conocimientos a los estudiantes. 5) Que la autoridad debe residir como una posesión del aprendiz y así la autoridad es entendida como una cosa y no como una relación. Muestro que estos elementos de la lógica del aprendizaje se encuentran dentro de los objetivos del programa de Filosofía para Niños y que sus opositores los han utilizado para atacar el programa. Continúo con una descripción de la comprensión relacional de la autoridad. Demuestro la importancia de la autoridad relacional y la enseñanza relacional como un componente clave del programa de Filosofía para Niños. En conclusión sostengo que Filosofía para Niños necesita estar a la vanguardia del movimiento de enseñanza relacional.

Palabras clave: Relacionalidad, aprendificación, autoridad, filosofía para niños

PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN AS A TEACHING MOVEMENT IN AN ERA OF TOO MUCH LEARNING

Introduction

I begin this article by admitting that I am a newcomer to Philosophy for Children. I am not at this moment a practitioner of Philosophy for Children, nor was I a witting practitioner of Philosophy for Children when I was a K-12 teacher. However, if I think back on my 13 years as a K-12 teacher in the 1980's and 90's, I must say that I was probably practicing Philosophy for Children unknowingly for many of those years. I am thinking here especially of my years teaching Grade 7 Language Arts. On Fridays, in my Language Arts classes, students did not do any learning. Instead, we participated in what I called 'dialogues.' For the entire class period, each Friday, my students and I would dialogue about a particular idea, a philosophical topic of one sort or another. The topic would be chosen either by me or my students, and, with me as the moderator, we would discuss philosophical topics for the duration of the class. I remember how students relished those Fridays. They would be very upset if 'dialogue day' was ever cancelled for any reason. As I look back on 'dialogue Fridays,' I cannot help seeing the resemblance to what is called the 'community of enquiry' in Philosophy for Children parlance (Kennedy, Kennedy & Kennedy, Sharp). I could never have given it that name at the time, simply because I did not know that Philosophy for Children existed.

What I would like to remark on, for the purposes of this article's argument, is that on those Fridays, anything that one might call 'learning' was suspended. Indeed, the reason my students cherished those Fridays is because they did not think they needed to 'learn' anything on those days. This brings me to another observation, one that might seem unrelated at first blush, but it is an observation I find germane to the argument I would like to make in this paper. The observation is this: After perusing the wonderful conference program for the 2015 ICPIC conference, and after attending

quite a few of the presentations at the conference, one thing is very striking.[3] The presentations at the 2015 ICPIC conference demonstrated a great deal of amazing teaching. One might even say that the majority of presentations were concerned with various ways of teaching in the context of Philosophy for Children. This fact is important to me because in this article I will argue that Philosophy for Children is a *teaching* movement, that Philosophy for Children is, or should be, concerned with teaching, as opposed to learning. And I want to argue that Philosophy for Children *as a teaching movement* is both important and necessary in today's overeducated world where lifelong learning has become the order of the day.

To begin this article, I will offer another personal anecdote, this one about my own education as a child in the 1960's and 70's. Then, I will situate the anecdote by detailing what I have elsewhere called "the logic of learning" (Bingham, 2015, in press). By the logic of learning, I mean the particular ways that learning has come to the fore in educational institutions. After detailing the logic of learning, I will make the case that teaching needs to be re-invigorated and that Philosophy for Children is an appropriate, and in fact required, for this to happen. I will suggest one way for teaching to be re-vitalized, that is, through the embracing of a relational conception of teaching authority.

An Educational Experiment Gone Awry

In 1968 I was eight years old, living in Tacoma, Washington, in the United States. At the time, educational innovations were commonplace and well-funded in the United States, with particular attention being paid to racial integration, especially in the South. As is well known, the Civil Rights movement was galvanized, in part, around demands for equity in education by means of school desegregation. In 1968, my mother was part of a parallel Civil Rights movement—albeit a movement not as well known historically—happening in the North. My mother, an upper-middle class white woman, was part of the Tacoma Urban League, a group that was working on a

[3] See http://icpic2015-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/06/ICPIC-Final-Program-June-16.pdf

number of fronts to combat *de facto* racism in the North. One of the Urban League's projects was to lobby real estate agents in an effort to make housing available to all races in all parts of the city. At the time, there was a lot of *de facto* segregation because real estate agents, for the most part, refused to show homes on the white side of town to African-American home-buyers. The North had its own version of segregation at the time. There wasn't segregation by law, but there was *de facto* segregation nevertheless.

Because of my mother's convictions to racial equality, she was excited to find out that a Tacoma school was to be re-tooled with a reverse-desegregation initiative. Reverse-desegregation can be described as follows: Whereas desegregated schools in the South bussed African-American children into schools in White neighborhoods, reverse-desegregated schools bussed White children into African-American neighborhoods. This meant that parents in our upper-middle class neighborhood had the opportunity to bus their children into McCarver Elementary school if they so chose. McCarver Elementary was located in a working-class neighborhood about 10 kilometers from where we lived. My mother convinced my father, and soon thereafter I found myself, at age seven, on a bus full of White children with progressive parents awaiting to arrive, on opening day, at the first reverse-desegregated school in the United States.[4]

It is worth noting, and germane to the argument I am making in this article, that this reverse-desegregated school was replete with innovation and government subsidies. Extra funding was allocated to the school because it qualified as an educational program promoting racial equality during a time in the United States when education was deemed a crucial component in the struggle to decrease racial tension and inequity. First of all, funding was allocated for the renovation of the school. Previously a rather typical school, McCarver was renovated in an "open concept" configuration (Maling). Walls between classrooms were torn down.

[4] A United States government report about McCarver Elementary School, written 12 years after it first opened, can be found at: https://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr12t11.pdf

Children walked from one classroom to another not down hallways, but moving from one unmarked group of desks to another. Children studied at desks, but also studied sitting on the carpet of what had formerly been the tiled floor of hallway.

Government subsidies also facilitated a complete reversal in McCarver's philosophy of education. In place of a traditional model of instruction-and-testing, the school embraced what was then called "Continuous Progress" (Mack). Continuous progress, as it was practiced at McCarver, was an educational philosophy that was completely learner-centered with very little, if any teaching. At McCarver, students tested into a particular level of an academic subject such as mathematics or English. Students were allocated their spots in particular classrooms based not on age, but on ability. Once placed among similar-ability children, students were given free reign to learn at their own pace, without intervention from teachers. Students were very interested in mathematics, for example, advanced quickly. Others, who showed no particular interest in advancing their learning were not bothered or chastised. They simply learned as much as they chose to learn.

Thus at McCarver Elementary School there were changes in who attended the school, what the school looked like, and how education was structured. There was, first and foremost, a unique effort to encourage racial harmony through reverse-desegregation. Then, there was educational innovation in the form of Continuous Progress. I would say that reverse-desegregation was a tremendous success at encouraging racial harmony. On the playground at McCarver, black and white children played soccer, football, jump-rope, softball, and tetherball together. We used the swings and monkey bars together. Together, we played the various imaginary games that sustain the unique creativity of all children. On the playground, there was racial intermingling that one would seldom witness in Tacoma, Washington in 1968.

On the other hand, the educational philosophy of Continuous Progress was, in my estimation, a complete failure in terms of the progressive goals espoused by a reconfigured McCarver Elementary school. Inside the renovated classrooms of our school, something very regressive was taking place. Namely, most of the children

from our upper middle-class neighborhood were excelling academically while most of the children from the local neighborhood of McCarver were not excelling. For example, I had tested into an upper level mathematics class wherein there was not a single child from the local neighborhood. Any sociologist of education will testify that this philosophy of education was destined to segregate rather than desegregate under such circumstances (Bowles and Gintis, Willis). The facts speak for themselves: Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, whose parents have lower educational attainment, tend to, in aggregate, have lower educational achievement than their peers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. McCarver was no exception. Many of the white kids who bussed into McCarver fared better in academic subjects than their African-American counterparts from the McCarver neighborhood.

Learnification and The Logic of Learning

Why do I tell this story? I tell it because, for me, it underscores the potential ill-effects of what Gert Biesta has called "learnification" (2005, 2011, 2012). At McCarver Elementary in the sixties and seventies, there was a stark turn toward learner-centrism in the form of continuous progress education. This is to say, continuous progress education was supposed to put the learner first and the teacher second. Following the educational philosophy of Continuous Progress, the learner was to set his or her own pace without interference from the teacher. This focus on the learner was new at the time, but this sort of learner-centrism has taken firm hold during subsequent decades.

Calling our educational era the era of "learnification," Biesta has documented a particular "language of learning," "…including the tendency to refer to teachers as facilitators of learning, to teaching as the creation of learning opportunities, to schools as learning environments, to students as learners and adults as adult learners, to the field of adult education as that of lifelong learning" (2012, p. 32). Indeed, learning has become a preferred term in education as a number of powerful discourses have

recently coalesced, without necessarily having conspired, to promote the learner while simultaneously demoting the teacher. As Biesta points out, the new language of learning has been bolstered by discourses of constructivism, critical pedagogy, informal learning, life-long learning, and of neo-liberalism (2012). To these discourses I would add the ubiquity of online learning opportunities deriving from unfettered access to text. With an omnipresent preference for learning, teaching appears to be fading in importance. If students can learn on their own, or learn online, it would seem that teachers are not necessary.

My own contribution to the research on learnification has been to identify a certain "logic of learning" (Bingham, 2015, in press). Below, I will detail five elements of the logic of learning. The reason I detail these elements is to show that the logic of learning, and especially its assault on teaching, needs to be identified as antagonistic toward Philosophy for Children and communities of inquiry.

Element 1: That learning *has* a logic. This element is perhaps the most essential aspect of the logic of learning. That learning has a logic might be said to derive from a longstanding tradition of theorizing *how people learn*. From Plato, to Rousseau, to John Dewey, to Maria Montessori, to Howard Gardner, educational thinkers have been offering up various figures-of-the-child in order to make the teacher better equipped to do his or her job (Bingham and Biesta, 2010). Current discourses on learning have not given up this idea that learning *has a logic*. Indeed, as teaching is assailed and learning is championed, such assailing and championing is often done in the name of this or that figure-of-the-child, a child who, assumedly, does not need a teacher in order to learn. That learning has a logic is not to say that learning has *one* particular logic. Many educational thinkers opine differently about what the logic of learning is. Nevertheless, these thinkers sustain the idea that learning is observable enough, or theorizable enough, or at least figure-izable enough, that we can talk about its logic—whatever the particular logic might be.

Element 2: Learning is instrumental. The logic of learning conceptualizes the learner as one who will acquire skills and knowledge to serve specific purposes. This

instrumental aspect of learning can be seen in numerous practices in educational institutions of all levels. From elementary schools to universities, the use of learning outcomes is a prime example of the instrumental nature of learning. Learning outcomes indicate demonstrable behaviors that students will obtain by the end of a certain period in their education. A typical learning outcome, this one from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champain Library's "Tips on Writing Learning Outcomes," states the following: "Students will be able to develop topic-relevant vocabulary in order to search databases with maximum flexibility and effectiveness" (Outcomes). While learning outcomes vary from subject to subject, and while learning outcomes are articulated in numerous ways at various levels of education, the central premise of any learning outcome is that students will gain a specific skill or disposition after they have finished their learning. Learning itself is thus posited as instrumental to specific, observable outcomes.

Element 3: Normation. Normation refers to the tendency to talk about learning as either on or off track, either right or wrong, either successful or unsuccessful. Discourses on learning, be they school-based, clinically based, or entrepreneurial, commonly entail the normative message that learning has a certain trajectory—and deviance from this trajectory means learning does not happen as effectively as it might otherwise happen. Thus in schools, one encounters the labels of 'slow learner,' or 'exceptional learner,' implying that the rate of learning has some 'natural' speed, and that any speed not commensurate with the natural one needs special attention. As another example, this time deriving from psychological discourse, one finds entries in the DSM of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder that are clearly aimed at learners: "…often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (e.g., schoolwork or homework…)" (DSM 5). There are also the ubiquitous, if costly, seminars that barrage teachers' emails daily, such as this one I received lately: "Strategies to reach students in poverty." The implication of this particular seminar is that students in poverty learn differently than other students.

Element 4: *That Teaching is the Same as Instruction*. Following the logic of learning, teaching is defined narrowly as instruction. This aspect of the logic of learning can be witnessed by looking to the beginnings of learnification in higher education. As an example, consider the widely-cited article of 1995 by Robert Barr and John Tagg, published in *Change: The Magazine of Higher Education* (1995). Entitled, "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Higher Education," this essay offers an argument as to why educators in post-secondary institutions should focus on learning rather than teaching. Barr and Tagg posit a binary of learning/teaching. Then they argue that there must be a shift from teaching to learning. In doing so, Barr and Tagg create a stereotype of teaching by assimilating teaching to *direct instruction*. Thus while any reasonable consideration of teaching would not assume that teaching consists completely, nor even primarily, of direct instruction, the "new paradigm" of learning premises its own necessity on a rather thin misrepresentation of teaching-as-instruction.

Element 5: Authority resides, or at least should reside, as the possession of the learner. This aspect of learning's logic derives both from the Cartesian model of the self's autonomy, and from the constructivist image of the acquiring mind. It is also related to the belief that authority is a substance rather than a relation (Bingham, 2009). The self-authorized learner finds his or her place in practices of self-regulated learning, online learning, as well as the continuous progress model of learning I experienced as a child. Following this logic of authority-as-substance, authority presents a zero-sum game: If the teacher 'has' more authority, then the student 'has' less.

Against the Logic of Learning

Now, my aim in detailing the logic of learning is to show that Philosophy for Children, as well as the community of inquiry model, need to be at odds with every single element of the logic of learning. I will take each element of the logic of learning in the above order, while giving more extended attention to the last two elements.

When examining the first three elements, it should not be missed that those opposed to Philosophy for Children are using these three elements to help bolster their cases against such philosophy. Take the first element: that learning has a logic. When adult philosophers claim, for example, that children are not "ready" for philosophy, they are clearly ensconced in the belief that learning has a certain logic, and that there is a certain figure of the child not yet ready for philosophy. The second element, instrumentalism, is also used by those who would rather see philosophy left to adults. It is used by those who claim that Philosophy for Children does not lend itself to the specific learning outcomes established by school districts and government oversight. The third element, normation, is also used as tool for criticism of Philosophy for Children. It is used by those who like to say that Philosophy for Children is not the same as "rigorous" philosophy. When Philosophy for Children is assailed as un-rigorous, such an attack is underwritten by certain normative assumptions about what constitutes rigor and what does not.

With regard to the last elements—that teaching is primarily instruction and that teaching authority should be 'given' to students—I would like to spend the rest of this paper addressing these two matters. With reference to these elements of learnification's logic, I would argue that Philosophy for Children has a new opponent that needs to be assailed. It is an opponent that is different from the opponent of decades ago when Matthew Lipman instigated his project of Philosophy for Children. In those initial decades, authoritarian teaching and rote instruction were identified as the obstacles to be overcome in order to practice Philosophy for Children (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011). While it is certainly the case that authoritarian teaching and rote instruction still exist, the educational pendulum has had a decidedly panoptic shift. Over the past five decades, the logic of learning has created a *general* aversion to authoritarian teaching and rote instruction. This has happened not so much because educators desire to teach differently, but rather because learnification has systematically eclipsed the significance of all teaching.

Michel Foucault would have termed this a panoptic shift (Foucault, 1979). To follow his metaphor of the panoptic prison gaze, the authoritarian guard—the authoritarian teacher—is no longer the oppressor. This kind of teacher, or any teacher for that matter, is simply not needed. The learner is responsible for his or her own learning in this educational version of panoptic self-surveillance. The logic of learning dismisses the authoritarian teacher and the rote instructor not because these represent undesirable models of teaching, and not because the logic of learning is progressive while authoritarianism is traditional. The logic of learning dismisses the authoritarian teacher and the rote instructor because teaching itself is said to be undesirable and unnecessary.

Philosophy for Children as a Teaching Movement

Following the logic of learning, it would be perfectly acceptable if students had no interaction with teachers. It would even be acceptable if students had no interaction with each other. Indeed, when I think back to my own experience at McCarver Elementary, I was experiencing one of the very first iterations of the logic of learning. One could describe that experience in this way: In order to bring the McCarver experiment of reverse integration to fruition, there had to be a number of great teachers. Indeed, at McCarver, there were many progressive teachers, teachers who were concerned with racial equality, with eradicating prejudice, with promoting positive identity recognition. These teachers were creating dialogue, cross-cultural dialogue. They were doing so in a rigorous, well-articulated, and indeed successful, manner. At McCarver Elementary, prejudices were being eradicated and social equality was being taught in a dialogic manner.

At the same time that these amazing teachers were working toward a truly dialogic experience for students and teachers, they were unfortunately embarking on the first wave of learnification. These teachers embraced a model of education with all the earmarks of the logic of learning. McCarver's Continuous Progress model was decades before its time. In the classroom, teaching itself was anathema. Students were

asked to learn on their own and at their own pace. Those socially progressive teachers who indeed established life-changing interactions with students outside of the academic setting, established a parallel learning environment that actually worked against the excellent work of these teachers. These teachers paradoxically embraced a powerful teaching paradigm—and at the same time rejected their own teaching—in the name of a nascent trend toward learnification.

I believe McCarver Elementary has something to teach Philosophy for Children. At this historical juncture, fifty years after forays into Continuous Progress, learnification and a commensurate logic of learning are more prevalent than ever. As the decades have passed, there has been very little critique of learning's logic. One major exception, as I have noted, is the work of Gert Biesta (2005, 2011, 2012). In contrast to rare instances of critique, it appears that the obviousness of learnification and its logic has become more obvious than ever. Thus when we talk about Philosophy for Children in today's context, we are talking about Philosophy for Children in times when teaching is commonly assimilated to instruction. And as instruction, teaching is often summarily dismissed as *not* necessary since learning happens by, and for, the learner. Moreover, teaching authority is usually construed as something teachers have, something they need to 'give' to students. Following the logic of learning, Philosophy for Children could easily be put in the precarious position of being learned rather than being taught. One could easily imagine Philosophy for Children being learned online, without teachers, with no dialogic interaction whatsoever. This is easily imagined following learning's logic.

This is why I say that Philosophy for Children is, or needs to be, a teaching movement. Philosophy for Children today stands to risk precisely what McCarver Elementary stood to risk fifty years ago. It risks losing its teaching even while teaching is its prime mover. Great, progressive, anti-racist teachers were the heart and soul of McCarver's dialogic project. Great, progressive teachers are the heart and soul of the Philosophy for Children that I am familiar with. Insofar as Philosophy for Children and communities of inquiry are dialogic projects, they will always reside

somewhere else than in—somewhere not within—the logic of learning. Just as in the case of McCarver Elementary, it is the teacher, or it is a group of teachers, who set(s) the stage for a dialogical encounter. This is not to say that students cannot equally set such a stage. That can of course occur too. It is rather to say that for such a stage to be set by a teacher, the teacher must teach. He or she must not disappear as per the logic of learning. This is why I say that Philosophy for Children must be a teaching movement.

It might be difficult for some practitioners and researchers to accept that Philosophy for Children needs to be a teaching movement. One might argue, for example, that Philosophy for Children is happily a part of the logic of learning and, therefore, that teaching should never be a primary focus. To be sure, the very phrase 'Philosophy for Children' owes something to the logic of learning insofar as the phrase is an effort to offer a revised figure-of-the-child, a figure where the child is deemed ready for philosophy. Thus it might be argued that Philosophy for Children began with learning's logic and needs to remain there. To this I would say that the logic of learning has changed from experimental to invidious over the past five decades. In that time, teaching has moved from being acceptable to being assailed. In this context, Philosophy for Children not only needs to retain its teaching, but can also serve to exemplify the dialogic potential of teaching in general. Furthermore, one might argue that children are being eclipsed within Philosophy for Children when one focuses on teaching. This argument, however, derives its sensibilities from the logic of learning wherein teaching authority somehow strips the learner of his or her own authority. As I have argued elsewhere, authority is relational (Bingham, 2009). Authority is not a substance to be taken away by one person, and allotted to another, in a zero-sum game**.**

Conclusion: Recovering Teaching, Authority is Relational

I would like to end this article with a discussion on one simple way to support teaching and reject the logic of learning. Specifically, this is a recommendation to

embrace teacher authority as a relation. As noted, one of the ways that learning's logic condemns teaching is by describing teaching authority as a substance that is possessed by the teacher in some sort of zero sum game. So when the teacher is said to "have" authority, the student is said to "have" none. It is possible, and I think necessary, to conceive of educational authority much differently. Learnification logic makes fairly primitive assumptions regarding authority. It presumes that authority is a thing, that it is a substance. According to this sort of explanation, the same mistake is made that a folk-meteorologist might make if he or she were to assume that wind is itself a substance. To be sure, one can take the position that wind is a substance in and of itself. And to the extent that one takes that position, it might even make sense to consider more wind as either a good or a bad thing. It even makes sense to say that we should try to stop the wind on certain occasions. Yet, from a more sophisticated, more accurate position, one should understand that wind is in fact a movement of air. It is a movement of air that exists in relation to the differing temperatures of various land masses and bodies of water. Wind exists only in relation to other circumstances. With a more sophisticated understanding of the wind, there is no meteorological sense in the endeavor to create more or less wind. There is only sense in asking how the wind acts in relation to different events.

It is the same with authority. Authority is not possession to be given or taken away. It is a relation that is enacted whenever there are two or more people. At a very basic level, even during a simple exchange of words between two people, authority gets enacted in relational ways. Whereas wind gets enacted depending on the differing temperatures of various land masses and bodies of water, authority gets enacted depending on the way various people interact in a particular relation. When a person speaks, I listen. What happens when I listen? The relation of authority begins. When I listen to another, I partake in authority. I partake as long as I halt my own speech long enough for the other to speak. When I listen, the other does not listen but speaks instead. I listen, the other speaks. Even through my listening, I enact a relation of authority. Through the other's speaking, authority is enacted as well.

Authority is not a "thing" lying in wait. It is not first "possessed" by the speaker, then "used." Authority does not happen until we, the listener and the speaker, enter a relation. As listener and speaker, neither of us "has" authority. Neither of us "succumbs" to authority. Authority is not present until the speaker is listened to. It is not present until the listener is spoken to. Authority comes to exist when the relation is made. Until the relation is made, authority is not yet present.

So authority gets enacted whenever one person speaks and another person listens. What's more, authority gets enacted *whenever there is a relation* between two or more people. Just as there is no way to avoid the enactment of authority once one has gained the ear of another, so, too, is there no way to avoid the enactment of authority once two or more people have entered into a relation with one another. As soon as there is a relation between human beings, there is authority. That is to say relation is a *sufficient* condition for the existence of authority. As well, the enactment of authority does not happen until there is a relation between human beings. Relation is also a *necessary* condition for the existence of authority.

To realize that authority is enacted whenever there is a relation between people, this realization calls for a reversal of the logic of learning's critique of teaching. Learnification logic assumes that the authority of teaching derives from the teacher's own intentions, that authority derives from the teacher's instructional practices. The logic of learning condemns teaching authority by considering such authority to be an autonomous possession of the teacher. Teachers should go away because, if they don't go away, they will dominate students through the direct transfer of knowledge. What happens in such a situation is this: In one fell swoop, the baby is thrown out with the bathwater. Relational authority is rejected through a misunderstanding of authority. Relation itself is interrupted because of this misunderstanding.

But authority is not something that the teacher, himself or herself, brings into the classroom. Nor is it something that can be given away to students. Rather, authority follows from both teacher and student. Authority gets enacted through

their relation. Thus, one cannot say that a teacher needs to yield authority so that a student can learn better. Learning and authority are not binary opposites. They are not opposites for the simple reason that authority takes place on a different register than the transfer or the acquisition of knowledge. Authority takes place on a relational register. And it is this register that we must never give up on. It is this relational register where Philosophy for Children and communities of enquiry flourish. This means one thing in particular: If Philosophy for Children is to flourish, teaching must flourish. For without teaching, we lose the educational relationality so central to P4C. In our era when the logic of learning dominates, Philosophy for Children would do well to re-think some of its original commitments and take a leading role in a nascent teaching movement.

References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM 5). 5th ed. http://dsm.psychiatryonline.org. proxy.lib.sfu.ca/doi/full/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm01#BCFHAEIJ

Barr, R. and Tagg, J. (1995). "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Higher Education." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Education,* 12-25.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2005). "Against learning. Reclaiming a language for education in an age of learning." *Nordisk Pedagogik*, Vol. 25, pp. 54–66.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2011). "From learning cultures to educational cultures. Values and judgements in educational research and educational improvement." *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 43(3), 199-210.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2012). "Giving Teaching Back to Education: Responding to the Disappearance of the Teacher," *Phenomenology & Practice*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 35-49.

Bingham, C. (2009) *Authority is Relational: Rethinking Educational Empowerment*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Bingham, C. (2015). "On the Logic of Learning and Relationalisty," *Philosophy of Education*, in press.

Bingham, C. and Biesta, G. (2010). *Jacques Rancière: Education, Truth, Emancipation*. New York: Continuum Press.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1977). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Kennedy, D. (1991). "The Community of Enquiry and Educational Structure" *The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 20-23.

Kennedy, N. and Kennedy, D. (2011). "Community of Philosophical Inquiry as a Discursive Structure, and its Role in School Curriculum Design," *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 45, No. 2, 265-283.

Mack, J. (2008) "Continuous Progress Schools See the "Whole Child," *Education*, 192.2, 324-326.

Maling, B. (1990). "Looking Back before Stepping Forward: Lessons from the Open Education Reform Movement of the 1970's," *Journal of Experiential Education* August 1990, 13: 18-24.

Sharp, A. M. (2007). "The Classroom Community of Inquiry as Ritual: How we can Cultivate Wisdom," *Critical and Creative Thinking*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 3-14.

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Library Description of Learning Outcomes. Accessed August 15, 2015. http://www.library.illinois.edu/infolit/learningoutcomes.html

Vansieleghe, N. and Kennedy, D. (2011). "What is Philosophy *for* Children, What is Philosophy *with* Children—After Matthew Lipman?" *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* Vol. 45, No. 2. 171-182.

Willis, P. (1981). *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Received in: 02/11/2015

Accepted in: 16/11/2015