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How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10 year olds?

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DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of Doctorate in Education (EdD) being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised the work of others.

Signature Student   ....   Date ....

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ABSTRACT

This action research project examines my development as a philosophy teacher and the impact my lessons have had on a class of 10-11 year old pupils. My wish was to develop a style of philosophy that best fitted my epistemological outlook – an outlook informed by poststructuralism.

This thesis chronicles my second year of philosophy teaching, during which I attempted to move beyond teaching philosophical thinking skills toward a philosophy that was inspired by my thoughts on post-structuralism. During the academic year 2009-2010, I took a Year 6 class (pupils aged between 10-11 year olds) for a series of weekly philosophy lessons. I did not have a clear idea of the direction the post-structuralist philosophy lessons would take, so I decided an action research project would help me to me make incremental improvements as the cycle progressed.

The action research project consisted of three cycles with each cycle concluding in an action plan to further improve the poststructural dimension of lessons.
A distinctive approach to teaching a post-structural influenced philosophy was developed.

The findings of the study show that a poststructuralist influenced philosophy has much to offer practitioners who wish to explore the practical application of poststructuralism in a classroom.

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Epigraph

When people see some things as beautiful,
other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good,
other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.

Therefore the Master
acts without doing anything
and teaches without saying anything.
Things arise and she lets them come;
things disappear and she lets them go.
She has but doesn't possess,
acts but doesn't expect.
When her work is done, she forgets it.
That is why it lasts forever.

Tao Te Ching by Lao-tzu
From a translation by S. Mitchell

Chapter 1

Introduction

This action research project examines my development as a philosophy teacher and the impact my lessons have had on a class of 10-11 year old pupils. In 2008, I attended a course on teaching philosophy to children, and I felt the subject could help pupils to develop a more reflective and thoughtful approach to their thinking and behaviours. My wish was to develop a style of philosophy that best fitted my epistemological outlook – an outlook informed by poststructuralism. In this section I introduce the two philosophers who have provided me with the inspiration to develop a poststructuralist-influenced philosophy. I then outline the theoretical perspectives of the research and the chosen research methods. The introduction closes with a summary of the anticipated benefits of teaching poststructural philosophy.

Personal and Professional Context

I am the headteacher of a large urban junior school on the outskirts of London. There are 20 full-time teachers working in the school, and 30 support staff. We are a popular and well-subscribed institution teaching 480 pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds, but mostly comprising White British children. The other largest groups come from an Asian British background, followed by British African pupils. Pupils come from 'average' social backgrounds, and almost all have attended a separate infant school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is in line with national norms. Each year, around 20-25% of our leaving Year 6 pupils go to local grammar schools, while those remaining attend non-selective high schools. The local authority is proud of its selective education system.

I have served for 20 years at the school, and in my time I have helped respond to a wide range of national initiatives, including Local Management of Schools (1990), the revised National Curriculum (2000; 2011), Primary Strategy (2003), Teacher Performance

Management (2004) and the Ofsted inspection process. Over this period, we have had four successful Ofsted inspections, with the last two (2006 and 2010) concluding the school is 'good' and provides 'outstanding' aspects to the pastoral curriculum.

I was originally prompted to begin an Education Doctorate degree as a way of giving myself a challenge (having spent over 15 years as a school leader) and improving my career opportunities. When I began the doctorate, I was unsure of what area I would like to research, but after seeking advice a college tutor suggested that 'underachieving boys' may be a suitable area of study. This seemed a topical theme, so I decided to focus on this theme; however, during the first year of the programme, I became uninterested in the subject, as I felt that too many 'experts' in the field were taking an essentialist notion of boys and were trying to offer quick-fix, one-size-fits-all solutions. In contrast, I became excited by the work of poststructuralist scholars in the field of gender studies, whose approaches, I felt, were far more nuanced – and I preferred their emphasis on the social construction of masculinity. As I developed my studies of poststructuralism, I became interested in philosophy, a subject that had never interested me in the past. Following Seneca, who advised 'docendo discimus' ('we learn by teaching'), I decided to start teaching lessons in my junior school with a view to deepening my understanding of the subject. If the lessons went well, I decided I would change my research theme to teaching philosophy to children.

During 2008-9, I began teaching philosophy lessons to each of the four Year 6 classes (10-11 year olds). I taught a lesson per week and over the year led 24 different enquiries, each class having four sessions. I regarded myself as a beginner in the field of teaching philosophy and read a number of books on the subject geared towards teaching primary school children. I also gained good advice and practical skills from attending three brief philosophy courses, Philosophy for Children (P4C).

During the philosophical enquiries, I became fascinated with and privileged to hear the insightful and thoughtful views of the pupils, and I was also delighted with how they improved their ability to discuss ideas with others. However, I also became aware of how much they were influenced by the government's promotion of individualism and consumerism, and many of the pupils viewed education solely as a means to getting a good job. Role models are commonly the rich and famous, and a successful life is often seen by the children as one involving high spending power combined with a life of leisure! Popular future jobs for the children increasingly include being television

celebrities and actors, footballers and pop stars, while any ideas of serving the community, improving society, working in the 'caring' professions or living a simpler and more ecologically friendly lifestyle are less valued. Pupils at my school feel pressured by the need to be successful and to be seen as 'cool' by their peers.

In teaching philosophy I wished to provide Year 6 pupils with more of an opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills, in an attempt to help counter what I believe are pressures to conform to the commercially-driven values of society: values that promote materialism and individualism. The lessons were intended to help pupils consider a range of choices that would help them live more successfully and in greater harmony with others. I believed that if I could develop a poststructural-orientated philosophy, I would be even more successful in my goals.

At this stage I was passionate about the teaching of philosophy and so decided to make this my area of study for the Doctorate.

This thesis chronicles my second year of philosophy teaching, during which I attempted to move beyond teaching philosophical thinking skills and more toward a philosophy that was inspired by my thoughts on poststructuralism. During the academic year 2009-2010, I took a Year 6 class for a series of weekly philosophy lessons. I did not have a clear idea of the direction the poststructuralist philosophy lessons would take, so I decided an action research project would help me to me make incremental improvements as the cycle progressed.

The action research project involved one class of pupils aged 10-11 years old, whom I took for a weekly 45-minute philosophy lesson. The lessons began in May (when the pupils were in Year 5) and continued through to February 2010, while the research consisted of three cycles. The information for each cycle led to an action plan that helped me to improve my pedagogical approaches to the subject.

Cycle 1 – May-July 2009

Cycle 2 – October-December 2009

Cycle 3 – January-May 2010

In the first cycle, I developed the modest initiative of developing a series of enquiries that sought to develop thinking skills by discussing ethical themes. In Cycle 2, I developed a poststructural pedagogy and introduced poststructural reflection to the pupils. During these first two cycles, I drew upon P4C and traditional teaching philosophy to children materials, to help with lesson planning. In the final cycle, I was far less reliant on P4C and traditional philosophy materials, and I developed a distinctive approach to teaching a poststructural philosophy, which included 'digital writing'. The aim of a poststructural-influenced philosophy is to develop our capacity to use reasoning skills effectively, in combination with an ability to reflect on the way language, culture and our history shape our assumptions. Derrida (1976) and Foucault (1972) acknowledge the role structures have in moulding our thoughts and actions, but they do not feel that humans are passive beings trapped in rigid structures.

Research Question

My project centred on the question: **How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10-year-olds?**

This question was divided further into three specific sub-questions, namely:

1. How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

2. Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

3. How do the pupils perceive the subject?

Methods of Data research

An action research approach to the thesis was undertaken for three reasons:

1. Action research follows the poststructural view that the researcher is unable to adopt a scientifically detached view when discovering the 'facts' of the matter. Instead, in this

project, I am located within the action, which allows me to record my 'findings' in a text that can be studied in order to reveal new insights that could lead to improved practice.

2. Poststructuralism is highly theoretical, but it also promotes a series of practices that seek to enhance justice and equality (Williams 2006). This fits well with action research and its emphasis on praxis.

3. An action research project allows me to avoid being the expert researcher who intends to prove certain theses. As such, I am able to begin the research in a state of not knowing how to develop the philosophical project, which thus encourages me to keep an open mind and to learn from others throughout the project. Not knowing or giving up mastery is one of the hallmarks of poststructuralism (Johnson 1994).

Research Strategy

Data Collection and Analysis

<u>Journal</u>

Brown and Jones (2001), using a Derridean approach, provide a useful model for action researchers. The key research instrument is reflective writing (through a journal) produced by the practitioner researcher.

The use of the journal is not an attempt to capture a 'true' first-person account of the area under study; rather, it is a series of narratives that shape the way the researcher constructs the situation, '[t]hat is to say, written descriptions of classroom practice, undertaken by the practitioner researcher, change the reality attended to by that practitioner' (Brown and Jones 2001: 8). Furthermore, Brown and Jones acknowledge that even the way the researcher presents themselves in a journal can never achieve the full presence or the truth of its author, as the researcher portrays him or herself in a particular way (often as the caring and concerned individual who wants to repair the situation), and it is often omissions in the journal that are the most telling!

<u>Interviews</u>

Eight pupils were interviewed for their views at the end of each cycle. These pupils remained the same throughout, and I was able to chronicle their changing perceptions as the lessons progressed. The same eight pupils were interviewed at the end of each of the three cycles, as I wished to chart their changing opinions of the lessons as we advanced from the introduction to the subject and then to its establishment within the school. The pupils were randomly selected: I asked for volunteers for the interviews, and nine girls and 11 boys volunteered. As I wanted an even gender mix, I conducted a lottery between the girls and boys separately, and I ended up with four boys and four girls.

Questionnaires

At the end of each cycle, all pupils in the class completed a questionnaire, to give their views on my effectiveness as a philosophy teacher and how they perceived the lessons. An additional source of data involved three lesson observations conducted by senior staff during each phase of the cycle.

Ethical Considerations

Action research is open, democratic and, above all, ethical. As such, I observed the highest standards of ethics during this study and scrupulously followed the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Guidelines for Research 2011. In addition, I obtained permission to conduct my research from the chair of governors and the Ethics Committee of Greenwich University, as well as written confirmation of permission given by the pupils and their parents. I also regularly made my pupils aware of their role as collaborators in the study and observed strict confidentiality by not naming them, the teachers or the school.

I am aware of the ethical issues regarding interviewing children, and in accordance with the school's child protection policy there was always another adult in attendance in the room. I conducted the interviews at the school and did all that I could to make the pupils feel relaxed. The information remained confidential and anonymous, and I honoured the right of the pupils and adults to withdraw from the research at any time.

Diary data were stored securely in a locked cupboard in the school office, and after the research was completed it was destroyed (i.e. shredded) in September 2010. I also ensured that individual staff could not be recognised through the analysis of my diary entries, by using pseudonyms and by ensuring the contextual information of an account of conversations did not reveal the person.

Benefits of the Programme

I hoped the pupils would enjoy and see the benefits of philosophy in developing their reasoning skills and gaining awareness of the roles culture and language have on our thinking. The regular practice of listening to other viewpoints should broaden their perspectives and give them deeper insights into the variety of lifestyles and personal values experienced by pupils in the class. I also wanted them to gain a sense of empowerment by having their views listened to and knowing that practices in the school had changed because of what was expressed in an enquiry. As a headteacher and philosophy teacher, I wished to improve our pastoral approaches, to ensure no groups of pupils were silenced or disadvantaged. This interaction with pupils would give me an insight into where improvements could be made, and I hoped that enough interest would be generated within the school for other teachers to take philosophy lessons.

This introductory chapter has outlined my professional background and the context of the research. I have chronicled my developing interest in teaching philosophy using P4C methods and then developed a desire to teach a poststructural-influenced approach to the subject. In addition, I have provided an overview of the action research project, which developed over three cycles. However, before detailing the development of the philosophy programme (Chapter 4), the next chapter will undertake a literature review of teaching philosophy in primary schools, particularly in the UK. Chapter 3 will then provide an overview of the two poststructural philosophers that I have used to inform my approach to teaching the subject. This chapter is written in a highly personalised style, whilst the next two chapters present a review of the literature in a formal academic style.

The personal style returns in Chapter 4, in order to align with the writing genre of action research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Teaching Philosophy in Primary Schools

This chapter examines the literature on teaching philosophy in primary schools, particularly in the United Kingdom. The literature has been categorised into the following three broad approaches: thinking skills, enquiry-based philosophy and academic philosophy. Thinking skills and enquiry-based philosophy are the more popular forms of approaches in the UK, thereby providing more extensive literature than academic philosophy.

Critical and Reflective Thinking in Schools

> Dictionaries, correctly, inspiringly, but unhelpfully, define "philosophy" as "love of wisdom," but a better definition would be reflective and critical enquiry… A training in critical and reflective thought, a training in handling ideas, is of the essence in this new and demanding environment. Philosophy thus provides both the individual development and enrichment, and a bright set of apt intellectual tools for meeting the world's challenges (Grayling in Hand and Winstanley 2008: viii).

Over the past 15 years, there has been growing interest in developing approaches to assist pupils in developing their reflective and critical skills, in order to help them cope with the challenges of modern life. Prior to this period, the work of the developmental psychologist Jean Piaget had a strong influence on the way educationalists viewed pupils' ability to think. Piaget's research (2001) concluded that children were unable to think critically until the age of 11 or 12. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, this view was challenged by educationalists who used the research findings of Bruner (1997) and

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Vygotsky (1986) to argue that pupils younger than 11-12 are indeed capable of critical thinking.

In the UK, primary schools keen on developing these skills have employed three distinct approaches: i) thinking skills, ii) enquiry-based philosophy and, less commonly, iii) academic philosophy. This chapter begins with an outline of the contexts in which we find creative and critical thinking, and then it continues with a review and evaluation of the literature on these three approaches.

Thinking Skills

The advocacy of thinking skills programmes in schools originates from changing views on the skills needed in modern society (Abbot and Ryan 2000; Rose 1997). One of the aims of the National Curriculum in England and Wales is that:

> […] education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work. In particular, we need to be prepared to engage as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, social and cultural change, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society, with new work and leisure patterns and with the rapid expansion of communication technologies.

Countries in Europe have reduced the requirements necessary to teach a body of knowledge and have promoted the use of transferrable skills, including creative and thinking skills and problem solving, to develop deep learning and life skills relevant for the 21st century (MacBeath 1999; Scottish Executive Department, 2000). Abbot and Ryan (2000) and Powney and Lowden (2000) contend that the need for this change in emphasis in education is also recognised by employers, who wish to have flexible and adaptable workers that have an open mind to change and a commitment to lifelong learning.

However, according to recent study findings, the aim behind improving critical and creative thinking without specialised programmes may be limited. The Study of Interactive Learning (SPRINT) project (Hargreaves and Moyles 2002) showed that teachers increased the proportion of questions in relation to information dissemination; however, pupil contributions were hardly ever 'extended' and dialogue was overly controlled by the teacher. Hargreaves and Moyles expressed reservations about the limited demand for extended thinking in the National Literacy Strategy in England and other areas of the curriculum. Black and William (1998) proposed that developing independent and reflective thinking through dialogue was important for raising standards, although they added a note of caution, namely that 'There is no "quick fix" with promises of rapid rewards'. Watkins (2001) analysed 66 studies and found that an emphasis on thinking and learning improved academic performances, while conversely an emphasis on performance targets could possibly lower achievement.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (2004) placed great emphasis on thinking skills (e.g. synthesising, analysing, evaluating and justifying), attitudes (e.g. open-mindedness and respect for all) and concepts (e.g. 'God', 'goodness') in religious education. Lake and Needham (1995) published a popular textbook, 'Top Ten Thinking Tactics', which was designed to develop the capabilities of 8-10 year olds through ten cognitive strategies, while Feurerstein et al.'s (1980) Instrumental Enrichment Programme (IEP) provided decontextualised paper and pencil exercises that developed in complexity through 14 'instruments'.

The Somerset Thinking Skills course (Blagg et al. 1988) consisted of eight cognitive processes drawn from Feuerstein's IEP and had the ambition of developing positive attitudes about learning to learn and strengthening problem-solving ideas, communication and self-esteem. Furthermore, De Bono's (1987) Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) thinking programme aimed at improving thinking skills in a series of carefully structured lessons.

Research into thinking skills shows that nearly all the relevant programmes and practices studied were shown to have improved the achievement of pupils (Adey & Shayer 1994;

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McGuinness, 1999; Sternberg and Bhana 1996; Trickey 2000; Wilson 2000). Cotton (2002), for instance, reviewed 56 studies and found that all of them, to varying degrees, reported benefits for pupils. Longitudinal studies found that thinking skills instruction hastened the learning advancement of participating pupils, and those with true or quasi-experimental designs almost always concluded that experimental students made significantly better progress than control groups.

Whilst the research into thinking skills programmes produce improved results, Trickey and Topping (2004) noted that few studies entailed short- or long-term follow-ups. McGuinness (1999) warned that such benefits produced by these programmes may only be short term, while Adey and Shayer (1994) optimistically suggested that perhaps there may be 'sleeper' gains that could come into effect, long after the project has ended.

However, Bonnet (1994) was suspicious of the thinking skills methods, which he characterised as an instrumentalist approach to empowering pupils through the transmission of core skills. He questioned whether the identified skills outlined in the programmes actually existed as discrete competencies and abilities, and he was not convinced that they could be taught separately as specific skills which could then be applied to real problems. For Bonnet, this created a false separation between the thinker and the world, something that may even encourage us to see the environment as a resource at the service of humankind.

Haynes (2002) was also critical of the thinking skills movement, regarding it as too mechanistic, and instead he favoured the communities of philosophy enquiry approach:

> If we are concerned to develop our thinking, we need to move beyond an overly structured, narrow and rigid tradition of logical thinking and argument. This is particularly the case when that type of thinking takes us always in the direction of closure, polarisation and the irreconcilable, and away from solution, decision or ambiguity and suspended judgement. Our habitual ways of thinking must allow us to live, in the full sense of the word, with rapid change and uncertainty, with unprecedented adjustments in time and motion as well as with the ordinariness of everyday life, with highly intelligent technology and with the enormous power of information management (Haynes 2002: 40).

The community of philosophical enquiry may offer a way out of instrumentalism, as it still offers critical thinking because it claims to offer the virtue of providing a more philosophical approach to problem-solving (Delghausen 2004).

Enquiry-based Philosophy

The idea of community is a central theme in current educational practice, and it appears in a wide range of approaches. Communities of learners (Rogoff, Matusov and White 1996), classroom community (Bridges 1995) and the community of practice (Wenger, 1998) are examples of this notion. The idea of a community of philosophical enquiry began with the work of Peirce (1986), a scientist and philosopher, who set himself the goal of bringing what he saw as a new scientific rigour and logic to philosophy. With his theoretical perspective on pragmatism, he challenged the orthodox Cartesianism framework of philosophy, whereby the individual can reflect on the world and uncover truth through the powers of reasoning.

The philosopher/scientist asserted that '[…] to make single individuals absolute judges of truth is most pernicious' (Peirce 1986: 229). He added:

> In sciences in which men come to agreement when a theory has been broached, it is considered to be on probation until this agreement is reached. After it is reached, the question of certainty becomes an idle one, because there is no one left who doubts it. We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore, for the *community* of philosophers. Hence, if disciplined and candid minds carefully examine a theory and refuse to accept it, it ought to create doubts in the mind of the author of the theory himself (Pierce 1986: 229).

The community of philosophical enquiry involves a group of people joining together and forming a jury to evaluate ideas and hypotheses. Murphy (1990) explained that when a group involved in the enquiry reaches a consensus, 'one can speak of knowledge, truth and reality, but these concepts will be grounded in the *community* of enquirers, not in the individual consciousness'. Peirce (1986) believed the production of knowledge model would be refined over time by the community of enquiry and eventually lead us to the 'real', i.e. rock-bottom, reality.

A popular form of community philosophical enquiry in Germany and the Netherlands, and to a much lesser extent in England, is the Socratic method, which is based on the work of Leonard Nelson (2010) and Gustav Heckmann (2004). Nelson believed the method promoted the 'forcing of minds to *freedom.* Only persistent pressure to speak one's mind, to meet every counter-question, and to state the reasons for every assertion transforms the power of that allure into an irresistible compulsion' (Nelson in Saran & Neisser 2004:139). The aim of the enquiry is to press pupils to express their thoughts clearly, to use logic and to offer their views for critique by others. The teacher's role is to use probing questions to draw out the pupils' ideas and then to finish with a group vote to reach a majority view.

A community of enquiry approach, Philosophy for Children (P4C), was pioneered in America by Mathew Lipman in the 1960s at Montclair State University in New Jersey, and it was further refined by Gareth Matthews at the University of Massachusetts. Lipman (2003) used Peirce's idea of a community of enquiry as the central methodology for philosophy lessons with children, and he also shared Peirce's pragmatism in his approach. In addition, he drew on the theories of John Dewey (1916), a pragmatist philosopher, who believed in the need to educate pupils so that they could play an active role in democracy. For Dewey (employing the theories of Vygotsky's socio-constructivist perspective), the importance of drawing on pupils'
 interests and using real-life contexts was key in devising a pedagogy for citizenship. Lipman was disappointed with his students during the political unrest of 1968 that spread to many universities in America, as he believed they were incapable of engaging critically with the events that had begun in Paris in that year. Lipman (2003) believed the younger generation needed to acquire deeper thinking skills for them to resolve democratically the many problems emerging in society. In addition, he felt that schools should introduce a structured approach to developing the necessary skills for democracy, so he proposed teaching philosophy to pupils as young as six or seven years old. Consequently, he devised a teaching programme, P4C, which contained lessons and stories to start philosophical enquiry, with the aim of developing pupils' creative, caring and collaborative skills (Lipman 2003). Typically, philosophy sessions (usually called enquiries) begin with a stimulus, which can be a short story, poem, object or piece of music, and pupils are encouraged to think of philosophical questions based on these stimuli.

An early pioneer in the UK, Murris (1993) developed picture books, because she found Lipman's stories 'dated' (Murris and Haynes 2000). In her approach, a vote is taken on the most favoured question and the enquiry is chaired by a facilitator whose purpose is to encourage a skilful and democratic debate. Jones (2008), a P4C trainer, notes the aim of the enquiry is not to reach a consensus but rather to allow pupils the experience of collaborative dialogue and to deepen their thinking skills. Disagreements are treated as valuable opportunities to learn to respect different points of view. Further pioneers in the UK include Ord, who employs pictures to invoke responses from pupils, Williams, who emphasises the use of structured dialogue, and Buckely, who promotes a kinaesthetic approach through the playing of games. The P4C approach to philosophy does not require a formal qualification in the subject, and it can be taught to teachers in just a few days. It has attracted a dedicated and enthusiastic following and has spread across the world to locations such as Australia, China, South Korea, Mexico, Norway and South Africa.

P4C has continued to grow in popularity in the UK over the past two decades, and particularly since the government's Excellence and Enjoyment (2006) paper, in which schools were encouraged to develop more creativity and innovation in teaching and learning approaches. Sutcliff (2006) states that in England and Wales approximately 2,000 primary schools offer P4C, together with 200 secondary schools (ICPIC 2006), while McCall maintains that 10,000 children are involved in P4C lessons in Scotland (http://sophia.eu.org). Teaching philosophy to children is promoted in the UK by the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE), which advocates intellectually rigorous communal dialogic enquiry into central, common and contestable concepts.

A flagship school for the UK is Galleons Primary School, London, which promotes a video enthusiastically contending that the use of P4C has been the most significant factor in helping the school achieve an outstanding OFSTED report. The video repeatedly reminds us that the outstanding OFSTED grade has been achieved despite the fact the intake draws on those who live in 'social housing'.

Sternberg and Bhana (1996) studied 20 evaluation studies of P4C and expressed reservations about the many positive benefits cited; they argued that most of the evaluations lacked a firm control group:

[I]ssues of subject drop-out, class selection durability, transfer, subject population, and experimenter bias were generally not addressed. Statistical analysis was often reported in only the most minimal detail: in some cases, significance levels were presented with no descriptive or inferential statistics (Sternberg and Bhana 1996: 64).

However, despite their reservations, they were 'favourably disposed toward the data reported', acknowledged the improved scores on verbal tests relating to critical thinking skills and concluded that P4C and similar programmes were more stimulating and motivating than most thinking skills programmes.

Fisher (1999) argued that it is problematic to evaluate P4C, because it has a wide variety of objectives and therefore is unsuitable for being judged fairly by most evaluative instruments. Barron and Sternberg (1987) supported this view, noting that Lipman constantly changed the criteria he used to evaluate P4C, including the ability of students to provide examples to support their views, to be able to articulate a challenge to a peer, to ask probing questions, to use their own experience to justify a view and the ability to look for connections.

Lacewing (2007) distinguished P4C from academic philosophy by highlighting the role of the product. He claimed that 'each P4C enquiry begins "anew"', and the product is 'very provisional' and has the tendency to result in a 'reinvention of the wheel'. Whilst academic philosophy incorporates the philosophical skills of P4C, it has the advantage of drawing upon a wide range of philosophers to deepen or broaden the enquiry. I agree with Lacewing and with Rorty (2000), who notes that access to knowledge relating to key philosophers and the philosophical movement allows the philosopher to be aware of all the moves and arguments. The influence of Dewey's (1996) self-discovery methods is strong in the enquiry approach, and whilst the practice of exploring thinking through first-hand experience is vital, the movement, I believe, underplays the role of enriching thinking by tapping into the ideas of past and present philosophers.

Wilson (cited in Murris, 2007a) differentiated P4C by stressing the abstraction and 'higher-order' thinking and reasoning of the latter. Academic philosophy is underpinned by abstract philosophising about general principles, while P4C is marked, he upheld, by philosophising about concrete examples. Wilson argued that P4C suffers from 'educational ideology', i.e. it assumes that philosophy is merely a case of questioning, reasoning and enquiry; yet, not all of these elements are philosophical.

Academic Philosophy

I use the term "academic philosophy" to describe the study of critical and reflective thinking taught with reference to philosophers, philosophical vocabulary and key ideas. According to Worley (2011), pupils learn the skills of creative and critical thinking but are also able to link their ideas to the broader tradition of the subject. The UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and Eurydice at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), hold records of the curriculum syllabuses offered in 20 'economically developed' countries, namely Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hungry, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and Wales (www.inca.org.uk). None of these countries offers philosophy as a national subject for the primary and lower-secondary age range. In Brazil, however, philosophy is a compulsory subject in most secondary and some primary schools, and in 2004, a Norwegian White Paper suggested introducing philosophy as a statutory subject, which was tested in Norwegian primary and secondary schools. In countries where the subject is taught, it is usually offered as an optional theme for the post-compulsory age group, and enrolment rates for this course are usually a small percentage of the total student population (Hand and Winstanley 2008). For instance, in the UK, only one public examination board offers the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education in philosophy. In 2007, only 3,001 students finished the course, with a further 2,009 in the same year completing a critical thinking course (which had a large philosophy module). With so few pupils studying academic philosophy in secondary schools, it is unsurprising to find a limited amount of literature on teaching academic philosophy in primary

settings. However, there are some materials available for those wishing to develop academic philosophy for the 7-11 age group.

The few teachers training in philosophy have specialised at the upper end of secondary schools and therefore have not had the opportunity to influence or share good practice in the primary sector. The popularity of P4C and thinking skills is due to the fact that teachers can receive some initial brief training (typically one to three days) and can begin lessons immediately thereafter. Few teachers in primary schools would have a degree in the subject, and in England there is no national organisation dedicated to teaching academic philosophy to this age group. However, a small group of UK pioneers (based around the 'Philosophy Shop' company) are enthusiastic about academic (or as they call it, 'practical') philosophy and regard P4C as a dilution of the discipline.

Worley (2008) is an enthusiastic promoter of 'practical' philosophy, which he regards as 'real philosophy', and for him the second-best choice is P4C. He is the director of a commercial website, 'The Philosophy Shop', which offers training courses in teaching philosophy for those with a background in the subject. Unlike P4C training, which is intended for trained teachers, Worley's courses are aimed at philosophers who wish to be employed as peripatetic teachers in schools. He makes the distinction between enquiry (which he regards as the concern of P4C) and practical philosophy, which should only be taught by educators qualified in the discipline. Furthermore, he acknowledges the work of Lipman and uses many of his ideas to promote enquiries, although he feels it is important to introduce pupils to canonical philosophers and some of the key questions posed by the subject.

Worley claims that his work with children (currently he teaches in 13 primary schools) shows that they can develop a range of philosophical skills and competencies, including conceptual analysis, abstract thinking, generality, complex reasoning, non-empirical reasoning, an understanding of the history of philosophy and the ability to re-evaluate (2008).

In recent years, Worley (2001) has developed an approach he calls 'philosophical enquiry' (PhiE) for non-specialists to use in the development of philosophy. A series of enquiries is outlined and begins with a thought experiment. For example:

> Imagine Tom discovers that he was once someone else, called Jeff. Jeff was a bad person who committed all sorts of crimes, but an operation was performed on him to remove Jeff's memories and to have them replaced with a new set of fictional memories of an entirely different kind of person: those of Tom. Tom is a good, law-abiding citizen. Who would you consider this person to be: Tom of Jeff? (Worley 2011: 15)

PhiE aims at developing philosophical thinking and providing information about the major philosophical themes and key ideas of Western philosophers.

I believe the works of Worley and his colleagues offer a fruitful avenue of enquiry to develop philosophy. I also agree with Worley that it is important to have good subject knowledge of philosophy, in order to teach it effectively. Indeed, a teacher should be knowledgeable about any subject he or she teaches, and I do not feel an exception should be made with philosophy. I also agree with him that philosophy should be developed in the spirit of Socrates by being concerned with helping us to "live the good life" by exploring one's values. Furthermore, philosophy lessons should focus on issues to help pupils, which they can then apply to their daily lives and get them thinking about their role as future citizens.

However, the drawback of teaching academic philosophy, the history of the "famous dead," may end up being a dry subject. Nevertheless, I believe Worley's (2008) instincts are correct in his acknowledgment of the strengths of Lipman's philosophical enquiry approach because, despite the limitations of enquiry methods, this strength lies in the varied and stimulating teaching methods that have been developed over the past 40 years. Since they have been designed for the non-specialist, care has been taken in developing a pedagogical approach that works with pupils. Thus, the use of their materials and courses, which provide advice on useful information such as introductory games, suitable literature and other starting points, helps in developing pupils' responses, assessments and leading an enquiry. SAPERE runs a website that provides teachers with ideas and the opportunity to network and to share good practice with one another. I agree with Worley that the next key ingredient is a teacher who loves the subject of philosophy and who can relate the responses of children to the wider thoughts of the tradition. This avoids

reinventing the wheel and allows those pupils drawn to the subject to consult philosophical texts and deepen their understanding.

Worley's practical philosophy, the enquiry approach and aspects of thinking skills have much to offer, and as such I support their goal of producing more responsible and caring citizens who are able to take an active part in (as AC Grayling puts it) 'meeting the world's challenges' (Grayling 2008). Nonetheless, I believe this cannot be achieved by better thinking alone, so we need to develop a critical awareness of the largely hidden role that power and language have to play in the generation of knowledge or truth claims.

This chapter has detailed the three main approaches to teaching philosophy in schools, namely thinking skills, enquiry-based philosophy and academic philosophy. Although all three approaches have much to offer schools, I intend to demonstrate in the following chapters that a poststructural-influenced philosophy provides an exciting and alternative way of developing the subject. Chapter 3 contains an account of the theories of Foucault and Derrida. This variant of philosophy retains the core skills of the above programmes, namely reflective, reflexive and critical thinking, but it also includes a consideration of the politics of knowledge. In the following chapter I introduce the poststructural theories of Derrida and Foucault, who emphasise the role of language in the formation of our subjectivity and in our meaning making. I then turn my attention to addressing the challenges of researching in the poststructural paradigm which call for a different approach. Entering the next stage of the discussion involves a different kind of discourse, namely the highly theoretical discourse of poststructuralism.

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Derrida and Foucault

This chapter introduces poststructural theory, the complex ideas of which place demands on the reader, if unfamiliar with the paradigm. I shall show how postructualists have radicalised the insights of Ferdinand Saussure, Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl and the structuralist movement, and I shall also provide a review of the literature on the two philosophers Derrida and Foucault, from whom I draw inspiration and who assisted me in developing an approach to teaching philosophy to children. I intend to show that the mix of the two philosophers' views which have informed my research methods are consistent with their brands of poststructuralism. The review of the theories of Derrida and Foucault will also inform the development of my aforementioned programme of teaching philosophy to children, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Poststructuralists posit that language is a salient factor in moulding our conception of the world, life and the human subject, and instead of it reflecting the 'real world', it structures and produces our conception of 'reality'. We are not merely the speakers of language but are constituted thereby. To paraphrase Martin Heidegger, language speaks to us. Therefore, instead of the individual having a clear view of reality, language is the mediator between the two.

Although these philosophers had their differences with one another, their paths converge upon the common ground of the role of discourse in forming our understanding, power and ethics (Boyne 1990). They also had a wish to re-examine the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, to suit the modern period (Gutting 2005; Powell 2006). Foucault's methods and Derrida's deconstruction provide powerful tools to support philosophy lessons in schools, because they challenge the idea that it should involve detached, abstract thinking to discover universal truths. Whilst neither rejects logical thinking, they both advocate considering the politics of knowledge, i.e. the roles that language, culture and history have played in forming our ideas and how they have limited us in thinking 'otherwise.'

A common misconception of Foucault and Derrida is that they are postmodern philosophers who denigrate Western philosophical tradition by promoting a form of anarchistic relativism in which "anything goes." From this point of view, texts mean anything the reader wants them to mean; the canonical philosophers of the tradition are irrelevant, as they have gained their status by imposing their will on others. In addition, institutions are just power-plays set up to oppress everyone, and language has imprisoned us within its meaningless play of signifiers that have no firm reference to reality.

Furthermore, poststructuralism is not a form of solipsism that claims all we have is subjectivity and no access to reality – we may not have a transparent view of the material work, but neither is it entirely opaque. As Caputo writes, 'Derrida is not trying to bury the idea of "objectivity," but, a little like Kant, to force a more sensible version of it than of some ahistorical *Ding-an-sich* (1997:80)." The crisis of representation does not signal

the end of representation itself but rather the end of pure presence. There is not getting outside representation, but in the poststructural turn there is a move from representing things in themselves to highlighting the 'sign, structure and play' web of social relations (Derrida, 1978).

My reading of Foucault and Derrida within the Kantian tradition provides a way of avoiding some of the extreme interpretations and implications of poststructuralism. It also assists in providing a more useful basis for developing a poststructuralist influence to teaching philosophy to 10 year olds. Following Blake et al. (1998), I have placed the two philosophers within a post-foundational framework suggesting that although meaning may not have a single ahistorical basis, there may nevertheless be multiple grounds, albeit depending on the context. The term "foundationalism" refers to theories that are seen as ultimate truths that do not warrant revision and are regarded as located outside of culture, history and language (Herzog 1985). It is therefore a mistake to assume that a rejection of foundationalism implies the adoption of the opposite position, anti-foundationalism, which proposes that all truths are valid. The disadvantage of foundationalism is that it excludes core beliefs that do not fit its worldview, while the disadvantage of anti-foundationalism is that all truths are regarded as valid and as leading to relativism.

As Butler notes, we cannot rid ourselves of the notion of foundations, and so as an alternative we need to weaken their ontological status and regard them as contingent:

> And the point is not to do away with foundations, or even to champion a position that goes under the name of anti-foundationalism. Both of those positions belong together as different versions of foundationalism and the sceptical problematic it engenders. Rather, the task is to interrogate what the theoretical move that establishes

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foundations authorizes, and what precisely it excludes or forecloses (Butler: in Steven Seidman1 994:158).

I shall now provide a literature review of Derrida and Foucault, in order to demonstrate how their "tools" may help us to gain an insight into ideas and concepts that have been excluded from dominant viewpoints. These tools, to paraphrase Derrida, are the gateway to welcoming the incoming of the other.

Derrida

This section will focus on aspects of Derrida's philosophy that I have used to develop my approach to teaching philosophy to children. His post-Kantian critical perspective, methods of philosophy (deconstruction) and promotion of teaching philosophy in schools will now be reviewed.

Derrida was a controversial figure on the philosophical scene, because he questioned philosophy's privileged status as the premier discipline for discovering universal truths and contended that Western philosophy was flawed due to its allegiance to the realist view of language and its search to discover firm foundations to knowledge.

Derrida unsettles our blind faith in reason by critiquing the realist understanding of language – the view that it is able to provide an accurate representation of the world 'out there', i.e. objective reality. Using the insights of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, Derrida argued that words do not represent things in the world but are instead the product of its differential terms in the language system as a whole (Saussure 1983). For Derrida and de Saussure, the problem inherent in language is that it is a system of differences in which signs have no essential meaning on their own. As Hepburn puts it, '[…] the meaning of a sign comes about through the differences that distinguish it from every other sign, rather than through the identification of its essential properties (Hepburn 1999: 660)'. For instance, one could play a game of chess by replacing a king with a stone, because there is no essence to the wooden piece shaped like the traditional chess king shape, and a stone or any object can replace the king, as it is easily recognised because it is *not* any other piece, i.e. it is different to the others on the board.

Derrida further radicalises Saussure's ideas by adding that meaning is never present but is deferred. In 'Margins of Philosophy' (1982), he introduces the neologism 'logocentrism' to encapsulate this error, namely the privileging of presence, rationality and logic. Logocentrism is the assumption that we acquire this essence when we select the correct word for an idea, and it involves a search for a transparent, rational language that truly represents reality, a language that can be interpreted accurately. The chosen word is regarded as capturing the essence of its representation – its full presence.

> Derrida gives a picture of Western rationality as a form of calculative thinking (as Heidegger calls it) involving deductive reasoning from premise to conclusion, and excluding everything which cannot be closed in this chain of reason (Moran 2000: 448),

For Derrida (1973; 1976; 1978), full presence is impossible because meaning is inherent neither in signs or words nor to what they refer, but purely in the fluid relationship between them. Words can exceed the intentions of their author, as they are often polysemic (having more than one meaning) and therefore can change meaning in different contexts; for instance, the word "pen" can mean a writing instrument, a female swan, an enclosure for an animal, shorthand for penitentiary in America and a cattle farm in the Caribbean.

Words do not contain a single, fully present meaning; they defer their meaning to other words in the language system. As a result, meaning is always slipping and sliding, and therefore language is not an accurate tool with which to represent reality. Moreover, meanings will always be partial, contingent and contextual, and they will open up an endless play of interpretation.

Derrida proposes a 'New Enlightenment' that is underpinned by a deconstructive philosophy attuned to both the play of language and the error of logocentric thinking.

The structure of meaning (without which nothing exists for us) includes and therefore implicates the observer in the process of interpretation, but there is no position outside language from which we can assess it "scientifically." For Derrida, speech,   writing,

signs, symbols and objects are all texts that require interpretation, as 'there is nothing outside the text' (Derrida 1976). Furthermore, he argues for a philosophy that takes greater consideration of the dispersal and interplay of meaning throughout language, of how words refer to other words and meanings and how each individual interprets these meanings. When philosophers grasp this point, they will avoid the error plaguing Western philosophy, namely logocentric rationality – a belief that "truth" can be determined by rationality based on a transcendental signifier.

Derrida suggests that our search for the transcendental signifies the one true meaning that supports all others, namely that the unquestionable foundation that exists without question and unlocks the key to reality is flawed. Meaning is the effect of language, not its cause, and so these foundations do have an ontological standing. This does not imply that our beliefs are fictions but it does challenge its anchorage in a truth that cannot be questioned.

Marchart notes:

> The ontological weakening of ground does not lead to the assumption of the total absence of all grounds, but rather to that of the impossibility of a final ground, which is something completely different, as it implies an increased awareness of, on the one hand, contingency and, on the other, the political as the moment of partial and always, in the last instance, unsuccessful grounding (Marchart, 2007: 2).

From Derrida's point of view (1976), Western thought appears to experience anxiety with a material world that lacks a central ordering principle or foundation, and over it time has created a series of them (e.g. God, consciousness, man and rationality) to provide firm foundations to knowledge' He further argues that our yearnings to create certainty or centres in 'texts' lead to attempts to exclude or marginalise, and consequently he regards such an approach as repressive, as the only way centres can appear to be grounded in reality is by the suppression of everything that does not fit into the model.

Derrida (1976) goes on to posit that we have no other access to reality except through language and its codes, concepts and the use of binary opposites. The longing for a firm foundation results in binary oppositions, with one term of the opposition deemed superior and the other inferior. For example, a culture that places Jesus Christ at the core foundational element of its belief system tends to marginalise others, namely atheists and those who believe in other religions, while patriarchal societies marginalise women. Further binary opposites include spirit/matter, Caucasian/Black and nature/culture. Derrida (1981) also notes that philosophers who have devised these centres want to fix or freeze the play of binary opposites, and as a result he depicts Western rationality as being drenched in power, particularly as the use of the hierarchical, binary thinking which appears to be so natural to us (Beasley 1999).

Derrida's philosophical approach to deconstruction sets out to reveal the constructed nature of foundational claims and the resulting hierarchical dualisms which form so many of our belief systems, and it also shows how the hierarchies of meaning are neither eternal nor natural. He achieves this by highlighting the unrecognised dependence on the privilege term with its inferior partner (1976). Thus, the process of deconstruction unpacks cultural and linguistic assumptions on the fixity and 'naturalness' of forms of power to allow for alternative choices. A typical deconstruction of a text would involve reversing the power structure of the binary by highlighting and valorising the marginal, therefore allowing for a re-evaluation of the power relations between the pairs and establishing a complementarity of opposites. The idea is not to reverse binary oppositions, which merely reverses the power structure, and neither does it set to destroy all foundations of Western thought to promote a form of nihilism or anarchism, or to overturn them. Instead, he endeavours to destabilise them to such an extent that they open up a space in which to consider aspects that have been marginalised or ignored, in order to keep the centre fixed. Deconstruction is not only a mere textual procedure employed to deconstruct binary oppositions, but it is also used to critique the wider power structures within which they are embroiled.

Derrida reminds us that there is no getting beyond logocentrism, which structures our thought processes and without which meaning becomes fragmentary and chaotic in an endless chain of sliding signifiers. Every discourse contains privileged signifiers that produce how meaning is developed, and a discourse comprises a set of assumptions which may be taken for granted so that they become part of one's unconscious thinking. These privileged signifiers limit the play of the signifying chain, thus allowing for communication and the normalisation of social discourses such as neo-liberalism, bureaucracy, patriarchy and humanism (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). For instance, in the neo-liberal discourse, key signifiers could be man, the rational subject, homo-economius, competition, consumerism and material wealth as the main road to life fulfilment, thereby creating wealth to help the poor. Nonetheless, discourses are not fixed and are open to the re-articulation, depending upon which master signifiers are selected, how they are interpreted and how the otherness of competing discourses impacts.

This implies that truth claims should not be dogmatic but must be open to reinterpretation. However, this does not mean that aeroplanes cannot take us across the world, or that volcanoes erupt; rather, it proposes a reasonable degree of humility towards reasoning that attributes causal factors to such events. Many aspects of science are hypothetical rather than certain, i.e. some medicines or therapies are successful without our fully understanding why they work. Successful operations in the material world do not always confirm the accuracy of our theoretical map.

Derrida's (1989) first published work was an introduction to Edmund Husserl's 'Logical Investigation', and in later years he claimed that all his subsequent ideas were contained (in embryonic form) in this composition. Derrida was interested in Husserl's quest to trace the historical development of ideal meaning, or the very essence of phenomena. Husserl's mission was to give philosophy a solid foundation by demonstrating that truth existed and was waiting to be discovered by our intuition, and then to show how it was developed with the use of logic over time. Husserl believed in 'the imperative of univocity', in that words mean the same throughout history and one can therefore find the true meaning of ideas and concepts by careful reading (Derrida 1978). During this period, Derrida was also fascinated with the plurivocity of James Joyce and spent much of his time reading Joyce, particularly 'Finnegan's Wake'. Joyce's plurivocal language is a free play on meanings than can never settle, and each sentence contains an abundance of allusions, associations and resonances with other texts, both past and present, and forms a variety of different languages (Caputo 1997; Kearney 1984).

Derrida (1978) situates himself between the univocity of Husserl, which seeks universals, essences and ideas, and the plurivocity of Joyce, which has the potential to refresh and challenge our thinking but, if left unchecked, could lead to confusion, chaos and relativism. I agree with Caputo, who writes:

> Deconstruction is a certain Husserlianism, a theory of the constitution of meaning and ideality, but one already exposed to a certain Joyceanism, to the irrepressible anarchy of signifiers, the unmasterable, anarchic event of archi-ecriture (Caputo 1996:183).

Another way to frame the argument would be to propose that Derrida situates himself between foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. If we accept that we cannot do away with foundations, part of the phenomenon involves acknowledging its other – anti-foundationalism.

'Glas' (1986), one of Derrida's major experimental literary texts (influenced by Joyce), develops the theme of the in-between: the search for ideality and the celebration of the free play of language (difference), or the in-between of foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. The text has two vertical columns, the left of which contains quotations

from Hegel, an authoritarian philosopher noted for his totalising view of philosophy that asserts solid foundations through the use of dialectal reasoning (Appendix 3). Hegel (in 'Glas') provides a justification (thesis) for the authoritarian Prussian state. The right-hand column of 'Glas' features the antithesis: extracts taken from the writings of Jean Genet, a writer, homosexual prostitute and thief.

For Derrida there is no overcoming the thesis and antithesis to create a new thesis, but only the interplay between each which creates undecidability about the truth.

> If there were a definition of différance, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian *relève wherever* it operates. What is at stake here is enormous. I emphasise the Hegelian Aufhebung, such as it is interpreted by a certain Hegelian discourse, for it goes without saying that the double [triple] meaning of Aufhebung could be written otherwise. Whence the proximity of différance to all the operations conducted against Hegel's dialectical speculation (Derrida 1981: 40-41).

At times, the two columns in 'Glas' conflict, and at other times they resonate in unison, with Hegel's rigid views benefiting from the creativity and radical views of Genet. Similarly, the excesses of Genet's writing are circumscribed by the demand for restraint from the left-hand column. As we read, our eye moves between the two columns to create an in-between understanding that can never settle but is always on the move as we read.

For Derrida, the search for truth or the reading of a text should be conducted in a disciplined orthodox manner that meets the accepted standards of rigour and competence. Once this is completed, the next stage consists of a transgressive reading to explore what has been excluded, or:

> Transgression is a controlled contravention or invention, requiring the discipline of an already standing frame or horizon to transgress, which is why it is described as a "double gesture" Transgression thus is a passage to the limit[…] the crossing of a well-drawn border that we all share, giving something straight a new bent or inclination or twist (Caputo 1996: 81).

The first reading accepts the foundational premises and explores logical moves and any claims made, while the second, the transgressive, is the anti-foundational, which investigates alternative readings based on different assumptions and the exploration of the exclusion required to keep the foundations in place.

However, despite his reservations about some of the pretensions of Western philosophy, he saw the discipline as important for helping humankind cope with the many problems of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Derrida 1992; Derrida 1993; Derrida 1998). To ameliorate the two deficiencies of Western philosophy he proposed a deconstructive philosophy – a philosophy he hoped would be taught to all school pupils from the age of ten and would help to reignite Kant's Enlightenment ideals (Hoy 2004).

For Derrida (1976), Western philosophy has devalued other forms of writing (particularly poetry and literature), which is more distant from the truth than philosophy. As such, philosophy is regarded as purer because of its use of non-metaphorical language and its precision in expressing ideas in a clear and objective manner. Derrida (1976; 1978), however, suggests that philosophy suffers the same problems as all forms of speech and writing. His deconstructive critiques of the canonical works of some of the greatest Western philosophers, for instance, show that philosophical texts do indeed rely as much on rhetorical and figurative devices as on strict argumentation (J Hillis Miller in Cohen [ed] 2001; Royle 2003; Ulmer 1985).

Foucault, together with many contemporary Foucauldian scholars such as Olssen, Codd and O'Neil (2004), Barrett (1988) and Said (1983), unfairly characterised Derrida as a 'textualist', whose theory on linguistics had little to do with the material world and was of marginal use for the political activist. These Foucauldian scholars largely ignored Derrida's later work, which specifically promotes social justice and equality. He wrote on the university institution (2002; 2004), racism (2007), law (2001a), linguistic and cultural identity (2001b) and the subject of philosophy to promote citizens of the future (2002). His overtly political works promoted a left-wing agenda, and they supported his claim to be a man of the left through titles such as 'The Other Heading: Reflections of Today's Europe' (1992), 'Spectres of Marx' (1994) and 'Politics of Friendship' (1997).

Yet, this criticism is unpinned by a deep sense of responsibility. Derrida repeatedly assures us that he has respect for the law and its institutions and is in many ways a conservative thinker. The re-examination of foundations allows us to build on our traditions and adapt to what he envisages as a 'democracy to come'. In an interview he rejects the charge of 'irrationalism' and emphasises the importance of rational thinking:

> As to the people who say that deconstruction is undermining rationality, first they do not *read,* second, they refer to a certain set of norms. But in the same way as the subject has a history, reason also has a history. Our rationalism today cannot be the same as rationalism, let us say, for instance, in the eighteenth century, when the contract of the rights of man, the revolution, and the declaration of universal rights were established for the first time. This is why I would describe deconstruction as a rational, as a modern rationalism which tries to incorporate new disciplines, new forms of rationality (Derrida in Bieta & Egea-Kuehne: 2001 181).

Derrida then cites the insights of psychoanalysis, physics and biogenetics informing a modern rationality,

Derrida (1995) supports the idea of a new Enlightenment that recognises cultural and social diversity but at the same time promotes peace, equality and freedom for all. He believed that Europe's Enlightenment tradition should be used as a model for a new world order, and he developed this idea in one of his last public engagements:

> But I do believe, without the slightest sense of European nationalism or much confidence in the European Union as we currently know it, that we must fight for what the word "Europe" means today. This includes our Enlightenment heritage, and also an awareness and regretful acceptance of the totalitarian, genocidal and colonialist crimes of the past. Europe's heritage is irreplaceable and vital for the future of the world[…] This Europe, as a proud descendant of the Enlightenment past and a harbinger of the new Enlightenment to come, would show the world what it means to base politics on something more sophisticated than simplistic binary oppositions (http://mondediplo.com/2004/11/06derrida [Accessed 14/10/12]).

To this end, he does not offer a blueprint detailing how to reach this utopian state. Instead, we must all be open to the other, open to new ideas and ways of being not currently thought. For this to be achieved, Derrida believes that we should be trained from an early age in philosophy, and we should use the discipline to help us become effective citizens of a new world order, a 'New International' (Derrida 2002).

Philosophy and Education

In 'The Other Heading' (1992), Derrida favoured a move beyond Western philosophy, which is dominated by continental and analytical traditions, to include influences from other parts of the world. I argue that all philosophy should be open to his brand of deconstructive analysis, while Powel (2006) writes that Derrida was a Kantian in his demand for the right of philosophy for all:

> Philosophy [for Derrida] must be off limits to no one, man or woman, and must be autonomous with regard to religion and science, which cannot affect it internally, but can do so by force from without. It is indissociable from democracy, a "democracy to come" (Powell 2006:183).

For Derrida, this right should also be extended to children. He spent much of his professional life promoting the practice of philosophy in education, from grade school (from 10-11 years old) to postgraduate levels. Beginning in 1974, he was involved with the Research Group on the Teaching of Philosophy to show the benefits of teaching the subject in schools, and as a result he found children capable of reading demanding philosophical texts. As such, he felt that since it took a while for pupils to reap the benefits of the subject, it would be better to begin at an early age (Caputo 1997; Derrida 2002).

Derrida wrote a report to the Mitterrand government and outlined a progressive approach to teaching and assessing this subject from secondary school through to university level. In the letter he recommended that secondary pupils should receive an introduction to the subject, and he proposed a comprehensive course at sixth form level, ending with an in-depth study at university level. His report was not well-received by the government, though, particularly as he had recommended smaller classes for teaching philosophy, which would have involved recruiting more philosophy teachers (Caputo 1996; Powell 2006).

Derrida did not write directly on teaching, but his experimental writing style and promotion of innovative courses, when he was the director of the College of France, indicate that he favoured experimental approaches that sought to break from logocentrism. He endorsed Ulmer's 'Applied Grammatology', a book outlining a deconstructive pedagogy:

> Applied Grammatology offers a full, rigorous and perceptive reading of my published works, from the earliest to the most recent. Gregory Ulmer's interpretation is at once subtle, faithful, and educational, and would be of immense use for this alone. *It is moreover an original and path breaking book, whether discussing new art forms or the transformation of the pedagogical scene* [my italics][…] I read this book with recognition and admiration (Derrida in Applied Grammatology, Ulmer: 1985: back page blurb).

Ulmer's 'Applied Grammatology' (1985) recommends the use of grammatology as the basis of a new pedagogy. Derrida theorised writing beyond the book, a writing that would not depend on logocentrism and phonocentricism, whereas Ulmer's project involved devising a form of non-linear writing by utilising multimedia approaches to teaching and learning – what he calls 'scripting beyond the book' (xiii.) (1984). It proposed a pedagogy that used Jacques Lacan's use of puns and diagrams, the German performance artist Joseph Beuys's demonstration of models and the film montages of Sergei Eisenstein (1994).

For Ulmer, teaching involves the fallacy of transmission. Traditional teaching, whether it is a formal didactic style or allows pupils to become engaged in learning through first-hand experience (for example a field trip), involves representation for the former and presentation for the latter. Both types of learning, representation and presentation, involve a claim to involve the full, immediate presence of the world, the metaphysics of presence. Biesta notes:

> Because every presentation of a hieroglyph provokes a subjective response (a text) that adds itself to the presented text, every such presentation must be understood as bringing forth a wider reading of itself. It combines subjective and presented elements into something different (a "double text")[…] What is taking place in the grammatological classroom, therefore, is not the reproduction of existing meaning. What is taking place is "invention" (Peters and Biesta 2009:110).

Ulmer argues that pedagogy cannot involve non-representation, as all we have is our logocentric language. He proposes instead a pedagogy that highlights the constructed nature of 'texts', one of hyper-representationalism that weaves around a 'grammatological' classroom. Learning and teaching are structured around the concept of the hieroglyph (Ulmer 1985:265), which he defines as an 'ideogrammatic/pictorial form' of writing intended to stimulate responses from the receiver at a rational, unconscious and physiological level. The grammatological classroom avoids recycling accepted meanings and instead focuses on invention, which is achieved by using digital

technology to develop multimedia approaches to teaching and learning. The influence of surrealism and the avant-garde within the applied grammatology help to create a new form of non-linear writing, a writing that refuses to be a copy of the voice, while the use of montage, different images, sound effects and music helps to show the effects of différance at work in the text. Foucault, at one stage in his career, also had a fascination with experimental writing.

In conclusion, a Derridean-influenced approach to philosophy needs to move beyond the logocentrism of thinking skills programmes. Whilst Derrida reminds us there is no getting away from logocentrism, the use of the outside of philosophy should be employed to help us to be always open to other ways of determining the truth. This "outside" includes poetry, abstract art and experimental writing, drama and films. The development of calculative thinking (logocentrism) and this "outside" should provoke us to be aware of the way politics, culture and history have influenced our thinking, particularly in the use of binary oppositions. The purpose of philosophy should not be to discover universal truths but to see truth as partial, contextual and contingent. Once a conclusion is reached, we must always be willing to re-examine the topic when different circumstances appear. Therefore, the citizen who receives an education in philosophy and uses the discipline in everyday life would be best placed to develop a 'democracy to come', a new Enlightenment, so to speak. Whilst Derrida saw ethics as the primary aim of philosophy and was concerned with how we can welcome the other, Foucault envisaged ethics in philosophical study as a way to develop the self.

Foucault

Foucault was a historian, philosopher and professor of Systems of Thought, and he was influenced by several other subject disciplines (psychology, literature, art and politics). His studies were a vehicle for him to "think otherwise." This section will focus on aspects of Foucault's philosophy that I have used to develop my approach to teaching philosophy to children. His post-Kantian critical perspective, methods of philosophy (archeology and genealogy) and his use of philosophy as a way of life will be reviewed in this section.

As with Derrida, Foucault problematises knowledge, rejecting the view which claims that knowledge if value-free, objective universal. Whilst Derrida's approach critiques logocentrism, Foucault questions the way in which knowledge is linked to power, i.e. 'Discourses represent political interests, and in consequence are constantly vying for status of power' (Weedon 1987: 41. It is important to emphasise that Foucault does not just see power as repressive but that it also has a productive side. It is through the webs of power certain knowledge come to be valorised as accepted as the norm.

Discourses shape discursive frameworks which order reality in a specific form. They constrain and enable the production of knowledge, as they permit certain ways of thinking about reality and exclude other ways of viewing the world. The social is forever caught within the play of hegemony, as discourses are constantly challenging one another for dominance, and discourse can dictate who is able to speak with authority and who will be marginalised and ignored (Ball 1990). Discourses strive for hegemony, to create exclusive understanding regulating how subjects perceive their reality (Laclau and Moufee).

In evaluating the effects of discourse, Foucault poses the question:

> […] what rules permit certain statements to be made; what rules order these statements; what rules permit us to identify some statements as true and some false; what rules allow for the construction of a map, model or classificatory system? (Philp 1985: 69).

Foucault's Post-Kantian Critical Philosophy

Kant argued in 'What is Enlightenment?' (1784) that humankind could make progress and become mature by avoiding metaphysical speculation and instead developing the critical use of the faculty of reason. He contended in the 'Critique of Pure Reason' (1781) that science (and not religion) was the best discipline to provide us with knowledge and understanding of the world of material objects in time and space. For Kant, this knowledge had a universal form.

Foucault responded to Kant with a paper also entitled 'What is Enlightenment?' (1997), in which he downplayed Kant's Enlightenment belief in the progress of humankind through a reliance on reason alone. He was deeply suspicious of the idea that science, particularly the human sciences, could discover universal truths dismissing the idea of a disinterested knower who would, in time, be able to discover all there is to know about the material world. The philosopher or scientist is unable to stand outside culture or history and has no vantage point from which to gain universal knowledge, and the best that science or philosophy can offer are partial truths to deal with particular situations. According to Foucault, the inflation of the capabilities of the human sciences to discover universal truths meant the 'historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults' (Foucault, 1997c:318).

Despite Foucault's objections to the idea of universal reason, he still retained a strong affiliation with Kant, whom he viewed as an early philosophical influence: as part of his dissertation, Foucault submitted a study translation of and commentary on Kant's 'Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View' (Miller 1993). In 'The Order of Things' (1970), he affirmed that 'Kantian critique' still forms an essential part of 'the immediate space of our reflection', and shortly before his death Foucault (1994) wrote a self-portrait under the pseudonym 'Maurice Florence' for a French Dictionary of Philosophers, once again placing his philosophical work within the Kantian critical tradition.

Foucault emphasises empirical, contingent contexts by which transcendental signifiers are appropriated and enforced. Foundations of first principles are adopted, according to Foucault, because of circumstances, situations, time and place.

Foucault distinguished between two branches of modern philosophy that developed from Kant, namely the traditional and the critical. The first branch, traditional philosophy, seeks to discover an 'analytics of truth' by rigidly applying faith in Enlightenment rationality. Jurgen Habermas would be a typical philosopher from this school of thought. Foucault believed that this branch of philosophy was not only too inward-looking but was also far too judgmental and domineering – underneath the will to truth lurks a will to power:

> [I]t is amazing how people like to judge. Judgment is being passed everywhere, all the time. Perhaps it is one of the simplest things mankind has been given to do. And you know very well that the last man, when radiation has finally reduced the last enemy to

ashes, will sit down behind some rickety table and begin the trial of the individual responsible[…] I can't but help dream about a kind of criticism that would not try to judge (Foucault in Rabinow 1997b: 323).

Foucault believed that these philosophers were trapped in a 'dogmatic slumber', whereas post-Kantian philosophers and theorists did not consider the background socio-historical conditions that led to produce Kant's philosophical framework, as they failed to question, continually and critically, the application of universal reason to human challenges and to respond according to the changed socio-historical conditions that developed over time. In essence, although they were using and developing Kant's philosophical approaches and ideals, they failed to use the important critical dimension.

The second tradition of philosophy (favoured by Foucault) focuses on an 'ontology of ourselves' to investigate the 'contemporary limits of the necessary' (Foucault 1997:313). He traces the beginning of this tradition of critical philosophy back to Kant and includes 'Hegel to the Frankfurt School, passing through Nietzsche, Max Weber and so on' (Foucault 2010: 21). In addition, he credits Kant as the first philosopher to have examined the present, in order to philosophise on issues of freedom, world citizenship and world peace. According to Foucault, this tradition does not rely on judging but instead employs a critique of the present condition, in order to help individuals see the necessity of transformation:

> Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it; to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult (Foucault 1988: 155).

On Foucault's unorthodox reading of Kant, he interprets critique as 'an attitude' or a 'virtue in general', comprising 'the art of not being governed, or better still, the art of not being governed in a certain way and at a certain price' (Foucault in J Miller, 1993: 302).

Foucault's philosophic-historic critiques show that society is not making steady progress in fulfilling Enlightenment. In addition, history is not progressing on a steady enough trajectory to give us more freedom, equality or a better quality of life. Whilst there have been benefits to living in modern times, the 'price' paid is the way society has been structured to make us into docile bodies (Foucault 1977). It is only when we wake from

our dogmatic slumber and develop a critical attitude to the present that we will be able to return to the Enlightenment goals of liberty and equality for all. Luckily, Foucault gives us the philosophical tools to help us develop a critique of our present condition (archaeology and genealogy), and he also suggests how philosophy can be used in a practical way to help us develop our potential and simultaneously avoid the domination of others.

Archaeology

Foucault characterised his early work as an 'archaeology' of knowledge, which involved the study of ancient documents to 'dig-up' how knowledge took shape during different historical periods. In 'Madness and Civilization' (1965), 'The Birth of the Clinic' (1973), the 'Order of Things' (1970) and the 'Archaeology of Knowledge' (1972), he explored how our thought processes are unconsciously structured by layers of thinking and acting (which he calls 'discursive formations'). These are the structures of knowledge we find ourselves in – the unconscious assumptions and prejudices that mould and limit our thought. Furthermore, our ways of thinking appear to be so natural and self-evident, as everyone else of the age thinks in a similar way to us; for example, when it was the received wisdom that our planet was flat, it would have been inconceivable to think of it as a globe.

Foucault utilised the term "episteme" (derived from the word "epistemology") to refer to the way our ideas are socially constructed. Episteme fixes the boundaries of a period's experience, the breadth of its knowledge and its notions of "truth," and each episteme produces a "world-view" comprising a whole series of truth claims and practices, which Foucault calls discourse. Discourses, for their part, are packages of practices, assumptions, concepts, statements and beliefs that circulate in a particular episteme. Therefore, our assumptions, prejudices and a common-sense view of the world are structured by our culture; for example, *The History of Madness* should, Foucault argued, be read as a philosophical excavation of the wide variety of discursive formations that controlled the way people (in the seventeenth through to the nineteenth centuries) were able to speak and think about madness.

For Foucault, the philosophical search to reach universal truths through reasoning is flawed, as we are restricted by the systems of thought embedded in our episteme. The philosopher should forgo the search for universal truths and overarching prescriptions for a good life, and instead he should aim for knowledge that is partial, contextual and temporal. When reading a philosophical text or being engaged in an enquiry, the Foucauldian scholar is interested in not only what is claimed but also the cultural assumptions underlying the truth claims. I believe the Foucauldian philosopher should develop a high degree of reflexivity and always be aware that the truths developed from philosophic practice 'are dangerous'; therefore, any claims made should be modestly proposed. The philosopher should also be on the continual look-out to 'think otherwise'.

In the early works, Foucault could not provide an explanation as to why some views in history became static and yet different epistemes replaced each another, but his use of the genealogy method gave an account of this phenomenon. Archaeology allowed him to demonstrate that our thinking and capacity to reason were limited by the social practices and beliefs of our episteme. The genealogical method (developed in his "middle" period) helped in showing how powerful forces are also working at the micro level of life – forces that shape our beliefs and actions. It also provides a potent tool for the philosopher or teacher of philosophy.

Genealogy

Knowledge, particularly in philosophy, is regarded as being separate from power, which allows the truth to be revealed. Foucault believed the relationship between power and knowledge was far closer than in the Baconian notion, for which "knowledge is power", meaning that knowledge is wielded as an instrument of power. For Bacon (2008), knowledge and power existed independently, but Foucault believed that they were intertwined, and in his writings he used the term "knowledge/power".

> Power produces knowledge[…] Power and knowledge directly imply one another[…] There is no power relation with the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not pre-suppose and constitute at the same time power relations[…] it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful to resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it us made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge (Foucault 1977:27-8).

In 'Discipline and Punish' (1977) and 'The History of Sexuality Volume 1' (1979), Foucault argues that operations of power produce the idea of truth, regardless of whether these truths involve criminality, power as a monolithic unity or sexual identity. For Foucault, power is not something one "has," and it does not necessarily belong to any privileged group of people. His genealogical method was designed to uncover the workings of power in truth and knowledge claims (Danher et al. 2001).

Foucault argued (1975) that experts who provide truths about human science use their positions in philosophy to wield power over others. Accordingly, knowledge/power is coercive and forces people to behave in particular ways. His genealogical studies focused on the development of the human sciences (prisons, clinics and schools), specialising in Europe during the Renaissance and Enlightenment movements.

Since the eighteenth century, European governments have been aware of the liberal ethos of not wanting to 'govern too much', yet at the same time they need to have a healthy and compliant population to ensure effective workforces. Governments therefore promoted the development of schools, hospitals, prisons, etc. with experts who were given relative freedom to develop their subject disciplines (Rose, 1999). This subsequently allowed power to be spread in a capillary-like fashion throughout the social body, and each of these institutions developed its own truths, or as Foucault (1988b) calls them 'discourses', which are rules governing what one may say and do.

Foucault's analysis shows how techniques and institutions, developed for different and often innocuous purposes, converged to create the modern system of disciplinary power. His studies demonstrate a 'will to knowledge', a desire to control the world and its inhabitants by proving through the use of power that particular ideas are good and true. Knowledge is produced by power because people's thinking and behaviour are controlled; the penalty for not following the norms dictated by society can result in exclusion and the withdrawal of privileges.

For Foucault, the modern disciplinary society imposes precise norms ("normalisation") and is far more controlling than previous, more "barbaric" approaches. The older system of judicial punishment judged each action as legal or illegal – as defined by the law or monarch – and unlike modern society it did not judge those considered "normal" or

"abnormal". This idea of normalisation is pervasive in our society, for example in the shape of national standards for educational medical practice programmes, industrial processes and products. Foucault (1978) showed how each individual is encouraged to self-regulate and self-monitor his/her own behaviour according to the recommend norms of society.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1986) characterise genealogy as a replacement for the flawed model of archaeology. To them, Foucault had moved on to a better methodology. Scheurich and McKenzie (in Denzin and Lincoln 2008) note that amongst US scholars the majority favour genealogy. I believe that such a view is incorrect, though, because Foucault himself explained the complementary roles of both methodologies, outlining their relationship as follows:

> If we were to characterise it in two terms, the "archaeology" would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and genealogy would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledge which was thus released would be brought into play (Foucault 1980b: 85).

I interpret this point to mean that archaeology is Foucault's overall method of uncovering cultural assumptions at a particular moment in time. Genealogy is then brought into play to explain why power inequalities or domineering practices have developed over time. Foucault understands the present differently by 'analyzing and uncovering the historical relationship between truth, power and knowledge' (Danaher, Schirato and Webb 2000: ix), and so a genealogical study gives us an opportunity to view the present 'otherwise' and to consider practices that are more equitable for all.

In his later period Foucault focused on ethics, conceding that in his archaeological and genealogical periods he had overemphasised the negative effects of power/knowledge, 'technologies of domination' in his terms, which depicted the individual as having little free will (Foucault 1998). This notion implied that humans lacked agency and were reduced to docility by the episteme of our age and by the various discourses of government agencies operating at the micro level. Foucault always upheld that power must not be characterised as a negative or repressive force; on the contrary, it is positive

and provides dynamism for life. Problems only occur when blockages occur in the circulation of power, and when groups dominate the vulnerable.

Consequently, power operates chiefly as a productive and positive force rather than as a form of repression (Foucault 1977) – it is primarily an enabling force, rather than constraining and inhibiting, as we find in Foucault's reading of modern theories of power. From the creativity of power comes the possibility of resisting oppression and achieving the freedom to lead fulfilling and enriched lives, whereas the other side of power can lead to the domination of people. While power and resistance are oppositional, they also rely on each other for meaning, as in the Derridean analysis of the dualistic construction of language and knowledge. Foucault's later work recommends utilising power for the benefits of the individual and society by using practices of liberty 'that will allow us to play[…] games of power with as little domination as possible' (Foucault 1997:298). The desire for power that each individual possesses should avoid domineering others and instead be turned inwards on oneself in a programme of self-mastery. Foucault was not recommending a quick-fix, New Age self-improvement programme, but he was interested in developing a lifelong set of disciplined practices for the cultivation of the self – academically, artistically, physically and spiritually. Simons (1995) explains that Foucault:

> [...] recognises that transformation requires the disturbance of our deepest cultural assumptions about ourselves and our world. Overtly political programmes of transformation hope that people will change if the system is reorganised, Foucault implies that political systems change when people do. Transgressive work on the limits of the present is a practical as well as an intellectual task (Sims 1995: 124).

He found his inspiration in ancient Greek and early Roman culture (Foucault 1990; 1992) and believed that cultivated citizens would be able to offer advice to community leaders to help ameliorate communities.

Foucault and Education

Foucault contended that philosophy should target 'ourselves', to help us move beyond our cultural conditioning and to think in ways we have not thought, in ways we have not been. Philosophy as a 'critical ontology' of ourselves helps us to 'examine the limits that

we may go beyond and thus as work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings' (Foucault 1997:319).

Foucault came to recognise that what interested him about power was how it produced the subject. In 'The Uses of Pleasure' (1992) and the 'Care of the Self' (1990), he studied ancient Greek and early Roman texts (1-2nd century AD) to examine principally the history of sexuality. However, after finishing the first volume, he became interested in the ancients' use of virtue ethics and saw the possibility of adapting this approach to develop our powers of freedom.

Devettere (2002:30) sums up virtue ethics well:

> In reading the ancient works of Greek ethics, we find a whole new world. Greek ethics is about happiness, not obligation or duty. It's about deliberations, not law. It is grounded in experience, not moral theory. And the motivation for being ethical comes from the deepest desires – the desire to make our desires go well. The desire to flourish, to live the good life, and to find happiness while we live – this is what drives Greek ethics.

Foucault's (1990; 1992) starting point was to make a distinction between morality and his version of ethics. Morality consists of sets of rules and values developed and policed by, for example, the church or the government, while ethics refers to the way in which individuals form themselves as the subject of morality, with the consideration of the wider codes of morality.

Foucault provides an account of Christian morality that was comprehensive and systematic, covering all aspects of living, and failing to meet the morality code was a slur on one's soul and one's worth and carried with it various sanctions, from simple penance to death. Christian ethics involved a high degree of normalisation, because breaking the code was a reflection of the soul of the individual and carried not only punishment but also the threat of eternal damnation.

Foucault was interested in the notion that there were only a few codes and rules of behaviour in the morality of antiquity. Even though there were probations similar to those found in Christianity (such as homosexuality), for the ancients moderation was recommended to ensure the qualities of self-discipline were not diminished. Breaking the moral codes did not determine the truth or essence of the person and did not usually

involve a sanction. The rules were regarded as signposts to help with the good life and did not involve an attempt to normalise and create docile bodies. What was more significant was the relationship the individual had with himself and the lifestyle choices made. Morality was premised on a personal choice to live a beautiful life and to leave a legacy of this existence for future generations.

Foucault's ethics of existence was an approach employed to combat the effects of the normalising power of episteme and the discourses circulating within culture. He contended that resistance could not be situated outside the networks of power, because we have already been moulded by them and could never escape the conventions, discourses and customs of our age. By living a philosophical life, constantly questioning and experimenting with our lifestyle choices, we could lead more fulfilling lives.

The idea of aesthetics of the self led Foucault to the ancient idea of using philosophy as a way of life rather than the futile search for universal truth. He developed the topic further in his lectures of 1982 and 1983 at the Collège de France and at Berkeley. In the Collège de France lectures, he discussed Socrates (in the *Apology* and in *Alcibiades I*) as an ideal example of someone who was determined to live a philosophical life, a life that involved caring for the self. The aim of philosophy for Socrates was not to discover truth for its own sake but rather for the self-transformation, growth and integrity of each individual. The approaches of Epictetus, Seneca and Plutarch were also heralded as examples of philosophical living. Foucault explored a range of ancient approaches to the practice of philosophy, including the use of personal writing (i.e. a reflexive, learning journal), self-reflection, cultivating the art of deep listening, in order to examine people's thought processes, contemplation and letter writing to a mentor.

Foucault encapsulates his views in the following extract:

> What strikes me is the fact in our society art has become something related only to objects and not to individuals or to life. That art is something which is specialized or done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp of the house be an art object but not our life (Foucault 1997: 261)?

In the Berkeley lectures (2001) he praised the ancients' practice of parrhesia (truthful speaking), which was the political aspect of self-cultivation. Ancient philosophers believed that self-cultivation should make one independent of thought and give one the

courage to speak out against the rulers of the day. Thus, an important part of living the good life was to develop social virtues by making a contribution to society (Foucault 2001). Foucault's untimely death in 1984 cut off this fruitful line of philosophical enquiry, and Derrida, from around this period until his own death in 2004, had much to say about the role of his deconstructive philosophy in contributing to greater social justice for all.

In an interview, Derrida was asked what the central purpose of philosophy was. He replied:

> First of all, to handle one's life and live well together – which is also politics. This is what was addressed in Greek philosophy, and from the beginning of philosophy and politics were deeply intertwined. We are living beings who believe we have the capacity to change life[…] Philosophy poses the question what should we do to have the best possible lives (Dick & Ziering-Kofman 2005:119)?

Conclusion

Foucault's methods of archaeology and genealogy provide us with useful tools to examine the politics of knowledge, while Derrida's focus is on 'the historical sedimentation of the language we use' and follows the same direction, as Foucault as the following comment confirms:

> Discourse is constituted by the difference between what one could say correctly at one period according to the rules of grammar and those of logic) and what is actually said. The discursive field is, at a specific moment, the law of difference (1973a: 238 History discourse reference).

Foucault emphasises empirical, contingent conditions that permit transcendental signifiers to become accepted and policed, while Derrida contends that transcendental signifiers that to try to benchmark and enforce texts often fail to deliver on the rhetorical claims made for them. While Derrida's project questions first principles, Foucault argues that dominant views are accepted because of the situation, circumstances, place and time

Foucault's methods and Derrida's deconstruction provide powerful tools to support philosophy lessons in schools, because they challenge the idea that philosophy should involve detached, abstract thinking to discover universal truths. Whilst neither approach

rejects logical thinking, they nonetheless advocate considering the politics of knowledge, i.e. the roles that language, culture and history have played in forming our ideas and how they have limited us in thinking 'otherwise.' For both philosophers, 'It is not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames out seeing, spaces of constructed visibility and incitements, to see what constitute power/knowledge' (Lather 2007: 119).

In the next chapter, I present the development of my action research project, which seeks to use the poststructural influences of Derrida and Foucault. This following chapter marks a discursive shift from the complexity of poststructural philosophy to the development of an action research project that is presented in a less complex and more personal style of writing.

Chapter 4

Research Methods

In this chapter I begin by explaining the challenges faced by those conducting educational research in the poststructural paradigm and then develop the chosen methodology for my research project.

As explained in the previous chapter, poststructuralism is not so much about abandoning the world of an external world to be investigated or avoiding making 'truth claims'; instead, the claims are made with more humility and a willingness to review the case. Poststructuralists are more concerned with the meanings ascribed to reality and how discourses and logocentrism constitute that reality. Thus, the factual is replaced by the representational (Baxter 2004), because there is no pure, mediated world out there, though we can gain pure access through the use of carefully utilised research methods. Since we view the world through the instability of language, concepts, relationships and people cannot be fixed rigidly and instead are endlessly deferred. As Baxter notes, '[…] poststructural theories argue that any interpretation of data must explicitly acknowledge that it is constructed, provisional, perspective and context-driven' (Baxter 2003: 59). Therefore, the poststructural researcher must acknowledge his own position as being context-specific and part of a particular set of discursive relations. The truth claims produced by recognise that a different paradigm may well result in different aims, results and positions within power relations. The researcher should make it evident and the

epistemological assumptions that will be applied to their research (Scott and Usher, 1996 in Baxter 2005: 59).

I believe that Caputo provides a good definition of a poststructural approach to truth:

> Truth is not what happens, but something going on *in* what happens. So, to think of truth as an "event" is to think of something that is trying to happen *in* something. Truth is the process of trying to *become* true. The truth of democracy… is its *trying to become true*, to constantly *become* democratic (Caputo: 2013 58-59).

Data Research Methods

Action research was considered an appropriate methodology for three reasons:

1. Action research follows the poststructural view that the researcher is unable to adopt a scientifically detached view to discover the "facts" of the matter. Instead, in this project, I am located within the action, which allows me to write my "findings" into a text that can be studied and lead to new insights that could then lead to improved practice.

2. Poststructuralism is highly theoretical, but it also promotes a series of practices that seek to enhance justice and equality (Williams 2006). This fits well with action research's emphasis on praxis.

3. An action research project allowed me to avoid having to be the expert researcher who intends to prove a thesis. As a novice philosophy teacher and a relative newcomer to poststructuralism, I was unclear as to how a teaching programme using the paradigm would develop, and so the cyclic approach of action research allowed me to advance and refine the programme through a series of stages.

I was therefore able to begin the research in a state of not knowing how I would develop the philosophy project, which encouraged me to keep an open mind and to learn from others throughout the project. Not knowing or giving up mastery is another hallmark of poststructuralism (Johnson 1994).

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The action research project involved one class of pupils aged 10-11 years old. I took the pupils for a weekly 45-minute philosophy lesson. The lessons began in June (when the pupils were in Year 5) and continued through to February 2010. The research consisted of three cycles. Information from each cycle led to an action plan, to help me improve my pedagogical approaches to the subject.

Cycle 1 May-July 2009

Cycle 2 October-December 2009

Cycle 3 January-May 2010

My project question was: **How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10-year-olds?**

The project centred on three specific sub-questions, namely:

1. How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

2. Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

3. How do the pupils perceive the subject?

Data Collection and Analysis

The main forms of data collection were (i) a journal, (ii) pupil interviews and (iii) pupil questionnaire. Whilst the journal facilitated the ongoing collection of data and analysis, the questionnaires and pupil interviews were conducted at the end of each of the three cycles.

i) Journal

During the action research project, I kept a journal which contained my lesson plans and evaluations of the lessons, as well as reflections on the progress made in relation to my pedagogical development. I was able to use reflexive critique to question my

assumptions and judgements about my lessons within the truth game, in order to find answers to my research questions. The journal allowed me to explore unities structuring separate relations and internal contractions underlying seemingly stable relations, and it also enabled me to interlink theory and practice on a lesson-by-lesson basis whereby each weekly entry became a cycle within three overarching cycles. The weekly entries involved plans, actions, evaluations and actions for the next lesson.

Brown and Jones (2001) provide a useful model for action researchers using a Derridean approach. The key research instrument for them is reflective writing (through a journal) produced by the practitioner researcher:

> We prefer to argue for the centrality of the writing process rather than any supposed research process. It is through such a writing process we suggest that the researcher asserts and thus "creates" himself (Brown and Jones 2001: 8).

The use of the journal is not an attempt to capture a "true" first-person account of the area under study but is a series of narratives that shape the way the researcher constructs the situation, 'That is to say, written descriptions of classroom practice, undertaken by the practitioner researcher, change the reality attended to by that practitioner' (Brown and Jones 2001: 8). The authors acknowledge that even the way the researcher presents themselves in a journal can never really highlight the full presence or the truth of its author; the researcher portrays him or herself in a particular way (often as the caring and concerned individual who wants to repair the situation!), and it is often omissions in the journal which are the most telling.

For Brown and Jones (2001), the writing should become detached from the journal's author, and over time it should be open to multiple interpretations. As the researcher is in a constant process, their views of particular events will change over time, and these will need to be reflected on. Thus, the journal should be constantly reread for fresh interpretations and insights, to help secure improvements for the future.

For Derrida, the meaning of a journal entry would always be subject to differance, meaning it always differs and is subject to difference, never reaching a full resolution. Each diary entry should be considered as part of a chain of narratives and its meaning(s) constantly evolve as extra diary entries are developed over time.

Foucault, following his study of ancient Greek's culture of the self (1986), recommended writing as a form of self-improvement or technology of the self, whereby the subject was able to record his developing ideas as well as entering quotations, fragments of works, examples and actions to which one had been witness (Foucault 1983:246). The writing was to aid self-reflection, self-improvement and to learn to use power ethically and with the minimum of domination (O'Leary 2002).

The core of the journal consisted of lesson plans, evaluations and ideas for further improving teaching and learning and lesson observations conducted by senior leaders. I also transcribed significant contributions made by the pupils in the lessons. Summaries of conversations with pupils, staff and parents regarding philosophy, as well as the activities in which I engaged, in order to promote the subject, contributed to another major part of the journal. I also included my ideas developed from my readings of Derrida and Foucault during the project.

ii) Interviews

While Brown and Jones (2001) favour writing as the sole method of conducting research, I drew accordingly from the work of poststructural researchers such as Baxter (2004), who recommends the use of polyphony (multiple voices) and heteroglossia (competing voices) when conducting research. For her '[…] a polyphonic analysis hopes to disrupt the possibility of neatly packaged solutions, instead provoking unusual combinations of ideas and more thought-provoking if more disruptive insights, which of course can lead to more (transformative) action' (Baxter 2004 : 69). Therefore, I shall use interviews and questionnaires as part of the research process, in order to gain a range of perspectives on the development of the lessons. I consider it important to gain multiple perspectives on my teaching of philosophy, in order to unsettle my "regimes of truth" and to play "games of truth." Derrida repeatedly warns us of the dangers of often describing the world according to previous structuring, and we therefore need to learn to see the world anew.

The same seven pupils were interviewed at the end of each of the three cycles, as I wished to chart their changing opinions of the lessons as we progressed from the introduction of the subject to its establishment within the school. The pupils were selected randomly. I asked for volunteers for the interviews, and nine girls and 11 boys volunteered. I wanted an even gender mix, and so I conducted a lottery between the girls

and boys separately and ended up with four boys and four girls. One girl left the school before the first round of interviews.

A poststructural interviewer is interested in not so much what the subject is saying but why is he/she is actually saying what is being stated. I used Foucauldian and Derridian discourse analysis as part of the interview process to unpick the underlying assumptions, values and rewards behind what was being said: How does power work through dialogue? What are the ethical implications of what has been said?

As I conducted the interviews on three separate occasions with the sample group, I was able to gain some sense of a chain of narratives developed by the pupils. The interviews allowed me to use discourse analysis to detect the underlying themes developed by the pupils. The original interview questions were developed (in cycles two and three) to reflect the findings, my concerns and any ideas I was intending to explore in the next cycle of lessons.

iii) Questionnaires

The class completed open-ended questionnaires at the end of each of the three cycles (see Appendix 6). The second and third questionnaires were developed from the findings of the previous cycle and the weekly evaluations. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 255) regard the open-ended questionnaire as being most suitable for smaller-scale research, as it allows 'gems of information to be captured that would not be discovered on more closes, tick box questionnaires'. Furthermore, for Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:255), '[a]n open-ended questionnaire can catch the authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour which… are the hallmarks of qualitative data'. The questionnaires allowed me to listen to any marginal and resistant viewpoints (heteroglossia) that may be missed in the interview process.

Ulmer notes that Derrida's wish to popularise philosophy, by having the subject taught in schools, was bound to face opposition, as his writing is so dense and intertextual that the average person would find it impenetrable. Foucault's writing style is also a 'hard read', but he never intended his work to be read by the general public; rather, he wrote and lectured for academics. Thus, a philosophy that is influenced by these two philosophers runs the risk of becoming too demanding and could disengage pupils. It also has the

other danger of attempting to be so popular with students that the approach becomes 'watered down' to the point that it loses its poststructural dimension.

Pupils who were not developing an interest in the subject may not have been so forthcoming in an interview, especially when the interviewer was their teacher of philosophy and their headteacher. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) warn that the researcher may have difficulties in making comparisons with the respondents. However, I was looking for a variety of different responses from the pupils on how philosophy may be helping them and for ways that I could improve my own teaching of the subject.

Ethical Considerations

Action research is ethical, democratic and open. I upheld the highest standards of ethics during this study by scrupulously following the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Guidelines for Research 2011. I also maintained strict confidentiality and did not name the pupils, the teachers or the school.

Firstly, I gained permission to conduct my research from the chair of governors (see Appendix 8) and the Ethics Committee of Greenwich University (see Appendix 9). Additionally, written permission was obtained from participating pupils and their parents (see Appendix 7). Throughout the project I acknowledge the fact that my position as headteacher could intimidate the pupils, thereby limiting their ability to express their ideas fully in the inquiries or when being interviewed or surveyed. I regularly made my pupils aware of their role as collaborators in the study; for example, I strived to give them the scope to praise and critique the teaching and learning that developed throughout the project. These issues are explored in the discussion section of each of the three cycles. I am aware of the ethical issues regarding interviewing children, and so in accordance with the school's Child Protection policy, there was another adult in the room. The interviews were conducted in the school, and I endeavoured to make sure the pupils were relaxed. All information remained confidential and anonymous, and the right of pupils and adults to withdraw from the research at any time was honoured.

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During the research, data were stored securely in a locked cupboard in the school office, and after the research was completed, it was destroyed (i.e. shredded). I ensured that individual staff could not be recognised through the analysis of my diary entries, by using pseudonyms and ensuring the contextual information of an account of conversations did not reveal the person.

Having outlined how I planned to conduct an action research project working within the poststructural paradigm, the next chapter will chronicle the research which was conducted in three cycles. Each cycle concludes with an action plan for the further refinement of enhancing the poststructural influence of teaching philosophy to 10-year-olds. In order to highlight the complexity of researching in one's workplace, I change discursive modes during this chapter, namely the voice and concerns of the researcher, the enthusiastic headteacher and the developing poststructural philosopher. This is in keeping with the poststructuralist position of the "split subject" – the idea that aspects of our identity are in flux, depending on the context in which we find ourselves.

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Chapter 5

Data Collection and Findings

In Chapter 5, I detail how I developed an action research project to incorporate a poststructural-influenced approach to teaching philosophy. During the academic year 2009-2010, I took a Year 6 class for a series of weekly philosophy lessons. Initially I did not have a clear idea of the direction the poststructuralist philosophy lessons would take, so I decided an action research project would help me to make incremental improvements as the cycle progressed.

The action research project involved one class of pupils aged 10-11 years old, whom I took for a weekly 45-minute philosophy lesson. The lessons began in May (when the pupils were in Year 5) and continued through to February 2010, while the research consisted of three cycles. The information for each cycle led to an action plan that helped me to improve my pedagogical approaches to the subject.

Cycle 1 – May-July 2009

Cycle 2 – October-December 2009

Cycle 3 – January-May 2010

During the first cycle, I developed the modest initiative of devising a series of enquiries that sought to extend thinking skills by discussing ethical themes. In Cycle 2, I developed a poststructural pedagogy and introduced poststructural reflection to the pupils. During the first two cycles, I drew upon P4C and teaching traditional philosophy to children materials to help with lesson planning. In the final cycle, I was far less reliant on P4C

and traditional philosophy materials, and I developed a distinctive approach to teaching a poststructural philosophy, which included 'digital writing'. The aim of this variant of philosophy was to develop the pupils' capacity to use reasoning skills effectively in combination with an ability to reflect on the way language, culture and our history shape our assumptions.

In order to answer the key research question, **How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10-year-olds?**, the following sub-questions drove the study from Cycles 1-3.

1. How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

2. Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

3. How do the pupils perceive the subject?

To answer these questions, I shall present the data collection methods and findings of each cycle, beginning with the first and finishing with the third. Each cycle will begin with an introduction outlining the development of the pedagogical and learning approaches employed in the lessons.

5.1 Cycle 1

The structure of the lessons in Cycle 1 was similar to a standard P4C enquiry, with the exception of the introduction of a 'major' philosopher, together with a key question drawn from their philosophy, e.g. Lesson 3, Aristotle: What makes a good friend? (see Appendix 1). By contrast, P4C lessons do not introduce philosophers and instead rely on pupils forming their own questions. I used a teacher's resource book, 'Philosophy for

Kids', by David A. White, to gain ideas on key questions relating to philosophers. The author provides useful background details on the philosopher and provides advice on how to develop enquiries.

The lessons began with pupils adjusting the classroom furniture, to allow them to sit in a circle of enquiry. Once this was completed, a 3-4 minute warm-up game was introduced, in order to give the children a break from their previous lesson (which was either mathematics or English). I then briefly (i.e. three minutes) introduced a philosopher by giving biographical details and key themes relating to his/her thinking (see Appendix 1). This section of the lesson was concluded with a key question derived from the philosopher's work, which would then be discussed in the enquiry. I would then 'chair' a 20-minute discussion, to allow pupils to explore a range of views and to develop and practise philosophical thinking. These enquiries were held during the morning session, and in the afternoon, pupils were given half an hour to write up their diary, i.e. a written response to the enquiry. The three research sub-questions will now be examined.

1 How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

As my initial approach in Cycle 1 to teaching philosophy was orthodox, there was not too much evidence of the two poststructuralist philosophers affecting the style of the lesson in a dramatic way. However, the NVivo analysis of my journal entries during Cycle 1 shows that I focused on two broad ideas as the starting point for developing an approach to the teaching of philosophy, informed by poststructuralism. Firstly I focused on power relations in the classroom, and secondly the role of promoting the discourse of philosophy.

I shall present the evidence for my involvement with power relations within the philosophy lessons. As a poststructuralist teacher, I was keen to avoid the misuse of my position of authority within the lessons. As explained in the first entry in my journal:

> As the headteacher of the school, who has not had a teaching commitment, I must be careful not to be domineering over the pupils by imposing my love of philosophy on them. Rather, I should seek an invitational approach, i.e. invite them to engage in the

benefits of the subject, by encouraging an approach that is not domineering. I shall do all I can to establish purposeful and open discussions. *Journal, 2 May '09*

I was not in a position to change the desk plan of the classroom completely, as the class teacher was taking a lesson directly after philosophy. The first arrangement involved sitting cross-legged on a carpeted area of the room, but after two sessions I became dissatisfied: some of the pupils complained of being cramped and uncomfortable on the carpet. We then tried the normal class positions for a further two sessions, and although the pupils said they were more comfortable, I felt we had lost the intimate atmosphere of the small circle – I felt that some of their voices were being lost in the classroom.

The remaining four sessions proved to be the most successful: I asked pupils to move their chairs to the outside of the classroom, which meant we created a circle, without disturbing the tables. To overcome the problems of hearing everyone, I introduced a small public-address system for the pupils to speak through. This helped them to focus on the idea that they could only speak when the microphone was handed to them. All six pupils interviewed stated that they preferred this format:

> KS: Having the microphone allows you not to worry if your voice is loud enough… so everyone hears.
> DA: When we had discussions in Year 3, we had to hold a ball before we could speak. Well, having a microphone is a bit like that. You can only speak if you have it in your hands.

Every lesson evaluation contained a reference to my concerns about the seating arrangements, while my anxiety to produce a harmonious circle of enquiry was expressed at the end of the third lesson.

> I am not really happy with the way we are all scrunched up on the carpet, and both the discomfort of the children and because they are sitting on top of each other are at times distracting them from fully concentrating on the enquiry. Perhaps the circle is not a good idea anyway. Is it a form of panopticonism whereby I am looking to have a complete gaze on all pupils to control them, rendering them docile to the demands of the enquiry?
> *Journal, 24 May '09*

In our first session we spent ten minutes collectively deciding the rules of the enquiry. Pupils agreed that, in the enquiry, the class should:

1. Pay attention when the teacher is talking.
2. Allow only one person to speak at a time.
3. Always listen to the person speaking.

4. Take turns to speak – do not shout out.
5. Treat everyone with respect.

Journal, 10 May '09

Although this was a time-consuming process, the benefits of collectively deciding the rules paid benefits throughout Cycle 1. I noted in Lesson 3:

> Children really settled down to the enquiry and kept focus for most of the lesson. "J", "S" and "R" gave comments out of turn, but I was able to say their name, point at the chart and firmly say '4'. This stopped the talking and did not interfere with the enquiry. Above all there was no side-tracking, and the rest of the group kept on task. *Journal, 24 May '09*

I avoided direct confrontation with the pupils during the lessons, in order to prevent ruining the calm and thoughtful atmosphere of the enquiry. I either used humour, praised those who were exhibiting the behaviours I desired or let the situation go until I could revise future plans to secure improvement. An example of this latter strategy is illustrated in a note made in Lesson 6:

> Some of the pupils took their pens and notes of their ideas [the first activity involved brainstorming ideas on paper before the enquiry] to the circle of enquiry. They kept fidgeting despite my reminding them to stop. Next time, whenever you do work involving paper and pens, make sure all the equipment is put well away before moving into the enquiry. *Journal, 21 June '09*

Most of my journal entries contained such little 'tweaks' to future lessons, in order to maintain a productive but friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

I tended to keep monitoring the behaviour of the less motivated pupils and did all that I could to encourage them during the lesson or whilst giving feedback at the end of the next lesson. I noted in lesson 8:

> "J" [a boy that was easily distracted] paid attention today and gave a response to the enquiry fairly near the start. I think it helped that I had caught him yesterday in lunch and told him how impressed I was with his enquiry write-up. His face beamed. Must keep praising the disaffected! *Journal, 5 July '09*

The pupils' responses to the question about what they particularly like about philosophy showed that they were enjoying the relaxed and interactive philosophic enquiries. Typical responses included:

> HD I liked when we did circle time and we always, we had the microphone and we had to ask, tell answers about if, what we think about if we should, if someone's being racist to you, you should be racist back, or if we shouldn't be racist back, and I like doing that…

> AL The best thing about philosophy is talking in a circle, because you can share more ideas that way, and it's quite easier to use it because it's interesting.

> GF I prefer it when we get into our seats and get into the big circle and pass the microphone round.

A lesson observation was conducted by the class teacher (a senior leader) in the first cycle. He reported that a good atmosphere had been created by the circle of enquiry and that pupils were keen to take part in and to listen to the views of others. His written report concluded:

> Thank you and well done – this was a good lesson. I was impressed with the overall focus of the children in the lesson and will use some of the ideas like the microphone myself.

Not one of the pupil questionnaires reported concerns with an oppressive style of teaching, and there was a good range of comments to testify that my enthusiastic and respectful approach was seen as a positive:

1. Mr Gordo is funny.
2. The lessons are relaxing and make you think.
3. *I used to muck about in circle time last year, but now I don't.*

The second theme that emerged from my wish to develop a Derridean- and Foucauldian-influenced pedagogy centred on the role of the poststructuralist teacher as a promoter of the discourse of philosophy, which I was keen to promote. The first enquiry, 'Is having fun more important than education?', concluded with an overview of the benefits of philosophy, and most of my early lesson plans included the question 'Who can remember what the study of philosophy entails? After five lessons, I was used to the reply from the class: 'Wisdom!'

At the Year 6 parents' meeting (held in the final term of Year 5), a full outline of the year's curriculum was explained to the parents by the Head of Year. At this meeting we highlighted our approach to improving the enjoyment of the curriculum, and I was given ten minutes to talk about the benefits of thinking skills and philosophy in the school syllabus. The following extract from my journal illustrates this point:

> I really enjoyed explaining to parents about my philosophy project, and I received a great deal of interest from the parents. Whilst I spoke about the benefits of the subject to encourage more thoughtful and caring pupils, I did find myself spending most of the time highlighting the claimed academic benefits of the subject. I showed a clip from Galleons School and read extracts from their OFSTED report (which attributed their outstanding grading to P4C). I was probably trying to avoid any possible negative reactions from the parents and therefore build a case for the inclusion of the subject in an already overcrowded curriculum. *Journal 12th June '09*

During this first term I did my utmost to promote the value of philosophy to pupils, staff and parents. Staff meetings, parents' meetings and school assemblies were used to promote the subject. During our Monday school assembly, certificates would be given for good work from the previous week. As well as presenting certificates for good behaviour, mathematics, English and a wide range of achievements, I also included a Philosopher of the Week from the class. During the project, nine certificates were presented in the assemblies.

All interviewed pupils stated that they liked the certificate, as it encouraged them to engage in the subject. One of the interviewed pupils received the award and commented:

> KS I was really chuffed to win the Philosopher of the Week Award. It made me feel, well, like intelligent.

Two parents wrote to the school to thank me for awarding the certificates to their children.

> I would like to thank you for giving "D" the award of Philosopher of the Week. The whole family are proud of "D"... He really enjoys philosophy and we look forward to more pearls of wisdom from him! (Parent 1)

> Thank you so much for sending me the photograph of my daughter… receiving the certificate for Philosopher of the Week. We are so proud of her. As you know… [she] did not pass the 11+ and was disappointed with not being selected for Grammar School. However, her interest in philosophy certainly shows her academic side, and her involvement in your lessons has boosted her confidence. (Parent 2)

<u>Discussion</u>

A key theme in Derrida's work (1992) is the willingness to have an open mind and to be open to the other, i.e. the unknown. In the context of the action research project, the pupils and my readings of poststructuralist texts set out to provide the resources to establish an encounter with the other. In Cycle 1, I was in the position of not knowing how the lessons would develop into a significant poststructuralist style. For Derrida, not knowing is advantageous because it allows one to not only re-examine concepts and ideas, but also to be open to new ways of thinking. However, my interest in employing the two philosophers was to develop a philosophy that would not endeavour to determine truths by thinking skills alone. Rather, I anticipated that the enquiries would focus on the way our views are shaped by the discourses underpinning our thinking (Foucault) or our tendency to think in hierarchical binary opposites (Derrida). For both philosophers, philosophy was seen as a way of unmasking the way power disguises itself behind knowledge. Thus, I believed that whatever style was to develop, the lessons needed to involve a teaching approach that promoted equitable relationships.

The literature on teaching P4C warns novices that beginning philosophical enquiries takes time to establish, and teachers should not be overanxious about difficulties in the first few months (Lipman, 2003). My constant references to the class's behaviour in my journal entries in Cycle 1 reflected an anxiety which would eventually subside in future cycles. This anxiety was less to do with the fact that I was a novice philosophy teacher and more connected to my wish to become a successful poststructural educator. Following on from my readings of poststructuralism, I was now paying far greater attention to shifting power relations in all my various roles as a school leader. As Cycle 1 developed, and I became settled with the class, a constant feature of my lesson evaluations continued to be a review of the maintenance of good relationships within the lesson. The tactic of jointly establishing the 'ground rules' of the enquiry at the start of the lessons helped provide a signal to the pupils that their involvement was valued.

It was also important for me to establish a good rapport with the children, as I did not want to appear oppressive. The discourse of poststructuralism challenged me to encourage and stimulate transformative ways of thinking within the framework of

positive and harmonious relationships. An even balance of power relation was a priority: the potential of the teacher (me) to dominate and control, or the disruptive or disenchanted pupil to disrupt the enquiry, were threats to the success of the enquiry. The evidence from the positive pupil comments shows that such reflection and actions to remediate the smallest of behavioural issues in a non-confrontational way helped towards creating a successful series of introductory lessons.

As the philosophy teacher, I too was not above the workings of discourse. My journal entries from the first to the last page chronicle the constitution of my thoughts, actions and emotions in the discourse of poststructuralism. I am bound by the 'rules' of poststructuralism, which seek to challenge unequal configurations of power at individual and institutional levels. Foucault's reminder never left me during the entire project.

My endless references to behaviour management display not only my awareness of power/knowledge, but also an anxiety about wishing to play the successful role of the pedagogue who is able to convince pupils about the life-enhancing benefits of the subject and the part it has to play in promoting equality and freedom. With such lofty ambitions, I needed to have the pupils fully engaged and displaying the minimum of poor behaviour.

The constant journal entries on the pupils' seating arrangements, designed to secure good behaviour, resonate with Foucault's insights (Foucault 1975) into the way buildings are designed to control how people move around and behave in specific areas. Although I felt that the location and spacing of pupils were important and legitimate considerations for a Foucauldian teacher, I was unsure about the use of the circle of enquiry. Was this a step too far for a Foucauldian? Was this not a form of panopticism (see literature review)? The circle of enquiry is used in P4C and has been used for many years in primary schools, particularly in personal, social and health education (Mosely, 1993), and it is promoted as a way to create a more egalitarian discussion whereby instead of the teacher sitting in the front of the class, they are part of the circle and act as the facilitator. Whilst I could see the merits of this approach, I was nevertheless unsure of its effectiveness. I certainly wanted to develop a good rapport between pupils and teacher, but I did find myself wanting to use this approach as a way of ensuring they gave their full attention to the whole enquiry.

Although I initially felt I might be falling into this controlling strategy, my justification was that the purpose was not to create docile citizens but rather the reverse, namely active minds. I am heartened by Foucault's views on teaching and behaviour management. Although in his earlier and middle work he chronicles the impact of the oppressive use of discipline, he also shows a positive impact when used in the correct way:

> I see nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them and transmits knowledge and techniques to others. The problem in such practices where power which is not in itself a bad thing must inevitably come into play is knowing how to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher, or a student is put under the thumb of a professor who abuses his authority. I believe this problem must be framed in terms of law, rational techniques of government and ethos, practices of the self and freedom (Foucault 1997: 298-9).

Employing the positive use of power to develop the lessons was proving to be successful, as the evidence shows that the pupils were engaging with the subject. The second theme that emerged (the promotion of the discourse of philosophy) provides another example of the positive use of power.

Prior to my 'conversion' to poststructuralism, I had favoured multiple intelligence (MI) theory (Gardner 1993) and considered a pupil's interest in a subject as being a predisposition through intelligence toward that discipline. I also considered that a good, enthusiastic teacher could help those with lesser intelligence in a subject achieve success. In philosophy, according to MI theory, those who are going to be successful in the subject will have good existential intelligence.

As a poststructural teacher, I abandoned MI theory and instead worked on the premise that the more one could promote a subject and give it cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), the more likely students would be to commit to the subject. Thus, a key strategy for a poststructural teacher is not only to be wary of the oppressive effects of discourse, but also to use its positive aspects to promote change. The evidence suggests that the promotion of the subject in the wider school context, by highlighting successful students and heralding its benefits, helps to motivate pupils. A meeting allowed me to ensure parents were aware of the aims of the new subject and to gain their support.

Although I considered my headteacher role as a disadvantage in the classroom (it could lead to unequal power relations), it was an advantage when promoting the subject, because as a school leader I have the power to bring philosophy to the attention of the governing body, to parents at the various meetings held during the year, to pupils in assemblies and to the wider school community through the school website. As I developed this aspect of my role, I began to realise the importance of the educator's role in promoting discourses in the school that supported its values. In my case it was to promote critical thinking and a heightened awareness of the importance of equality and freedom. In the next section, I explore whether or not I was beginning to achieve this goal with the pupils.

2. Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

In order to answer this question, three themes emerged from the data: thinking skills, ethics and knowledge about philosophers. Each theme shall now be examined in turn. Despite only having had eight lessons, there was some evidence that the pupils were acquiring philosophical thinking skills, and although they were using these skills in the enquiry, they were less confident with their progress than their teacher.

The questionnaire completed at the end of Cycle 1 produced a modest affirmation of improved thinking skills. The following extracts illustrate this feature:

> G1. I have learnt that you can always change your views on things and you don't have to say the same view just because everyone else has got it.
> G5. I have learnt that different people have different views.
> G6. My thinking skills, more reasons.
> G7. Thinking better and understanding people's views.
> B7. How to improve my thinking skills and to have better knowledge.
> B11. I have made my thinking skills graph higher.

The majority of the interviewees were able to cite examples of how philosophical thinking had helped them in some way. Furthermore, three of the interviewed children described the benefits of philosophy by citing an ability to change or modify their views in the light of what they had heard. For example:

> Q   And, in that circle, so you said you liked to listen to other people's views. Do you ever, sort of, change your views depending on what other people say?

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DA I do change my views because, when I think something and they think something else, I think, oh yeah, that's right, I thought wrong then, so I do change my views sometimes… I learnt that, in philosophy, it's not just about what you think, it's what other people think as well. So that you can change your views on what they think as well, because then you can realise that you was wrong.

KS Yeah, I learnt how to, like, agree and disagree with people, like, a bit more better, and instead of saying, "Oh, I disagree", having a reason why, and when I'm doing my work, thinking more better.

The remaining interviewees articulated a range of the benefits of philosophical thinking that involved thinking more logically and collaborating with others:

AS I have learned to spend a few minutes in silence before speaking. That way I get my best ideas.

BR … it's important to back up your thoughts with a good reason.

DF … by listening to your class speaking, you can get good ideas. In one enquiry I didn't speak in the circle, but I still felt I learnt a lot 'cause of what the others said.

GF   To not criticise the person, but the ideas.

SH I like expressing my ideas in the enquiry. I can go on a bit, I know. Philosophy gives me the confidence to express my views in class.

Only one of the eight interviewed pupils felt that he had not learnt anything from the lessons:

Q   … are there any other skills that you think you've picked up so far? Or is it still early days?
AL   No, I don't think so.

I included the lesson observation evaluations in my journal. My notes highlight a range of skills developed during the course of Cycle 1:

- Listening to others actively and with concentration:

    Once again, the class quickly settled into the circle of enquiry and were attentive in listening to the views of others. Pupils are referring back to previous ideas, either to build upon or to challenge. [Journal 14.6.09].

- Giving good reasons or examples to support a point of view:

[Enquiry response] Boy: I don't think you should tell a lie to get out of trouble. If you start to tell lies and people find out, no one will believe you... or someone else could get into trouble. It's also about being honest.

Girl: Sometimes it's hard to be a true friend. I am reading a book called "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas". In the book a German boy makes friends with a Jewish boy who is in a concentration camp. The boy's father knows Hitler, and if he finds out he will be cross. Yet, this is his only friend and they get on really great together.

- Clearly expressing ideas:

  [The class teacher listened to a recording I had made of one of his pupils, responding to the question, "What makes a good friend?"]. The teacher was surprised by the quality of J's comment. He said, "I was amazed by J's answer. He rarely takes discussions seriously in class. When pressed he never comes up with much. But his answer today was well thought out and well-rounded" [I wrote the comments down immediately]. Journal 21.6.09.

- Building on other pupils' views:

  [Enquiry response] I can see what D... means by saying that if you don't work at school you won't get a good job. She says that without the qualifications a boss would not want to give you a job. But if you did get the qualifications but hadn't really worked hard, you may get the job, but because you are not used to working hard at school and you may get sacked because you are lazy. So what I am saying is D... is right to say that if you don't work at school you won't get a good job.

- To disagree tactfully:

  [Enquiry response] I hope you don't mind me saying P... but I don't think you should listen to your priest and do what he says. I mean, if you want to eat meat it's your decision. But then I don't believe in God and I know you do.

- A willingness to express ideas:

  Another good lesson. The discussion in twos before the main enquiry lasted for five minutes. I left pupils to it, as they were engaged in the question [If many people believe that something is true, is it true? Aristotle]. The whole class enquiry moved swiftly for 25 minutes, and I allowed pupils who had not spoken in this section of the lesson to have "the final word". Eight pupils had not contributed to the enquiry, and all spoke giving a clear viewpoint. [Journal 22.6.09]

I recorded the enquiries and carefully studied the responses, in order to note down the thinking skills used by the pupils. I also used an assessment sheet that outlined the skill that would be covered in Cycle 1. Table 1 below contains the assessment made in the

final enquiry. The numbers in   indicate the number of times a skill was used. In   most cases, a single response resulted in two to three skills being employed.

Table 1

Thinking Skills developed by pupils in Lesson 8, Cycle 1

Philosophy Skills	Frequency
Develop confidence in expressing ideas	14
Being thoughtful to others	6
Clearly expressing ideas	13
Accurately summarising the views of others	4
Tactfully disagreeing with others	3
Being able to examine the implications and consequences of a point of view	4
A willingness to explore alternative views	4
Listening to others actively and with concentration	25
Building on the views of others	5

The data showed that ethical "skills" were also being developed alongside thinking skills. When pupils responded to question 3, 'What have you learnt from philosophy?', ethical matters were cited, in addition to thinking skills. The following examples from the data illustrate this feature:

G3. That you need to think things through before acting.
G9. I've learnt what's right to do in some situations.
G11. Never talk back to people and never be violent.
G12. I've learnt a lot about different people and see how they think.
G13. That you have to be patient when you are thinking.
B4. Not to cheat.
B8. I've learnt that you shouldn't do what someone is doing wrong.
B9. I have learnt that you don't always agree with a philosopher.

I was particularly pleased about the responses, as I had not prompted them to raise ethics as a benefit of the subject.

Three of the interviewed pupils were able to give examples of where they had thought about ethical issues. Their responses varied, and all claimed to have improved their approach to ethical living:

> GF Like, during philosophy, when we have done some of the things, like, do you always have to be violent? I think that's also, like, focused in my life. Because sometimes if... I used to, like, if sometimes people, like, got angry at me, I would get angry back, but after that I found out, like, if someone gets angry at you, just don't reflect on them really. So I think most of the subjects have actually focused on my life after we've actually done it.

> Q   So, so would you say it has, sort of, made, made you think about life?

> GF   Yeah, it made me think about what I've done.

> DA I learnt that, in philosophy, it's not just about what you think, it's what other people think as well. So that you can change your views on what they think as well, because then you can realise that you was wrong. Or it could be that you have a really good reason to do something, but if you know it could upset or offend others, you may want to hold back.

In my journal I recorded at least one example of pupils wrestling with ethical issues in each enquiry. Examples included:

> Lesson 3: What makes a good friend?

> I know J… said you should never let your best friends down, but I think it's not just your best friend, but really all your friends. Otherwise, what's the point of having friends?

> Lesson 6: If many people believe that something is true, is it true? Aristotle?

> The pupils were discussing the question, 'Should you always listen to adults?'

> P: You have to decide if the adult is being kind or unkind to you. If they do not have your best interests in mind, you shouldn't listen to them. You have to make a choice.

> Lesson 8: Do two wrongs make an action right?

> P: I think J… is wrong about getting even with someone who steals from you. That just lowers yourself down to their level.

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The data showed evidence that the process of the circle of enquiry was helping the pupils to develop thinking and ethical skills. The evidence also indicated that learning about philosophers was also helping pupils in these two areas. A total of 30% of the class indicated that knowledge of the philosopher was a good feature of the lesson. Responding to the questionnaire question, 'What do you like about philosophy?', a sample of the responses was as follows:

G2. About all different types of philosophers.
G4. I learnt a lot more about the philosophers.
G8. About philosophy.
G10. I have learnt what philosophy is.
B1. I have learnt about the philosophy.
B2. I have learnt about all unusual and amazing people, George Hegel, Socrates, Martin Luther King Jnr., Aristotle and some others.
B5. How philosophers work.
B6. I've learnt about all the different people who did philosophy.
B12. Who philosophers were.

Seven of the interviewees found an introduction to the philosopher useful in helping them think through enquiries:

BR I would say I've learnt about some philosophers in the world, and I've also learnt how to… like, with enquiry four, I think it was with Socrates.

Q   In the inquiry about having fun and education?

BR Oh yeah, I learnt that it is important to ask yourself questions about how you live your life. If you don't, you can waste a lot to time doing silly stuff. I also thought it was good the way he died for what he believed in.

Q And did that enquiry also make you think about how you could act in the future?

BR   Yeah, I think sometimes you mustn't just agree with your friends just to keep in with them…You have to say what you really believe in, especially if it is important to you.

Q What do you think about the actual... the philosophers I introduced?

GF I'd like to know more about, like, their life basically, and what they actually did as a philosopher.

Q And tell me, what do you think of this idea of having, like, a philosopher of the week and... on, on a film clip?

GF   Yeah, that's good for... the philosopher of the week. But I think instead of just normally having one, I think you should have, like, a few, but have maybe two from, two from the agree side, two from the disagree and just then one person in the middle.

My initial intuition, namely that introducing Western philosophers would make it hard to engage pupils, was correct, as evidenced by the following journal extract:

I am not sure if introducing philosophy through the introduction of philosophers is going to lead the children to becoming disengaged, even before the lesson begins! I'll give it a go, and put all my energies into making this section of the lesson interesting. *Journal 4th May '09*

Regular reflection on this part of the lesson was featured in my journal, and my dissatisfaction in some lessons made me more willing to try new approaches:

Lesson 1: Pupils were amused with my presentation of Aristotle – the philosopher on a stick. [I had attached a picture of Socrates to a stick and held this A.V.A. up as I was speaking]. *Journal 11.5.09*

In the next lesson, I used a short animated film to introduce Aristotle. I had found the process of making the film too time-consuming, and so I reverted to the philosopher on a stick for the next four inquiries. By the lesson 7, this approach was losing its appeal and I found myself having to work hard to keep the whole class's attention.

Pupils were generally OK with the philosopher on the stick intro, but I think it's time to move on, to think of a different, more novel way to introduce the philosopher. *Journal 7.6.09*

The final inquiry of cycle began with an animation of Immanuel Kant, followed by a short play to introduce the key question of the enquiry.

The use of the film clip to introduce Immanuel Kant helped focus the class, and I am glad I have changed from the philosopher on the stick. They asked to see again, before beginning the enquiry. I'll have to look at other novel ways to introduce the philosophers. *Journal 6.7.09.*

Discussion

Journal entries and pupil write-ups highlighted the emergence of philosophical thinking skills at a rudimentary level. Most of the interviewed pupils were able to give examples of their improved thinking, and in two cases they demonstrated the ability to be reflexive and flexible in their opinions.

Most pupils valued the opportunity to engage in the enquiry, understood the need to obey enquiry rules (for example, only one person speaking at a time) and were able to engage in a variety of learning opportunities during the lesson. The emphasis on individual, small group and whole class thinking helped to ensure all pupils had an opportunity to engage in the lesson.

My journal entries highlighted a range of good examples of the pupils' emerging thinking skills. When interviewed, most of them believed their skills were improving, and they were able to cite an example of a particular skill they had acquired. However, pupil responses in the questionnaire showed a more modest claim to improved thinking. My assessments of each lesson confirm that the pupils were able to develop the key philosophical skills introduced in each lesson.

Pupils' responses in the questionnaire showed they were not only able to cite thinking skills as a benefit of philosophy, but they were also aware of an improved understanding of ethical issues.

Some of the pupils found the introduction to philosophers and their key ideas interesting and considered that learning about philosophers was a key feature of learning the subject. The remaining pupils were neutral on the matter, with only one pupil expressing a dislike for this section of the lesson.

My initial intuition regarding the introduction of the philosophers to the pupils was correct: teaching them about "old dead white men," who were not the most adventurous

historical figures, was going to be a challenge. I thus adopted the correct strategy of not spending too long on this section of the lesson (five minutes) and ensuring the lesson was as engaging as possible. The use of the philosopher on a stick and then PowerPoint pictures helped to keep the pupils' attention.

At the end of the first cycle I was ambivalent about the usefulness of teaching the pupils about philosophers. My initial motivation for introducing the philosophers was not based on a deep theoretical motive; rather, I felt that this would make my enquiries different to P4C or Socratic enquiries (another reason was to make the subject worthy to the school community). I decided to continue with this approach in Cycle 2, with the caveat that I would stop the approach if the pupils became disengaged. If this was the case, I would proceed straight to the question.

There was clear evidence of children beginning to engage with philosophical questions. The focus on skill development and revision of previous thinking skills helped them to develop their ability to advance arguments. The circle of enquiry provided the pupils with an opportunity to practise key ethical skills, i.e. the ability to listen to others, to share ideas and be willing to agree to disagree. Furthermore, they demonstrated that the enquiries were allowing them to explore their own ideas and, at times, to adapt their views. The introduction of seminal philosophers to the class provoked a mixed reaction among the pupils, and for Cycle 2 I had to decide whether or not to proceed with this aspect of the lesson.

The focus on mainly ethical themes helped to maintain the close connection with philosophy being used as a way of life, i.e. for practical everyday living. I tried to focus the pupils' attention on the thinking process and how they should act. The pupil who gave the example of helping by including a girl in a game of football was perhaps the most significant instance of a pupil being influenced by an enquiry. He originally took the stance in the enquiry that boys were better at 'men's jobs' and most sports, but by the end he had adopted a view more in line with gender equality. There were a few minor examples where pupils stated that they were more ethical, which may be hard to substantiate, but what is noteworthy is that when questioned they accepted that the subject should help them to behave more ethically.

They were also much more affirmative in relation to the benefits of the subject helping with their ethical thinking. The interview responses showed them citing opportunities to discuss ethical issues as a benefit of the subject, although I was expecting them to focus more on 'thinking skills', as I tended to begin lessons explicitly with an introduction to skills. I also referred to the lesson as philosophy/thinking skills, to emphasise the role of the latter within the subject.

Whilst I was pleased with the improvements made in the pupils' ability to participate in an enquiry, it was important to me, as a critical educator, that I was winning not only the minds of my pupils, but also their hearts, because I felt it important that they were emotionally engaged in the lessons. It is rare for poststructural researchers to use interviews as a research method, but I felt that this tool would allow me to explore ways to develop effectively a pedagogy that would engage pupils cognitively and affectively. Thus, pupil perceptions of the lessons were a crucial factor in determining the success of the lessons.

The establishment of healthy relationships in the class is essential, and the teacher must be ever-vigilant to avoid any person or group dominating, which of course includes the teacher. Following Foucault (1972), I believe that it is important to recognise that discourses are not to be seen in a purely negative light; they can help us to constitute ourselves in positive ways, and the teacher can use the power of discourse constructively by using his/her position to promote philosophy. Finally, the teacher cannot escape discourse and must be aware that he/she is the product of thereof.

This section has noted my attempts to put poststructuralism to work in the classroom. In the next section, I explore the impact of the poststructuralist lessons on the pupils.

3 What are the pupils' perceptions of philosophy?

An analysis of the data shows that the pupils were split broadly into three groups, which I termed as follows: excellence and enjoyment, philosophy for edutainment and anti-philosophers. These groupings represent three dominant views about philosophy. The first group argued that it is a key subject that can lead to significant academic improvement and is also enjoyable at the same time. The second had a more lukewarm

approach but saw the subject as worthy of study, providing they found it fun. The final view held that philosophy had little benefit as a school subject.

The first group, the enthusiasts of philosophy, the excellence and enjoyment group, made a modest scattering of references in the questionnaire about developing a keen interest in the subject. Examples:

What would it be good to do more of?

    B1) I would like to do more of the philosopher, to get used to him.
    B9) I would like to have more circle time.

What is the best thing about philosophy?

    G4) The best thing about philosophy is learning about the philosopher.
    G13) Probably learning about all the different philosophers.
    G 6) It makes you think better, like more skilfully.
    G 9) I liked it when we do the class circles around the class.
    B4) It helps you to think more clearly.

The pupils' survey showed that eight pupils – four boys and four girls – were enthusiastic about the subject and were confident that it would help to improve their thinking skills or wisdom. They showed an affinity with the subjects and were interested in the idea of having them taught as a lesson, being introduced to 'famous philosophers' (as one pupil described it) as well as the subject's potential to develop their thinking skills. Another enthusiast wrote in the survey: 'Philosophy teaches you to be wise' (a key message in my introductory lesson). Positive comments from the philosophers in the interviews included:

Q And what do you think about the time we spent on the philosopher of the week? Would you like to know more or less about the philosophers, or was it about right what you were told?

BR   I want to learn a bit more about philosophers, because maybe one day I might be able to be one, too. So if I learn more about them, I will get some… if I learn more about them, I would also learn about them, too, and maybe if I did some of their ideas and my ideas together it might… I might be a philosopher. Because if my ideas and their ideas, it might make me a philosopher.

GF Yeah, that's good for... the philosopher of the week. But I think instead of just normally having one, I think you should have, like, a few, but have maybe two from, two from the agree side, two from the disagree and just then one person in the middle.

GF I'd like to know more about, like, their life, basically, and what they actually did as a philosopher.

One pupil suggested that they should be told in advance of the lesson themes:

HD I'd want to know a bit more for, and I like to know a bit more ahead of things, like from things we do and work we do.

KS I really look forward to philosophy. In philosophy, you think a little bit better about any other lesson and you have time, as well, to think about it. Like, in maths, it's just get down, like, to do work and stuff, but in philosophy, you have some time to think about it, and then you can write it down, so...

All the pupils in the group had an appreciation of the benefits of developing their views by sharing their ideas with others:

DA I think the best thing is when we all sit in circle and we can all share our views together, so that, when we do our writing, we can get ideas from other people. And then we can sort of change our views and think what, what we actually think and, like, do our views and what they said as well.

Q What do you think of the length of the lessons?

KS I think it was a little bit too short, because if you're halfway through your writing, you'd have to stop and then you have to go through your reading, so I think you should do it a little bit longer.

The second group of pupils engaged with philosophy as edutainment. Responses from the questionnaire showed that 16 pupils (10 girls, and 6 boys) were enjoying philosophy, albeit less for its capacity to develop deep thinking skills and more as an entertaining new subject. They expressed an interest in the topic and felt the introduction of a well-known philosopher and the background information helped them to focus on the enquiry. Their responses showed a favourable disposition toward the range of active learning approaches adopted, rather than an appreciation for developing their thinking processes or gaining knowledge about the philosophers. Their primary interest in the subject favoured the affective domain ('having fun') rather than its cognitive counterpart:

B8. The best thing is watching a video clip and explaining how things are.

B1. The best things in philosophy are drama and the enquiries.

G5. I really like the idea of passing the microphone around and listening to people's views on the enquiry. Also hearing views, watching clips and dramas.

G7. Doing the plays and dramas and the films.

KS   It did help, because from the film clip and stuff, which we saw, it helped you get more ideas so you can start the enquiry.

SH   I find it funny, a little bit. And I find it knowledgeable to do work with, 'cause if you didn't have that, I would have been a bit bored and it's hard.

While a significant number of pupils enjoyed the use of film clips, cartoons and slides for the lessons' themed introductions and 'guest philosopher', they were particularly enthusiastic about the one lesson in which I used drama. One enquiry revolved around Hegel's belief that history is constantly moving forward. The pupils were intrigued and perplexed by the following idea: can a different past affect our present? I used the film 'Back to the Future' as the basis for a play, performed by six members of the class, to help introduce this complex theme. The children enjoyed the play, which was also performed to the school in an assembly. One of the children, who was part of the interview group, highlighted the benefits as she saw them:

KS I like doing the plays in front of everybody in the school, because they're, they're fun to do, and because you were doing it with your friends, it got more fun as well.

Int   And did the plays help you with the ideas that we were looking at?
KS   Yeah, it made you get more ideas about what the lesson was about.

However, when pressed, KS was unable to explain what actual ideas she had gained from the drama.

Within this group, most found the philosopher of the week useful to help focus their thoughts, but they did not want to have this section of the lesson extended. Their comments centred on the entertainment aspect of the philosopher:

Comments in the questionnaire included:

G5   I like the way you have the philosopher on a stick [for three lessons, I held up a cardboard portrait of a philosopher, which was attached to a stick].
G6   You spent just the right amount of time telling us about the philosopher.
B5 I enjoy hearing a bit about the philosopher, but if you tell us too much it may get too boring... I just want to get on with the enquiry.
B9 Your funny voices keep me amused.
BI2 I liked it when you had the philosopher as a cartoon.

Following on from the first enquiry, it became clear that the children's general writing standard was not as secure as I (as a headteacher) would have liked. I decided to use the written write-ups as a way of helping the class to improve their general standard of English, so the next lesson consisted of a session on the techniques of writing a philosophy enquiry. I was aware of their disappointment but was confident of being able to overcome their reticence for writing. I noted in the lesson:

> The pupils were disappointed that I was not going to conduct an enquiry – they were particularly looking forward to playing the warm-up game, 'Killer'. They were attentive during the lesson and spent the second half of the lesson re-editing their work. Hopefully the quality of the written enquiries will now improve. *Journal 18.5.09*

When the next two enquiries finished, I left the class and the class teacher gave the pupils time to write up the enquiry over the following days. I found this was not helping the pupils, so I returned for 20 minutes later, on philosophy days, to help the class with their writing. It was obvious that some of them were not enjoying the process, particularly as I was trying to help them improve the quality of their written expression. A crisis point occurred three weeks later:

> I feel that this lesson hit a wall. The day was extremely hot and stuffy and pupils were getting ready for the end of the term. They seemed very uninterested and not wanting to engage in the lesson. Parts went well. They were attentive during the film, and the enquiry produced pupil engagement. The problem seems to be the issue of writing the accounts; the pupils who lean towards finding writing a chore are tending to 'switch off' as soon as we do the write-up. As well as taking some time to mark, I am not too sure how helpful they are and, in many ways, the issues of their writing skills can be addressed in other lessons. I will aim to have two upbeat lessons using a warm-up game and an engaging film and a follow up drama to re-engage pupils. Have a try at asking pupils to help with the film-making for the start of the lesson. *Journal 22.6.09*

About 25% of the class held negative opinions on the writing aspect of the lessons. When asked what they didn't like about them, typical responses from the disenchanted writers included:

G4. The worst thing about philosophy is doing a lot of writing.

G6. The writing sometimes.

B9. I didn't really like the writing, but it was alright.

At this time, I was justifying my insistence on the written follow-up as a way of avoiding phonocentricism (a privileging of spoken communication over written):

> While significant minorities of pupils are not so engaged with the writing follow-up session, the opportunity to engage in the write-up does result in good quality work by the pupils. It also provides a way of making the enquiries less ephemeral, as I was able to return to some of the pupils' work to review previous ideas. I'll either have to convince the class of the merits of the write-up or look to another solution to resolve the issue. *Journal 24.5.09*

Whilst four interviewed pupils enjoyed the writing, two expressed negative feelings on the matter. The following is an example of an advocate of writing:

> Q Right, and, but tell me about sort of doing the diaries, now what would you think on that, was it a chore or was it okay, or...?
>
> HD Doing the diaries was okay, because I like doing diaries, so I like learning about different things, like attending to people, and I think diaries are kind of good fun and easy to do, and not like anything hard; you've just got, it's just kind of easy.

A critic of writing expressed his view in this way:

> Q And what would you say is the worst thing about philosophy?
> DA Well, I don't really know, because I think the worst thing is, sort of, doing the writing, because we've already written what it is and, when you do your writing, when you come actually to it, you forget what your things were and it gets really annoying sometimes.
> Q Right, okay. And, so you don't enjoy the writing. Do you enjoy writing in other subjects?
> DA Yeah, I do enjoy writing in other subjects.
> Q Right, but you find, with the philosophy, it's, it's a bit more of a problem trying to remember?
> DA Yeah.
> Q Okay, that's fine. So would you cut that out?
> DA I wouldn't exactly cut it out, because we would forget what we've been writing about and what we've done, but it wouldn't make a difference if we did cut it out, I don't think.

The advice given in the second lesson was a rather formulaic way of writing up a philosophical enquiry, but one pupil pointed out a way forward: rather than just cut it out, devise different ways to do the writing. This particular pupil favoured bullet point notes.

GF But things that I didn't really like was, like, also... yeah, like, some of the questions what we had, I found a bit hard to find the answers to them. And also on the writing, I'm... I, I like it when we do, like, the, the short things in the book, but I... even though I think, yes, you do need to write it down, but I didn't find it too keen [?] that way, you write your full answer down and I think it'll be easier if you just put, like, little bullet points, like what you think.
Q Right, so, so you're saying that you found that the writing was, was a bit of a chore?
GF Yes, in a way. But I've... I think... I would, I would still do the writing if I had to, but I think it also would be easier if, like, you put... if we could do it, like, in bullet points and, like, put down each, like, little note on it.

One pupil critic of writing stated: 'I don't see the point of writing about the enquiry, as we have already talked about it in the lesson'. In addition, the teacher of this case study class reported:

They're a really enthusiastic class – the best I have had for some years. They are keen to try to do new things, but they are not so good at pushing themselves to produce good quality work. I sometimes feel I am banging my head against a brick wall when I try to get them to re-draft their work.

However, there was a small group of pupils who were not enthusiastic about the subject at all. I call this third group the 'anti-philosophers'. Although most pupils in the survey were either very engaged or satisfied with philosophy, four expressed some ambivalence toward certain aspects of the subject. Typically negative comments included:

B10. It is boring!

B5. I don't enjoy philosopher of the week, because people might think you might not think they're as good.

B3. Putting your hands up and waiting for ages.

G5. Sometimes philosophy puts me under a bit of pressure. Hogging the microphone, complicated views and nerve wracking.

None of the survey pupils in this group was entirely opposed to the lesson, and they did

record some positive aspects (generally on the 'lighter' aspects of the lesson). Typical comments from this group were:

G1 Playing the games was fun. I like the lessons, when you make it fun.

G7 I liked watching the film.

B3 I enjoy playing the game 'Killer'.

B8 I like it when you get to talk in twos. It's less pressure on you.

Out of the eight pupils interviewed, only one represented the antagonistic group. This particular boy found it difficult to sit in a circle of enquiry and to wait his turn to speak, but when he did express his views, he promoted himself as a heroic figure who would not tolerate those trying to do him a disservice. In one enquiry, the class was discussing what to do if someone was burgling one's house. B's response was to take action himself immediately, by taking a bat and going to knock out the burglar. While others could see the danger of this approach, B was insistent on following this course of action:

[In the interview.]

I think philosophy is a waste of time, as all you do is sit around talking… well, I mean, what is the point of that? My mum says that we should be learning proper subjects like history or science, or stuff like that.

When asked if he enjoyed discussions in other subjects, he replied, 'No', and said he preferred to be 'doing stuff in class… but not writing'.

Discussion

At the case study school, pupils who saw philosophy as a route to wisdom (the excellence and enjoyment group) clearly enjoyed discussing philosophical issues and exchanging their views with their peers. They were optimistic that the subject would help them to develop their thinking skills, and they were able to cite examples of how they had used these skills. Pupils were aware that philosophy is a skill that can be used to help them throughout their lives.

They all saw the subject as being enhanced by the introduction of prominent philosophers and felt the time allocated to developing their ideas in lessons (about 5 minutes) was just about right or they wanted to know more. Furthermore, they were committed to the discourse of philosophy.

The pupils' enthusiasm for the subject's academic and fun aspects has echoes of the government's discourse 'Excellence and Enjoyment' (2004). This document was published to assuage the growing body of opinion accepting that standards were rising in the UK but that the pressure to do well in tests was leading to a 'shallow and regurgitate curriculum'. The government was, as ever, relentless in its determination for standards to continue to rise, but now pupils must enjoy their learning:

> Primary education in England is in a strong position with improving results and good comparisons internationally. We want to build on that success, and challenge primary schools to take the lead themselves in going further.

> We want schools to continue to focus on raising standards while not being afraid to combine that with making learning fun. Our goal is for every primary school to combine excellence in teaching with enjoyment of learning (Excellence and Enjoyment 2004: 5).

For this small group of pupils the academic challenge of what they saw as a stimulating and interesting subject provided them with enjoyment. They also enjoyed contributing to the enquiry and were keen to practise and deepen their philosophical skills.

The class teacher (DM) who observed the lesson noted that the multimedia approach was the strength of the lesson and commended the 'Very good resources – PowerPoints, photos/images and film clips'. In the oral feedback he suggested that other teachers should observe the lessons, as they were 'a really good example of excellence and enjoyment'.

Ofsted's Inspection Questionnaire for Key Stage 2 pupils begins with a statement which has to be ticked or crossed – 'I enjoy school' – before asking about the school's capacity to challenge and inspire them to high academic standards. The evidence suggests that for the second group (edutainers), enjoyment was derived – not so much from the merit of philosophy but more from the games, multimedia and drama.

Edutainment has been an aspect of pedagogy for thousands of years in the form of parables and fables promoting social change. Modern forms include television productions, film, museum displays and computer software, which use entertainment to attract and maintain an audience while incorporating deliberate educational content or messages.

As the prescribed National Curriculum (1999) in the UK gave teachers little room for creative curriculum innovation, the emphasis was more on diverting the aspirational and creative teacher to channel their energies towards innovative learning approaches. The belief involved helping to bring a prescribed curriculum alive, so exciting learning approaches through edu-entertainment became the order of the day. As such, the instructor would become an "edutainer", entertaining the students while providing an education and meeting course objectives, which involved the use of a lot of variety, as explained by Bird (2007):

> The instructor should (a) show videos that add value while entertaining; (b) involve students in skits; (c) conduct an impromptu satire; (d) add demonstrations with scenarios; (e) add some jazz to the PowerPoint slides; (f) make the lecture more interesting by adding flair; (g) make the lecture more interesting by adding work-related examples and (h) make the lecture more interesting by engaging all students.
>
> Additionally, the instructor should add humour in the delivery of the lesson and within the exams in order to ease the anxiety and allow the students to relax, which should allow students to learn effectively and efficiently.
>
> (http://professormbird.com/model.html)

The influential 'Accelerated Learning Programme in Primary Schools' approach (Smith 2001) advocated brain-based learning and promoted the benefits of enjoyment. Archer (2008), an accelerated learner trainer, highlighted fun as one of the eight features of successful learning.

> 5. Fun
> I mention earlier about the telly being our fiercest competitor and good learning programmes on the box use humour. Not slapstick but entertainment. We should do the same. Having a sense of humour helps enormously – it relaxes people, shows us real selves and shows modesty too... Don't be childish but be child-like in your approach to training. Use fun where appropriate, learn to laugh at yourself, play with toys and make games to encourage learning.

> Children by the age of 5 have learnt 75% of their total learning. The first five years is vital, as every parent would tell you. But how do they do this learning? Predominantly through play and fun.

> (http://www.archertraining.co.uk/Documents/8%20Principles%20of%20Accelerated %20Learning.pdf. Accessed 1.6.2011

The third group, the anti-philosophers, were at times amused by some of the 'fun' activities but were unimpressed with the merits of the subject, as they could not see the need to develop thinking skills or consider ethical matters in a philosophy lesson.

Some of education's stakeholders (for example parents, politicians and school governors) may believe that such matters should be left to the family or faith communities to develop. Woodhead (2009) expresses such views but rejects 'soft' subjects such as citizenship, personal, social and health education and circle time to discuss emotional issues:

> I do not myself want to be an active citizen "addressing" problems of social justice, human rights, community cohesion and global interdependence [and] challenging injustice, inequalities and decimation. A society, such as our own, which is obsessed with these huge abstractions is a society in deep trouble (Woodhead 2009:14).

One member of my senior management team felt that I was 'wasting my time with teaching philosophy' and suggested that I join the increasing trend of headteachers engaged in coaching groups of Year 6 pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests. A school governor and LEA adviser expressed similar views. Thus, it could be argued that philosophy in schools is regarded by some as 'subjugated knowledge' (Foucault 1980).

I believe that philosophy should not be viewed as a 'special' subject that, if taught well, will come to be valued by all pupils and the wider school community, because, as with other disciplines, it is a discourse and has to compete with other discourses at any one time. The introduction of a discourse tends to create both winners (those who gain financially, socially or personally) and losers (those who do not perform well or gain sufficient status). Hopefully, for most of the pupils, the benefits of philosophy will become clear to them, even if some of their other values, beliefs and practices do not always align themselves to the topic. For some, the idea of open, reflective enquiry is a

threat to their value system, and so it may never be a favoured subject. In addition, some may feel their confidence levels or expressive powers are low and that they therefore lose out in these subjects. As one pupil wrote in the questionnaire, she did not enjoy philosophy because she was 'not good at it'.

My lesson plans and evaluations demonstrate that I carefully planned a 40-minute lesson that established a fast pace, to keep the philosophy show going. Towards the end of Cycle 1 I wrote:

> Hopefully, as I develop the lessons, I will feel the need to perform less and let the pupils take charge of the pace of the lesson. *Journal, 29 June '09*

The research findings suggested that most pupils were engaged with the variety of learning approaches but not necessarily with the subject of philosophy itself. Whilst this may be acceptable for the edutainer, as a philosophy teacher I felt I needed to engage the pupils on a deeper level; I needed to find a way beyond edutainment but at the same time still keep the class engaged, particularly those who disliked the subject – the anti-philosophers.

As a poststructuralist educator I regard all subjects as a discourse, and one therefore has to consider the way power is imbricated in philosophy. For instance, not all parents and pupils (perhaps for religious or political reasons) would consider traits such as open-mindedness, perseverance, respect for others and self-examination as worthy of development.

It would not be my role to win the entire class over to philosophy, and such an attempt to do so, in my opinion, would be a misuse of power. Rather, the challenge was to develop thought-provoking, interesting and engaging lessons that would appeal to as many pupils as possible.

Conclusion

Cycle 1 helped me to devise two key teaching elements in the style of poststructuralism. Firstly there is the teacher's persistent awareness of the power/knowledge in the teacher-pupil relationship. It was beneficial spending time not only reflecting on this aspect of

the lessons, but also seeking ways to improve behaviour management and seeking to engage as many pupils as possible in the introduction to the new subject, the way it is taught and in the establishment of good (i.e. non-oppressive) pupil-teacher relationships. The role of discourses in shaping our view of the world was the second area reflected upon in my review of the role of discourse in the implementation of the project. As I became involved in post-highlighted in my thinking, this has made me aware of the role of using my position of authority in the school to promote actively the discourse of philosophy. In the UK, it could be argued that philosophy is a subjugated discourse, in so far as it is not recognised as a national curriculum subject and therefore has to justify its place on an already overcrowded curriculum. It is also in opposition to the dominant paradigm of our current educational system, which I would characterise as technical-rationalist and supported by the government's promotion of positivism (Gillies 2013). This technical-rational discourse encourages teachers (especially headteachers) to adopt a teleological view of education, requiring the adoption of recommended 'best practice' approaches to secure outstanding examination results, which in turn leads to an outstanding grading. School with gradings below this are increasingly becoming pressurised to seek ways to secure 'outstanding'. Smeyers et al. ably describe our current system:

> In neo-liberal thinking all human transactions are conceived as economic forms of exchange. In such a regime education is re-shaped to follow the logic of the market, and educational policy becomes ever more subject to economic policy. The result is that education is transformed into the acquisition of instrumental knowledge and marketable skills (Symers, Smith & Standish 2007: 141).

In contrast I would see philosophy as deontological, i.e. a subject that is worthwhile and valuable in itself. Nevertheless, as a leader, the game of power must be played in order to promote philosophy, and so I have found myself arguing for the benefits of 'improved thinking' or higher level thinking skills as a route to securing higher levels in the SATs tests. It is not that I am deliberately deceiving stakeholders, as the research indicates that philosophy can improve exam results, but by gaining acceptance of the benefits of the subject, I am hoping that I can make philosophy part of the school improvement and school effectiveness discourses. I regard higher grades in tests as an ancillary benefit, but for some parents, staff and pupils, unless a subject is going to help pupils in tests, it is regarded as of little value.

The focus of ethical themes is to encourage pupils to have the insight to critique their lives ruled by the technical-rational paradigm, by focussing on the original question posed by Socrates: 'What is a worthwhile life?' Through a Derridean lens, one could argue for the avoidance of the oppositional relation between the two aims of the subject (that is improved thinking skills for academic performance and the ability to reflect on 'the good life'), as both are implicated in the other. Rather than valorising the one, and excluding the other, both should be acknowledged and allowed to feature in the philosophy programme. For instance, from the beginning I was eager for pupils to develop their writing skills, as I not only felt this to be important for the subject, but it would help the pupils' writing across the curriculum. Although there was no reference in my journal, I was also looking at improving the school's SATS writing grades, to improve our position in the league tables.

In this brief cycle of eight lessons, there is evidence that the pupils did indeed develop their thinking skills. Initially, I was intending to concentrate on emphasising social conditioning shaping thought in subsequent cycles, but I could see the benefits of encouraging the pupils to develop clear and logical approaches to thinking. In cycle 2, I intended to develop thinking skill together with a consideration of the impact culture has on our thinking. Due to the ethical themes of the lessons, pupils gained a heightened awareness of ethical issues and also benefitted from the study of key philosophers, seeing this aspect of the lesson as crucial to studying the subject.

The pupils' views show that most of the class demonstrated an interest in the new subject, with some (whom I call the 'philosophy for wisdom' group) adopting a strong interest. Pupils in the edutainment group enjoyed the varied teaching and learning approaches I developed and spoke favourably of the themes. They also responded well to the brief introduction to the philosopher at the beginning of each lesson. There was a small minority who did not enjoy the subject and held generally negative views about the topic and its capacity to improve thinking, while a significant number did not respond well to the written follow-up at the end of the lesson.

Action Plan

1. Explore ways to ensure the anti-philosophers do not win over the allegiance of the edutainment group. The solution seems to be in 'spicing up the lessons to keep the attention and interest of the pupils'.

2. Be versatile in developing behaviour management strategies, in order to ensure pupils are attentive during the enquiry and respond well to one another.

3. Improve the poststructural dimension of the lessons by seeking ways to not only to develop thinking skills, but also to explore the effects of social conditioning on their own thoughts.

4. Explore different ways to make writing more interesting for pupils.

5.2 Cycle 2

In this section I provide a brief outline of the modifications made to my philosophy lessons in Cycle 2. My aim was to increase the poststructural influence and to ensure that healthy power relations were being maintained within the classroom. I then examine the data derived from the development of a poststructural pedagogy.

1 How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

Lessons in Cycle 2 saw a shift away from the standard P4C or Socratic enquiries. I began with a five-minute film. In this presentation, I introduced the philosopher to the children and provided some background details, before giving an outline of the main question of the enquiry. After the film was shown I revised any previous skills covered and introduced a new skill for the pupils to use when appropriate. I also highlighted examples of the pupils' thinking from previous enquiries that had been influenced by cultural assumptions. Following a quick warm-up game, the pupils discussed the enquiry question in small groups, before the commencement of a class discussion. The lesson ended with a plenary.

My initial strategy at the start of Cycle 2 was to ensure I continued developing momentum in the philosophy lessons, as evidenced below:

> My goal for the lesson structure in Cycle 2 will be to try to radicalise the way I deliver the lesson – an attempt to keep the anti-philosophers and edutainers interested. I shall move away from positioning myself at the front of the class and presenting the key question and outlining salient features of the "guest philosopher". Instead, I'll use more AVAs in an experimental fashion. Hopefully this will prevent disengagement. *Journal 20 .9 .09*

At times I downloaded films or animations of the philosophers from the internet (particularly YouTube) and used these clips in my films. Where I was unable to find suitable materials from the Web, I used IClone software to 'animate' the philosopher. I also involved some members of the class each week to assist with the film or slide show. At times, one or two volunteers would undertake to do some research on the philosopher and would record a commentary for the film or slideshow before the lesson. At other

times, the pupils would work on an audio play (lasting for a few minutes) to highlight the theme of the enquiry. In these cases the animated philosopher provided a brief autobiography. For instance, in the enquiry 'Do two wrongs balance out and make an action right?' (Immanuel Kant), three pupils helped me produce a film a few days before the lesson. They acted out a scene of three pupils sitting an exam. The girl in the scene had studied hard for the examination and was confident, while the two boys were less confident, as they had not prepared for the paper. One boy sees the other copying the girl's answers and decides to copy as well. When confronted by the teacher, his justification is that the other boy began copying first, and he then decided to do the same. Additional PowerPoint slides were added to the film, to add variety and interest.

As the weeks progressed and the pupils became familiar with the format of the film, I would change certain aspects to keep a sense of surprise. I used film clips from other films (e.g. The Matrix, Super Girl, Charlie Chaplin) using a mix of dance, hip-hop music and spectacular special effects to create a philosophic version of a 'pop video'. The aim was to stimulate the pupils with a fast-paced, multimedia film that constantly changed direction from a brief narration about the philosopher to an animation or film on the philosopher, and then on to a musical montage of paintings, photographs and graphics that highlighted key themes of the enquiry. The pupils looked forward to each film introduction, and I was eager to observe their reaction, which was always positive. A typical affirmative comment made in my journal was as follows:

> Lesson 5: Stoicism: Should you let the little things bother you? Marcus Aurelius
>
> The lesson went well, with the children enjoying the drama of the "Gladiator" film clip. The topic allowed me to present philosophy in quite an 'action-adventure' style, which demonstrated how it can be used to strengthen one's character (echoes of Nietzsche's Overman!).
> On the downside, the time preparing for lessons has quadrupled. It is taking a lot of time finding film clips, music, etc. and to think of ways to present the work using these approaches. Hopefully, when the pupils become more engrossed in the subject, I can move away from such an edutainment style. *Journal 19.10.09*

As I developed my expertise and ability in making the documentary films, I became absorbed in this style of pedagogy, and my desire to return to a more formal approach of teaching dissipated. I now wished to encourage the pupils to continue assisting me with

the lesson introduction while I explored innovative ways to develop the filmmaking, animation and audio-mixing skills.

> Although my original interest has been to engage the whole class at the start of the lesson, I am beginning to see this approach as a way of capturing a poststructuralist style, i.e. it is not aiming at a logocentric presentation of the subject matter. Rather, it presents a creative and playful approach to the subject matter, with ideas always on the move. *Journal: 20.10. 09*

My journal entry for the penultimate enquiry of Cycle 2 notes the pupils' concentration and enjoyment:

> Another good film introduction. The class recognised DM's voice providing the narration to the life of Socrates. I was pleased with his research. He used "The Children's Book on Philosophy" and got an article from the internet. His notes were in a mind map form, and upon checking the two texts he used, this was clearly his own work.
>
> As ever, the pupils gave the film their full concentration from start to finish. There wasn't a sound from the class, as they remained transfixed, smiling at the screen. Some smirked when they recognised Socrates as M [site manager]. I felt I had used a good range of visuals and music – the timings were much tighter than enquiry 7. *Journal 23.11.09*

The lesson observation conducted by the class teacher in Cycle 2 concluded:

> This was a very good lesson. Its real strength was the use of audio-visual aids. I have never seen my class sit so still, with such concentration. They did not want to miss a thing (and nor did I!) *Lesson observation 2, 16.11.09*

One of the interviewed pupils had been involved with the narration of one of the film introductions and found the process stimulating:

> AS I really enjoyed helping you with that film. The one about the tree.
> Q You mean the George Berkley one?
> AS Yeah, "Does a tree make a sound in the forest if no-one is around?"
> It's good the way you give us a chance to be in the films. I always enjoy looking at the films. You don't always know who will be in them. I like the music that you use...

Whilst I had become engrossed and excited by the development of a poststructural pedagogy, I never lost sight of the flipside of knowledge, namely power. As I enthusiastically developed teaching and learning approaches, I continually focused on

the impact of the behaviour of the pupils in lessons. I was keen to develop the lessons using the minimum of domination over the pupils, which I believed would be achieved through good behaviour management skills, together with time spent in motivating them to engage actively in the subject. From the first lesson, I felt that the enquiry employing the normal desk seating was an improvement from sitting on the carpet.

Enquiry 1:
I found this enquiry went well in the normal seating places. There was less hassle getting to their places and I felt less in need of having to control each person by keeping my gaze on everyone in the circle. *Journal 21.9.09*

Avoiding sitting the pupils in a circle gave me more scope to allow them to have small group discussions before the main enquiry. Once the skills section was completed, the pupils were asked to sit in silence for a few minutes, to reflect on the question. They then discussed the questions in groups of two to four for about five minutes. Thus, even if any of them did not respond in the main enquiry, they had an opportunity to express their ideas in small groups. One of the interviewed pupils was an advocate of this approach:

AS   I am quite shy, so I don't always find it easy to talk in the enquiry. So I think it's a good idea to let us discuss our views with our partners. I get on well with S… (the girl who sits next to me) and she says that I have good ideas… that pleases me.

A second interviewee added a further benefit:

DF   It's good to talk through your ideas with a friend before the enquiry… 'cause it's like a warm-up… it gives you more confidence to speak up in the enquiry. Like when you start talking to your partner, you sort of think to yourself I've got some good ideas here… then you're more likely to want to tell the rest of the class in the enquiry.

By the fourth enquiry I was finding the use of small group conversations an effective prelude to the main discussion:

Lesson Evaluation
The use of the small group discussion before the main enquiry acts as the "warm-up" and gets the pupils ready for the enquiry. I am going around making sure everyone is engaged in the activity. In this enquiry, everyone was. This makes me less inclined to "force" pupils to contribute in the enquiry. I feel as long as they have taken part in the small group discussion, I won't force them. *Journal 12.10.09*

I asked one of the interviewed pupils about this approach. She mentioned being shy and nervous when being asked to speak:

> BR: I think it's much better to give us a chance to discuss with our partners. So, if you're shy, you don't have to speak to the class. But then, even if you are shy, once you are talking to your friend, you find you are coming up with good ideas and you want to tell the class. So you end up wanting to speak in the class discussion.

The pupils' increased engagement with the subject allowed me to be more relaxed, but I was still attentive to power/knowledge relations. I was particularly keen to ensure that the pupils were respectful and attentive to each other and to peers in the enquiry, and on a few occasions I had to speak to some of them after the lessons about talking out of turn or talking amongst themselves. My main strategy in promoting a good enquiry was to reflect on the successes of the previous lesson by referring not only to the thinking skills and reflections successfully employed, but also to the conduct of the pupils during the enquiry. The regular recognition of the behaviour I desired helped to ensure co-operative enquiries.

Where there were behavioural difficulties, it was more in connection with the way I had presented the lesson rather than pupils disrupting the lessons. One of the three minor situations where I felt I had lost the pupils' attention was as follows:

Lesson 2: Soren Kierkegaard: Can We Change Who We Are?

> I feel that I need to keep the intro to the enquiry to a tighter format by having a clearer way of presenting quite complex ideas to the pupils; 'less is more' may be the way forward with this section of the lesson. For instance, I did not get round to introducing the word "existentialism", as I felt the pupils would have further developed their thoughts in the enquiry if they could have explored the idea 'existence precedes essence'. *Journal 21.9.09*

Discussion

Developing fast-paced, multimedia films to introduce the lesson was prompted by the responses of the anti-philosophers in Cycle 1. I wanted to do all that I could do to capture their interest in the subject and to avoid them believing that philosophy was dull.

Initially, I was apprehensive about adopting such an approach, which seemed to have its roots in edutainment rather than in academia. In my initial evaluations in Cycle 1 I had created too much of a binary division between academic philosophy and edutainment – I saw academic philosophy as the ideal, with edutainment as an inferior form of pedagogy. I now began to see the two approaches as being more complementary and helpful in the pursuit of helping all pupils to make progress in lessons.

After the first few lessons, though, my evaluations were showing that the pupils were engaging with this section of the lesson, and I therefore felt less under pressure to 'sell' the enquiry to the class. The preparation of this section of the lesson was time-consuming anyway (taking up to two hours to prepare), and I had originally planned to return to a more straightforward lesson 'input' once philosophy became more established and (hopefully) more popular.

However, at this stage of the project I was reading basic books on filmmaking and discovered poststructural film theory (Brunette 1992), which led me to a key educationalist working in this area: Gregory Ulmer. After reading Ulmer's 'Applied Grammatology' (1985), I began to realise that a highly audio-visual, non-realist form of pedagogy would suit a poststructural style of teaching, in that rather than a form of edutainment it could be used as a vehicle to represent the difference and deferral of meaning by using fast-moving collages. This made me more willing to embrace the use of audio-visual aids as a central feature of my pedagogical approach.

The use of film clips, animations and current popular music became a form of bricolage (Derrida 1968) whereby whatever is to hand is used to create something original and fresh for the pupils. Bricolage questions the notion of pure, original work:

> If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one's concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is "bricoleur" (Derrida 1967: 278-294).

In today's digital age, a style of film and audio-mixing called a mash-up (Shiga 2007), whereby songs and films (Miller 2008), both old and new, are blended together to produce an 'original work', is a form of bricolage. Poststructuralism and mash-up culture

recognise that original works do not have a pure origin but are always derivatives of other works – ideas are intertextual and new works become part of the archive to influence others in the future (Miller 2008).

The evidence shows that the pupils were fully engaged in this style of lesson delivery, and for some this was the best feature of the lesson. The use of the introductory film grabbed their attention for the full five minutes; they were never sure what would appear on the screen. At times, some of their class members could be acting, and then the scene would cut to an animation, a section of a pop video and so on. The animated clips of the philosophers highlighted the representational dimension of the lesson, and as I had asked different members of staff to be the 'voice' of the animated philosopher, pupils listened attentively, to discover who was providing the commentary.

The choice of music and visuals was important, and I found the more extreme the contrasts, the better the response. For example, a mash-up used on one of the films consisted of a classical piece, which was beat mixed (i.e. merged) to a dub-step segment followed by a jazz section. As a poststructuralist philosophy teacher I was learning the craft of the disc jockey and moviemaker, mixing a range of sounds and visuals backed by the all-important philosophy narration of the pupils. In addition, the teacher also becomes an archivist, digging into the (digital) archive to retrieve old paintings, documents and films to bring the message into the classroom. The continuous creation of new trains of thought and images, openness to the next event and the use of multiple perspectives promotes not only pupil engagement but also a sense of Derrida's différance.

The use of the pupils' opinions and the account of the philosopher gave a discursive dimension to the films. However, the non-discursive elements were developed through the use of music, images and sound effects. The effect provides the sense of the flow of différance.

The desire to engage pupils fully, without dominating or manipulating them, became the key driver to extending my pedagogical repertoire. Even though the class's behaviour was much more settled in Cycle 2, I continued to reflect after every lesson on relationships between the pupils and me. Where behavioural problems developed, my journal entries show how I tried to minimise the use of coercion, to ensure compliance

from all pupils. Instead, I looked to good behaviour management strategies to help ensure purposeful and cordial lessons. The success of the project relied on the active involvement of the pupils in a supportive and thoughtful enquiry.

The questionnaire (Appendix 4) shows that the pupils enjoyed expressing their views in the enquiry and felt that there was a good atmosphere in the classroom. They reported that they were happy with the way I was developing the lessons and felt that I did not dominate and they were given the chance to express their views. The survey showed that a significant number of pupils enjoyed the options of not feeling forced to make a comment in the main enquiry but could instead share their views in small groups (between two and four) before the whole class enquiry.

My increasing awareness of the power of discourse to mould pupils made me equally aware of the way I too am constituted by a variety of discourses and do not have access to 'The Truth' which I can present. For instance, the use of sitting the children in a circle for discussions is common in school philosophy lessons and in personal, social and health education. In the latter case, this is known as 'circle time' (Mosely 1993; Sharp and Smith 1994; White 2009), and the process is recommended as a way of creating greater democracy and equality in a group discussion. By not sitting at the front of the class, and rather in the circle, the teacher minimises his/her position of authority and creates a better atmosphere for sharing ideas. Such approaches have their merits, and over the years I have conducted circle time and have seen it conducted successfully by other teachers. Yet, as a Foucauldian teacher, I had difficulty not equating circle time with one of Foucault's famous metaphors of the disciplinary society, namely the panopticon (see poststructuralist methodology). Although the philosophical enquiries were acceptable, in the circle I could not rid myself of the idea of being the guard in the tower, i.e. rather than running a free and open debate. I was now disguising my use of power, because in the circle I could survey all the pupils, to ensure their compliance. I am not endeavouring to make the point that enquiries are better by not being in a circle; rather, I became constituted by a discourse and found myself following its discursive practices.

2 Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate that pupils are developing philosophical skills?

In the second cycle I continued to develop traditional philosophical thinking skills and knowledge about philosophers. In addition, I introduced poststructural reflection, to draw the attention of social conditioning on the thought process.

Data Collection

Each lesson began with an introduction to a philosophical skill for the pupils to consider for use in the forthcoming enquiry. In addition, I revised previous skills. In the second cycle I introduced the following philosophical skills:

Thinking Skills

1. Seeing connections.
2. Open-mindedness.
3. Building on other ideas.
4. Developing intellectual courage to 'think outside the box'.
5. Challenging 'facts' presented to support an argument.
6. Logical fallacies.

These skills were in addition to the Cycle 1 skills of providing reasons or examples, sticking to the point, refining and modifying arguments in response to criticism and drawing inferences. I produced a fresh key skills sheet for each lesson and made a note of when pupils used a skill.

The third observation of a lesson, conducted by a senior teacher, commended the emphasis on skill development at the start of the lesson:

> I felt the introduction to the lesson (making connections in discussions) was very effective. The film clip, followed by the children having a discussion, clearly demonstrated a good example of making connections. I liked the way you referred to previous skills that you had covered. The use of giving actual examples of the children using the skills from previous enquiries captured their attention. I also thought it good that you wrote all the skills you have covered on the flip charts. It provided a handy reference during the enquiry. *Journal 5.10.09*

Most of the surveyed pupils referred to improved thinking skills as one of the benefits of philosophy. The edutainment group (as noted in the previous section) was able to cite some of the more essential skills we had explored: giving reasons, providing examples and gaining confidence in expressing their views.

The interviewed pupils were given an opportunity to provide an example of how their thinking had improved, and all were able to give a satisfactory account in this respect:

> BR Well, I am much better at giving reasons, and I try to listen to both sides of an argument before deciding which is right. Sometimes I change what I first thought after listening to someone.

> GF Well... always give reasons for your views... but make sure they are true, because someone may spot a mistake and show you to be wrong. Also, don't wander off the point. Lots of the class tells me I do this, but I think I am getting much better.

> AK I have learned to give my thoughts at the end of the enquiry. I first listen to what the rest say. This helps me think through what I will say.

During the enquiry I listened for and noted down key skills being used by the pupils. In all lessons I was able to record the coverage of most of the skills in the enquiry and follow-up.

The following is an example of my recording of skills noted in Lesson 12:

1. Reasoning G, M, H.
2. Examples, E, F, G.
3. Sticking to the point, H, F, G.
4. Refining and modifying arguments in response to criticism, drawing inferences S.
5. Seeing connections.
6. Open mindedness.
7. Building on other ideas F, G, F.
8. Developing intellectual courage to 'think outside the box'.
9. Challenging 'facts' presented to support an argument.
10. Logical fallacies.

The last six enquiries resulted in a number of pupils being able to use the key skills. The only one that was not utilised was 'discerning logical fallacies'.

Whereas only six pupils referred to thinking skills in Cycle 1 as a benefit to philosophy lessons, 21 pupils cited this in the Cycle 2 questionnaire. Examples include:

G3 I am much better at giving reasons.

G9 It's good to give more than one reason to back up your answer.

G12 I can give my opinions more clearly now.

B2 I can listen carefully to see if their ideas make sense.

B7 If you give a good example, more people will agree with you.

Knowledge about philosophers was also regarded by the pupils as central to the lessons. The questionnaire revealed that approximately 30% of the class cited knowledge of the philosophers as central to their learning. A sample of their answers is as follows:

What have you learnt?

B1. About different philosophies and history.
B2. About many famous philosophers.
B3. There are lots of famous philosophers.
B4. About famous philosophers, including Plato, Socrates and many more.
B5. History of philosophy.
B7. I have learnt about a lot of philosophers.
B13. More about the past and new philosophies.
B14. I have learnt what philosophers' points of view are.
G1. Different philosophy questions.
G4. We have learnt about how you can use mind skills and about how philosophers told people about a variety of things using their own minds.
G9. I have learnt about philosophy, when it was first used and who did philosophy.

G11. I have learnt about philosophers.

G13. About different philosophers; enquiries.

None of the pupils expressed a dislike for studying philosophers or found this aspect of the lesson uninteresting. The only issue raised about the philosophers was the time allocated to this section of the lesson – three felt it was too long, with six expressing a wish for the session to be longer.

The interviewed pupils represented both spectrums of viewpoints:

SH What I would like to do more of is to learn more about the philosopher of the week.

GM I think the amount of time we spent on the philosopher of the week was just about right. It got you thinking, then you wanted to have a go and discuss the ideas in the enquiry.

The seven pupils in the philosophers group were confident that insights into the

philosophers helped them to improve in the subject by deepening their skills and ideas.

DF I think that we've also learnt things about jobs and how it can help us in the future, and also some things about what… how to be kind, and how to react to people's opinions and things.

Q How can I improve the teaching of thinking skills lessons?

DF Well, I liked it when you linked up our philosophy lessons with our topics on Greece. You see, I like history, and when we learnt about Socrates, Aristotle… and…

Q Plato…

DF ... Plato, it helped me to understand a bit more about how the ancient Greeks thought and how they lived. So I think it would be good to link up our other history topics to philosophy. Or, if we do an enquiry, we could go to other year groups who are studying history and I can tell them about the famous philosophers of the time. Like, we could have gone to Year 3, when they were doing World War II, to show them the work we did on how women worked in the war doing all sorts of men's jobs.

Another typical response was:

KS I've learnt that you kind of get more ideas while doing philosophy, and also it… it kind of makes you, like, learn more new things, and I think that's what some people like. So that's what I kind of like as well, because you don't want to just stick to the usual things, you want to learn new stuff. So I think that's what's made it really better.

After Lesson 3, I was becoming concerned about the introduction to the philosopher. I

recorded in my journal:

I had to work hard to keep everyone's attention when I introduced… Some of the pupils' attention began to wander, and I felt they were more interested in the question… and wanted to get on with the enquiry. Although I am pleased they are keen to take part in

the enquiry, I would like to engage more with the philosopher studied. I will have to think of new ways to grab the pupils' attention. *Journal 28.9.09*

I found the most successful way was to vary the approach, for example with pupils acting as the philosopher (both as part of a film or in class), providing a voiceover for a film clip of the philosopher (e.g. a rare movie clip of Martin Heidegger) accompanied by a teacher's dialogue or an animation of the philosopher. This last approach was the most successful. My journal entry reflects this assumption:

> Lesson 4: Thomas Hobbes
>
> I do find the use of animation to introduce the philosophers a really good way to engage the pupils. The animation of Thomas Hobbes went really well, and the pupils were intrigued by the moving lips of the philosopher. They smiled and listened intently to Thomas Hobbes discussing freewill and determinism (in two minutes). The trick seems to be to vary the approach – to "keep 'em guessin'", as it creates a difference that makes a difference. *Journal 12.10.09*

Having developed the teaching of logical and clear thinking skills, I now wished to develop the pupils' awareness of the roles that culture, history and language play in our thinking processes. Rather than devise a tick list of poststructural refection skills, I decided to let the enquiries develop and allow such thinking to mature. I was attentive to perspectives in the enquiry that noted in which way the roles of language, culture (macro or micro) and history may affect how we think and behave. Whilst the majority of the pupils did not readily consider this aspect, this different view was noted at the end of the lesson as part of the summing up process. Once this poststructural dimension to thinking had been raised, I then referred to the approach when we revised the 'skills developed so far' section at the beginning of lessons.

I called these domains of understanding 'reflection', and when they 'appeared in an enquiry' they were written on the flip chart and entitled 'Further Food for Thought'. This flip chart complemented a second flip chart that detailed the philosophical skills developed over the course of the enquiries.

My journal noted the following examples of poststructural thinking:

1. Archaeology
Lesson 5: Marcus Aurelius
1. Culture encourages us to think in certain ways (archaeology):
Pupils were intrigued by the "harshness", as one pupil put it, of life in ancient Greece. By the end of the enquiry some were of the opinion that we are too soft in our lifestyles today and "it would be better if we all toughened up, like the Greeks". A pupil replied: "We don't need to live such a hard life nowadays, as we do not need to be trained to fight in wars all the time. But in those times you would have to".
Journal 19.10.09

2. The way we may be compelled to think and behave (power/normalisation):

Enquiry 7: Do girls/women have to work harder to be more successful (S De Beauvoir)?

The girls certainly felt the effects of the microphysics of power in today's enquiry! Many of the girls were really cross with a significant minority of boys, who felt women were not good at "men's jobs" (e.g. police, the Army, car mechanics).

Some of the boys were giving false facts to support their views, e.g. girls cannot join the Army. I felt this lesson benefitted by giving feminism a historical context. By showing the pupils (particularly the boys) that women have had to struggle to gain equal rights, they began to be aware of the role of power and its dominating effects on groups. A... compared the struggle for women's rights with the fight for "Black people to get equal rights". *Journal 16.11.09*

Whilst most of the girls were in favour of all jobs being open to both sexes, the boys were split (about 50/50). In addition, some of the boys enjoyed annoying the girls by trying to give examples of male superiority, e.g. men's football is better than women's, which is why it is a professional sport for males. The girls became very heated in their opposition.

EP sighed:

The reason why women are not always as successful as men is that men put women down and don't encourage them. It's much harder for a woman to be successful, so they have to work harder.

In my summing up, I gave the following thought: 'We are agreed in the enquiry that it's good to be successful in life, but perhaps for some groups of people it is harder because they get put down.' *Journal 16.11.09.*

Another moment of reflection on the nature of power occurred in the enquiry on Thomas Hobbes. One of the pupils, J, was able to build on the insights gained in the enquiry on feminism, which is recorded in my journal as follows:

The children found this enquiry interesting and were keen to contribute. Many were of the opinion that children were restricted to doing things, but once you are grown up you have much more freedom to do as you like. J referred to the enquiry on feminism and said, "Not all adults have the same amount of freedom as others; like, if you're poor, you won't have the freedom to go on holiday or buy a new car. Or women may be banned from some jobs, so they are not as free as the men". *Journal 12.10.09*

3. The way we use language can affect our thinking

At the beginning of the above enquiry, one of the boys felt he was able to offer proof that some jobs could only be done by men. My journal recorded this conversation:

A [Announcing to the group confidently] Look, it's obvious some jobs are just meant for men. Like you have firemen – well ladies can't do that job.
S….[girl] That's silly A… of course women can be in the fire service – they are. They can be called firewomen or firefighters.
A [Looks surprised as he realises his error] Oh yeah…

4. How everyday practices are the result of decisions made by past leaders (Foucauldian Genealogy)

Lesson 7 Enquiry: Do girls/women have to work harder to be more successful (S De Beauvoir)?

This lesson, more than most, benefitted from the historical details of women working in factories and farms in the Second World War. I was able to develop the theme that tension was created when the returning soldiers wanted women to return to the role of homemaker, as many women felt a sense of empowerment after taking on traditional male roles. During the course of the enquiry, pupils used the factual information developed in the introductory films to counter the view that women can't do strenuous jobs. *Journal 16.11.09*

5. Is there a core belief to an argument (Metaphysics of Presence)?

Pupil's written follow-up to Lesson 5 (Marcus Aurelius) on the question 'Should you let the little things in life bother you?'

I am a Christian and believe that life can be hard and it is also a test. It is important to love God and to obey your parents. You should be kind and helpful to other people. It is important not to get bothered by small things, and you should be grateful for what you have got. *Journal 19.10.09*

6. Stop! Is either/or thinking

Most enquiries allowed for the opportunity to encourage the pupils to consider not only two opposing viewpoints before reaching a conclusion, but also to use elements on both sides, to synthesise a point of view.

Heidegger <u>Lesson 1</u>

Do the advantages of technology outweigh the disadvantages? Martin Heidegger

A… [in a roundabout way!] argued for a balance to be made between the positives and negatives. Most tended to side with one side or the other. It would have helped if I had emphasised the original question – emphasising on balance. E.g. K: technology is bad, as it is destroying the planet, and H: it is good because on a car journey you can play a computer game! *Journal 21.9.09*

7. Winners & Losers. Are our beliefs fair (Dividing Practices/Justice)?

Will having fun make you happier than studying? J S Mill

The pupils were discussing the merits of working hard at school in order to secure a good job. H offered the following, recorded in the journal:

"I don't think you should muck around at school, because you won't get good qualifications. Then you'll get a rubbish job, like being a dustbin man" [some laughter from the class]. This allowed me to steer the enquiry gently to considering the perils of denigrating the opposite state of affairs we are advocating, i.e. just because we may want a "good" job, those who work in low-status jobs (another pupil characterised a "rubbish" job as working in McDonalds) should not be put down and demeaned. One pupil said that her aunt has to look after her grandmother, who is ill, and as a result she could only get a part-time job as a cleaner, "because it is more important to look after my Nan". *Journal 28.9.09*

Lesson Observation 2 noted:

Assessment of the pupils is a strong feature of the lesson. Your notes on the key pupil contribution helped in the summing up, and the review of the previous lessons at the start of this enquiry demonstrates that you are able to develop key skills and concepts in a logical and progressive manner. DM (School Leader)

By the end of Cycle 2, I had recorded the following:
1. Culture encourages us to think in certain ways (Archaeology).
2. The way we use language can affect our thinking (Archaeology).
3. We may be compelled to think and behave (Power/Normalisation).

4. Everyday practices are the result of decisions made by past leaders (Foucauldian Genealogy).
5. Is there a core belief/principle to an argument (Metaphysics of Presence)?
6. How are the ways we think today related to the thinking of past philosophers (Derridean Genealogy)?
7. Either/or thinking.
8. Winners and losers. Does our thinking disadvantage others? (Dividing Practices).

Discussion

The two cycles demonstrated a great deal of evidence to support how the pupils gained confidence and expertise in using their thinking skills, not only in philosophy but also in other subjects. The evidence from Cycle 2 demonstrated that a poststructural reflection, developed in a systematic way, can give pupils an understanding of the role of power and perspective in our thinking. I would argue that Lipman's (2003) wish for better and more caring thinking has many merits, but it undervalues the function of foundational principles, which often may have developed unconsciously. History has shown that many of the great philosophers have not made good decisions in their lives or in their politics. An example would be Martin Heidegger, regarded as one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, who also happened to be a Nazi supporter and anti-Semite, and no amount of higher-level thinking skills or appeals to reasonableness from his philosophical supporters (which included Hannah Arendt and Jean Paul Sartre) could persuade him otherwise. For poststructural philosophy, an awareness of perspective, power and interpretation is as important as thinking skills.

In Cycle 2, there was evidence that the pupils were becoming aware that our ideas often can be traced back to foundational principles. For instance, the girl who began her input into an enquiry with the statement, 'I am a Christian, and we Christians believe...' was clearly identifying her foundational principles. Once I pointed out to pupils that our ideas can often be based on a person (parents) or a group (church, cubs or brownies), others at times would cite the foundation to their thinking.

The evidence suggests that strong historical or genealogical markers helped the pupils to think otherwise. For instance, the enquiry about 'Do women have the same opportunities as men in the workplace?' was enhanced by a study of the suffragette movement and the role of women in England in World War II. Some of the boys in the class, who saw women as 'inferior', were able to see them in a different light. In this enquiry (which was

the most heated) we were able to tease out how the effects of power are hidden behind commonly accepted views and that women have to fight to gain acceptance in the workplace.

Throughout the enquiries, the children were able to see how people thought on a range of issues in the past and how some of our current-day thinking is based on previous thinkers.

A key strategy I found useful was to highlight when pupils raised the roles of culture, nature or language in an enquiry. Re-contextualising an idea posited by DeShazer (1996) – noticing the 'difference that makes a difference' – I made a note of when pupils referred to a different form of thinking and highlighted the significance of the contribution. The placement examples of poststructural reflection on a flip chart helped them to consider the impact of this dimension on our thinking. All the enquiries contained references to previous enquiries' poststructural reflections, together with a review of previous thinking skills.

The emphasis on reviewing skills and key ideas was influenced by Derrida's notion of the trace. This quasi-concept proved to be a unique feature of the philosophy lessons and was a major contributing factor in helping the pupils to develop a range of philosophical skills. The constant references to previous enquiries encouraged the use of intertextual aspects of philosophy, and the knowledge, skills and concepts from previous lessons were evident in each enquiry.

When I initially embarked on the action research project I had reservations about how well the pupils would respond to learning about philosophers, as I felt that these 'dead white males' may be of little interest. The advantage of the P4C approach is that knowledge of philosophers is not needed, as enquiries are based on pupils' questions.

However, part of the process of the philosophy concerns an examination of the past, to reconsider the present. When I first began to feel that not all pupils were engaging in this part of the lesson, my initial strategy was to turn to edu-entertainment, to grab their interest. The use of animations, films clips and drama to introduce the philosopher was very successful in retaining focus and was a hotly anticipated aspect of the lesson.

Consequently, my reservations about the use of philosophers acting as starting points to the enquiries proved to be unfounded. The philosophers group in particular found this aspect of the enquiry helped to marshal their thoughts. Comments showed they were able to deepen their awareness of the subject by listening to the views of the famous philosophers. However, in all the enquiries, some pupils were noted as saying, 'I do not agree' or 'I only partly agree' with [the philosopher of the week], showing that they were not regarding the philosophers as experts on the theme discussed. In some (although rare) cases, the children referred back to previous philosophers to develop a point, although they did see the study of famous philosophers as integral to the subject.

3 What are the pupils' perceptions of philosophy?

Data Collection

An analysis of the questionnaires and interviews shows that pupils had now broadly positioned themselves into two discourses:

i) The philosophers group had become the larger group (43% of the class) from Cycle 1.
ii) The remaining 57% of the class formed what I call the 'enjoyment and excellence' group.

The composition of the interview groups remained the same: four pupils were the philosophy enthusiasts (excellence and enjoyment group) and the other four were the edutainers.

The excellence and enjoyment group's responses were directed more at highlighting the academic, ethical and social benefits of philosophy, and enjoyment was regarded as a bonus. The edutainers, on the other hand, were more interested in the enjoyment aspect, with a secondary interest in philosophical development, while the anti-philosophers had ceased to exist as a group, because the originally disengaged pupils now enjoyed the subject as a form of edutainment.

The defining characteristic of the excellence and enjoyment group was their interest in the academic, ethical and social aspects of the subject. When they were asked to suggest

ways to improve the subject, their wish was to spend more time studying philosophers, to have more time on the writing or to have longer discussions. A typical comment from one of the four philosophers in the interview sample was:

Q Is there anything else you'd like to say about the development of future philosophy lessons?

HD Well, I'd just, to say, when you do philosophy, it's really fun and really interesting to do. And it's really… I don't know what to say. It's really fantastic, as you get to think deeply about things you never normally get a chance to. I wish I could do it again.

This pupil explained that he would like to do more research, to 'get to know more about the philosophers and their ideas'. Another typical comment that displayed an enthusiastic and positive approach to philosophy was:

Q … what have you found the most useful aspect of our thinking skills/philosophy lessons?

GF Well, it's all good, really, because when you get to secondary school, it really makes you think harder, because you know how to think harder, really. And it's fun, and how we all get our say, and how the microphone goes round, and if you've got an idea, you say the idea. At the start, it's also good, and how we get thinking by playing a game, like we do… having, like, little fun games to warm us up, and then when we get into our philosophy lesson, it also makes it exciting when we have the film clip that we do. Because, before you do the lesson, it helps you to know what the lesson's going to be about. It gives you, like, an overview, at the start.

Q And finally, is there anything else you would like to say about the philosophy lessons?

KS I think that they're actually quite good, because it kind of helps you think a bit more about your le… other lessons like geography, history and all that. And also, I kind of think that you should extend the lesson a bit more, like I've said before, because if you extend it more, there'll be more ideas and it helps more children think of their work better.

IV   When you say extend, do you mean the length of the lesson?

KS   Yeah, the length of the lesson.

Another typical positive response from another pupil was:

Q   What have you learnt in our sessions?

KS I've learnt that you kind of get more ideas while doing philosophy, and also, it… it kind of makes you, like, learn more new things, and I think that's what some people like. So that's what I kind of like as well, because you don't want to just stick to the usual things, you want to learn new stuff. So I think that's what's made it really better.

Q Anything else?

KS I really like the last lot of lessons, where we have being doing more acting and making the film. I find that it allows us more time to think about the philosopher we are studying. It also makes you want to know even more about the philosopher, because it may help your drama be even better.

All claimed that philosophy was deepening their understanding of ethical issues. The most overt statement to this effect was:

HD   I think philosophy can also help you to do the right thing, even if your friends are telling you do something that you know isn't right.

Other benefits highlighted were the ability to complete extension tasks in other subjects, thinking clearly in discussions at home, making history more interesting, better writing and developing an interest in the lives of philosophers.

The questionnaire from this group reflected similar interests to those of the interviewees. Using NVivo, I coded the pupils' responses into the themes outlined below. Reference could be made to the themes at any point in the questionnaire, and where a theme was referred to more than once, I only counted that entry once. When pupils in this group were asked how the philosophy lessons could be improved, a variety of responses was given. The table below (Table 2) shows the number of times the comment was made on the questionnaire.

Table 2

Positive Aspects of the Philosophy Lessons according to the 'The Philosophers' in the Questionnaire

Taking part in discussions	100%	13
Developing thinking skills	92%	12
Learning about philosophers	85%	11
Watching the introductory film	85%	11
Listening to different viewpoints	62%	12
Taking part in small groups discussions	38%	9
Being involved with drama	31%	8
Developing confidence in expressing ideas	31%	8
Being thoughtful to others	23%	3

The second group, the edutainers, ranked enjoyment more highly than academic excellence. The questionnaire from this group showed that the following ranked list, Table 3, displays positive features of the lesson, and the numbers represent the amount of pupils that made a positive reference to the feature:

Table 3

Positive Aspects of the Philosophy Lessons according to the 'The Edutainers' in the Questionnaire

Introductory film	20
Playing warm-up games	20
Being involved in a play	15
Discussions	12
Smaller groups discussions	8
Use of the machine to project voice	6
When the teacher makes a joke	5

This group also offered interesting suggestions to help them engage further in the subject (Table4).

Table 4

Suggestions to improve Philosophy Lessons according to the 'Edutainers' in the Questionnaire

More acting	9
More fun things	8
No writing	7
More games	7
Watching more films	4
More warm-up games	4
Drawing as a follow-up	2
More humour from the teacher	1
Listening and learning more	1
The teacher to do more random things	1

Some suggestions were made regarding improving the cognitive aspects of the lessons, but these were rare and vague. Such comments included:

More time on the enquiry (1)
The teacher to explain more about the topic (2)

The second of the interviewed pupils in the enjoyment and excellence group succinctly suggested how I could improve philosophy lessons:

He could improve it by putting a type of game into it, to make it more fun.

However, elsewhere in the interview, she added:

Well, I think I've learnt a lot from them. Normally, when, like, in Year 4 and Year 3, we didn't do philosophy, but now I understand a bit more about it and all the philosophers.

This pupil typified the ethos of this group by showing a willingness to engage in the subject if it had a high fun/entertainment dimension:

Q What have you found the most useful aspects to our thinking skills philosophy lessons?

AS I find it quite good… I like it when we, like, discuss really interesting questions and we share each other's idea. I like it when we get to see all these dramas, and seeing the philosophers.

Q And what didn't you like about our philosophy sessions?

AS I didn't like it being quite so long.

Q And how can philosophy lessons be better for children?

AS I think you should keep to the idea of having an enquiry one week, then the next week let us choose how we do the follow-up. Because we all do different things… to see what everyone else has done….

Q In what way was this useful?

AS Well, it's like you get ideas when you're in the circle having the enquiry, then when you see what others have done, it gives you more ideas.

Q And what would you say that you've learned from our thinking skills sessions?

AS I've learnt about more philosophers, and I've learnt how to write a bit neater, and I've improved my thinking skills.

Q How have you found writing the enquiry?
AS I don't see the point of writing about the enquiry, as we have already talked about it in the lesson.

Only one of the edutainers in the interview group (4/8) liked the writing aspect:

Well, I think it's good because it gives you time to go over ideas. And sometimes you don't say your ideas clearly in the enquiry... you sort of get nervous and it comes out wrong; well, not exactly wrong, just not how you would like it to come out.

The remaining two sided with AS in their dislike of the writing follow-up:

I look forward to the lessons, but I find the writing boring. It's like you've said it in the enquiry and you have to try to remember what you've said in the afternoon. Sometimes it's hard to remember… and anyway, I think it's a waste of time anyway.

On one occasion, I was unable to attend the afternoon writing session and I asked the class teacher to take the lesson. He told me that the class were restless in the writing session and most were not fully engaged in the activity. He concluded:

At 2 o'clock [the end of the session] most were keen to move on to the next lesson. I think they are going to need more motivation to get them wanting to write.
Journal 10.11.09

Discussion

Pupils in the excellence and enjoyment group displayed a genuine passion for the subject and recorded the positive aspects of their experiences. These pupils showed an interest in the subject, enjoyed the academic challenges and were optimistic about the benefits of learning the discipline. They were also able to give clear examples of how the subject was helping them in their academic and social life. Their claim that the enquiries were helping them to express their ideas and to develop thinking skills supported my evaluations. The pupils broadly enjoyed studying the philosophers (with some wishing to spend more time on this aspect of the lesson), and for some this renewed their interest in history.

This group was less likely to cite the fun aspects of philosophy as their main reason for liking the subject, although it did feature as an added asset. Clearly they enjoyed the subject, primarily because they were gaining considerably from the academic and social benefits. This is in contrast to the next group, who required enjoyment before committing fully to the rigours of the subject.

Pupils in the edutainment group moved beyond the entertainment merits of the subject and could cite benefits that moved beyond pleasure. However, this group was insistent that philosophy must be fun, in order for them to derive satisfaction from the topic. Nevertheless, it was heartening to discover that there were no anti-philosophers in the

groups, and those engaging in the subject were keen to take a full and active part in lessons.

The most popular activities were once again those with a high entertainment value: films, warm-up games and drama. However, once the pupils were engaged, they took an active part in the enquiries and benefited from the experience, as evidenced by their enjoyment of the discussions. In addition, the small group discussion helped some of the less secure pupils to cultivate their ideas. Despite their progress, when asked for further improvements this group requested more 'fun' or entertainment, which is in contrast to the philosophers group, which requested more opportunities to develop philosophical knowledge and skills.

When asked how the subject could be improved, the pupils tended to opt for improving the 'fun' aspects. However, as they had more experience on the subject than in Cycle 1, they were also keen to share the benefits they had gained. All pupils in the survey and in the interviews were able to offer a rationale for the benefits of philosophy, ranging from cognitive through to ethical and personal development (greater confidence). Although very few felt the study of the philosophers was a high point of the enquiry, none suggested not using a philosopher as the starting point.

The interviewed pupils expressed positive views about the subject and engaged with philosophy. They particularly liked a range of activities during Cycle 2 and enjoyed expressing and sharing views with their peers. However, most did not enjoy the writing and did not want the academic dimension of the lesson to be increased: lessons should not be too long, the enquiry needs to flow smoothly and pressure should not be put on individuals in the main enquiry.

Some of the excellence and enjoyment group found the writing of the diary rewarding and enjoyed having a record of their enquiries or relished expressing their thoughts in writing. The others in the group were less enthusiastic but saw the activity as a necessary part of the subject. The majority of the pupils in the edutainment group were much less interested in writing and, as AS and the class teacher indicated, the process had become unproductive. Writing, to some of the pupils (the anti-philosophers and edutainers), had

beome an exercise in remembering what had been said during the enquiries and, as one pupil put in the questionnaire, 'writing as much as you could remember.'

As such, I began to realise that a linear form of writing was logocentric and needed to be developed, in order to advance a poststructural philosophy. In Cycle 1, I had assumed that a poststructural philosophy lesson could not rely on oral discussions, as this would be phonocentric. However, the resulting form of writing was underpinned and restricted by the voice, because the pupils were merely remembering what was said in the enquiries and transforming what they could remember into the written form. Consequently, they were writing in a traditional philosophical way by expressing their views in a clear and concise manner, in order to recaputure the ideas of the enquiry. I therefore needed to find a way to develop a writing style that pupils would enjoy but which also had the characteristics of poststrucural writing, namely experimental, intertextual and less focused on the individual.

Conclusion

The poststructuralist style of teaching that developed in Cycle 2 was the poststructuralist pedagogy derived from the work of Gregory Ulmer. The development of an experimental 'mash-up' pedagogy reflects Derrida's ideas of difference and deferral at the heart of communication. A second feature of this pedagogy is using images and music that engage the emotions of the pupils, thus involving them positively in the enquiry. My development of a poststructural pedagogy that employed contemporary culture and digital movie-making techniques was helping to engage the pupils.

Cycle 2 saw significant developments into poststructural philosophy, by way of a double strategy – skillful thinking and poststructural reflection. Whilst initially I had thought that poststructuralism would be less concerned with rational debate and instead focus on deconstruction and discourse analysis, I began to see the benefits of a dual approach. Most of the pupils' responses in the enquiries involved mainly their use of traditional thinking skills. With these skills, they were able to explore the key questions using insight and were able to consider ethical issues. The use of poststructural reflection was used as a supplement for further consideration of the use of language, power and culture in the formation of our foundational principles.

The evidence demonstrates that the pupils were able to develop insightful, thoughtful and caring opinions using thinking skills developed in a structured and progressive manner. The second aspect to the strategy was the use of poststructural reflection to uncover the politics of knowledge. The findings show that the pupils' understanding of issues was helped by being aware of their own and others' grounding assumptions. The historical dimension to poststructural reflections helped them to gain a sense of how our thinking today is affected by the past.

The data suggest that the pupils enjoyed and made philosophical progress in the lessons. The philosophers group particularly was excited by the potential of the new subject to develop their reasoning powers throughout the curriculum, and they were interested in learning about philosophers. The second group required lessons to be 'fun' before they would willingly commit to the discipline of philosophy. In addition, the majority of this group was less enthusiastic about the written assignments.

The pupils developed their thinking skills and increased in confidence in using them in the enquiries. When questioned, they were able to refer to particular skills they had used, and they were able to explain how the skill had helped them in the enquiries and other curriculum subjects. This is in contrast to Cycle 1, where they were still unsure. Evidence shows that the pupils found it helpful to begin the lesson with a specific 'thinking skill' and then to revise previous skills. It was not expected that all of them would necessarily use the new skills in the enquiry, but when they were used in the particular lesson, it was mentioned in the conclusion.

Action Plan
1. Instead of developing one enquiry each week, explore a three-week cycle for each enquiry. This will allow a longer period of reflection on the philosophers and produce a key question.

2. Look for ways to develop more innovative methods for the pupils to respond to the enquiry.

3. Continue with the exploration of power/knowledge in lessons.

5.3 Cycle 3

In this section I further refine the use of a poststructural style in my teaching of philosophy and look for more ways to establish a more egalitarian relationship with the pupils. In Cycle 3, I developed the philosophy lessons by introducing poststructural writing using digital media, which I term 'E-criture'. The use of digital films as a medium for 'writing' allowed me to develop two key poststructural themes: intertextual references and the death of the author. I also developed the idea that philosophy for children should not only use dialogical reasoning but should also incorporate Foucault's ideas of philosophy as a series of aesthetic practices to develop one's character or virtue.

1 How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

Data Collection

Rather than having a dialogical enquiry every session (as in P4C), I extended the philosophical enquiry over three weekly lessons, which allowed me to develop a poststructural style of writing (E-criture). The following journal entry notes my new-found enthusiasm for digital writing.

> I am finding Ulmer's applied grammatology really interesting. He emphasises that a grammatological classroom should be less concerned with the transmission of knowledge and should instead involve invention (i.e. creativity). I now realise that I need to employ a writing style that is not representational but instead is underpinned by différance – writing that is aware of its inability to represent presence. Digital technology will help with this writing beyond the book. *Journal 3.1.10*

In the first week I introduced the philosopher and a related key question (see Appendix 1) with the aid of a film. As in Cycle 2, a pupil conducted a piece of research before the lesson and recorded a narration to introduce the key question. In all three enquiries I introduced the philosopher through 'IClone' animation software. Film clips and pictures of the philosopher were also used. This software package allows a portrait to be converted into an animation, with the lips synchronised to an audio recording. Facial expressions can also be adjusted, to suit the dialogue. After the film and key question

were discussed briefly, the challenge for the class was to develop a piece of drama that would feature in the philosophy film the following week. The objective for the pupils was to produce a piece lasting about three minutes, to illustrate the theme of the enquiry. The class was excited when I told them of the new format of the philosophy lessons:

> The pupils were especially keen when I told them that in this first session they would split into groups to improvise a play based on the theme 'Is it ever justified to use violence?' They listened attentively to the introduction to Mahatma Gandhi. And once the introduction was over, I gave ideas on how they could develop suitable themes to develop issues. After an initial discussion, the class asked to watch the introduction again, to get ideas. *Journal 7.1.10*

At the end of the lesson we looked at four of the finished plays (two groups decided not to show their work, as in their view their ideas had not been successful). The pupils voted on the most suitable play, and the following day I filmed the group performing this production. The scene was set in a school and involved a child being bullied. One of the groups of pupils wanted to retaliate by attacking the bully, but after a discussion they decided to report the issue to the headteacher, who dealt with the matter.

In the second week we looked at the original four-minute film of the philosophers, with the addition of the film of the play performed by one of the groups of pupils from the previous week. Once the pupils finished watching the film, we began the philosophical enquiry with a small group discussion as a 'warm-up' and prelude to the main enquiry. The whole class enquiry was recorded on an audio recorder, to allow me to assess their responses and to choose contributions for inclusion in the film.

In the third and final week of the enquiry, the lesson began with the latest edition of the film. This version had the original scene shown from lesson 1 (pupils' research of the philosopher) and the short two- to three-minute film, dramatising a scene to illustrate the theme of the enquiry. In addition it included the audio recordings of six to eight pupils from lesson 2. Some of these contributions were the original live recordings from the enquiry, and sometimes the pupils re-recorded a better version for the film. The task for this third and final part of the enquiry was to look at the film, to see how they could make a creative contribution. The pupils, for example, could sketch, paint, compose music, sing a song or compose a jingle. The art contributions would provide the visual

content to accompany the philosophical recorded dialogue, while music and jingle contributions would be used for the soundtrack, together with published music.

After the lesson I chose suitable pictures, music and other contributions and inserted them into the film to accompany the pupils' enquiry responses from the previous week. I was pleased with the first completed film in Cycle 3:

> It's taken some time to solve the problem of "writing". For many children it was becoming a chore and had the potential to disengage them from the subject. I feel I was encouraging a style of writing that was too clinical and formulaic – too logocentric. Using a film format I can illustrate the flow of différance, not only in teaching, but also in pupil learning. It certainly captured the attention of those who watched the film. *Journal 25.1.10*

As well as trying to create a non-logic-centric way of writing up the enquiries, I also decided to move away from the 'talking head' format that I had used periodically in Cycles 1 & 2, in order to develop further a poststructuralist style. I considered this change in a journal entry:

> I think it would be better to not have individual pupils giving their views to camera, as it implied that what they were saying was originating in the individual's consciousness. In some cases the pupils repeated someone else's view, articulating it more clearly and leading them to be filmed. I would rather the film represent a range of views that circulated in the enquiry without referring to the author. I shall record six to eight pupils' reflections and use their paintings or slides, animations or films from WWW to provide the visuals. *Journal 25.1.10*

After the first enquiry (of three lessons), I was pleased with the direction of the new-style lessons, as evidenced in my journal:

> Got there in the end! The three-week cycle has worked much better. It takes pressure off me to churn out a lesson a week, as I felt that we were on a conveyer belt last time, covering too many philosophers and ideas. By spending three lessons on Socrates, I could add extra insights into each lesson, without overloading the pupils. *Journal 29.1.10*

All the interviewed pupils favoured the three-week cycle over the first two, typified by the enthusiasm of the children in their following responses:

> HD I liked the circle of enquiry, but it is also good to do other things like drama and stuff. It's good that you can work with others in the class, not just those you normally sit next to.

> GF You never know who is going to be chosen to have their bits in the films... so it makes you do your best to try to get in. I was chuffed when I got me talking on the

last film and I had a picture in it as well. A few of my friends in... [another Year 6 class] enjoy our films and are jealous that we get to do philosophy.

KS I like the lesson even better now, 'cause you're given a choice... so if you are good at, say, drawing you can do a picture, or if you're good at drama, a play could be the thing for you.

All three films were shown to the other three Year 6 classes and I received good feedback from all teachers. I asked one of the teachers to provide written feedback for my pupils and me. The Year 6 teacher wrote a complimentary report:

The philosophy films have been a big hit with my class. Last term they most enjoyed the film clips you showed in assembly of some of your students philosophising; some were also interested in the written work produced as a result of your enquiries. However, the films raised the bar. I can honestly report that all my class were attentive throughout the film. They soaked up all that was imparted – and there was so much going on. The class liked your use of dance and chart music, together with the children's own compositions, acting and art. The frenetic pace of sight and sound kept our attention. Above all, we enjoyed listening to the views of the children responding to the philosophy question. *Year 6 Teacher Report 29.3.10*

Whilst a great deal of my enthusiasm was directed towards developing an innovative approach to teaching philosophy, I was still anxious to improve the autonomy of the pupils. In this third cycle, I wished to erode further the traditional hierarchical relationship between the teacher (as a knower and controller of knowledge) and pupil (as the recipient of knowledge) and instead develop a mentoring role for myself. Much of the school's curriculum is 'delivered' through predetermined objectives and rigid pupil outcomes that must be achieved in order to meet government targets. I wished to make the series much more open and flexible, with the teacher and pupils working in collaboration to produce the 'work'.

At the end of Enquiry 1 of Cycle 3, I reflected:

All three sessions had the feel of a workshop. From the beginning, pupils were on-board to contribute to the film and I didn't feel as if I were the controller or motivator having to keep the show on the road. I was more like a facilitator. *Journal 29.1.10*

After the first session of Cycle 3, I recorded the following journal entry, which contains an outline for the structuring of the enquiries in Cycle 3:

I began the lesson by explaining to the children that I would want them to try to improvise a short play, with one to be included in the film. They were keen on the idea and listened attentively to the film sequence, which gave details of Mahatma Gandhi's life and his views. We then had a discussion of the sorts of plays they could do, to show the dilemmas of using non-violence or where they may consider violence appropriate. A number of pupils asked to see the film again to get ideas, and once again they watched with interest, although this time some of them were discussing ideas… Once the drama began, the children spent the next 20 minutes spread out around the classroom and corridors working on the improvisation. I spent the time helping groups when asked… in the last five minutes of the lesson we looked at two group plays… Three other groups wanted to show the class their contribution but we had run out of time [I arranged to go back in the afternoon to watch them]. *Journal 7.1.10*

The next lesson (the enquiry) engaged the pupils from the outset:

The lesson started really well. The pupils were looking forward to seeing how the play by J, P and & S would work out. They looked with attention once again at the original introduction, which then led to the group acting out the scene of Socrates asking a group of modern-day pupils questions about their life goals. The class was impressed [I used a cartoon with an ancient coliseum] and keen to get involved with the enquiry. *Journal 14.1.10*

The microphone was passed around, to both amplify and record the proceedings. I noted at the time:

The pupils had plenty to say during this enquiry, and I do feel that I had less and less to do. Pupils were developing at their own pace. They gave their views and referred to others' views, to contradict or to support their own opinions. *Journal 14.1.10*

Comments from the interviews reflected the children's absorption and enjoyment of working in an informal classroom setting, as this example illustrates:

SH It's good the way we are left to get on and do what we want to do. Sometimes I feel like doing a drawing, at other times I may like to do some music. It's great that we get to choose.

AS I like the way we all get involved in making the film. Like, it's someone from the class who tells us about the philosopher. I mean, it's not you or another adult, say in a film clip. I think it's really good that it's someone from the class. Then so many of us get a chance to have our work in the film. It feels as if it is a class effort. I mean, even if your work is not chosen, it feels like we have all worked together for the film.

A senior leader observed the final session of Cycle 3 of the project and was particularly impressed with how well the pupils responded to the autonomy given to them.

Lesson Observation

Enquiry 3, Lesson 3

> A really good lesson. The children were really engaged in the classroom. I was impressed by the way you converted the classroom into a workshop. It was good to see the children spread out in the classroom and corridor, working effectively in groups. A good range of activities (felt-tip drawings, music composition, audio recordings and drama) that kept the children engrossed and on task during the whole lesson. *Senior Leader 6.2.10*

Discussion

While approaches such as P4C and the Socratic Method favour spoken dialogue, I started with the initial premise that it would be worthwhile for the children to write a diary, which would also provide me with evidence of their philosophic development. I also theorised that the enquiry method was perpetuating the bias of the spoken word to express reality (e.g. presence) in preference to writing. Phonocentricism was critiqued particularly by Derrida but also by Foucault (see Literature Review), and therefore it could not be a central feature of my project philosophy – particularly if I wanted to claim a poststructural heritage.

My original plan for developing high-quality writing, to demonstrate the effectiveness of philosophy, was leading to a formulaic approach to the lessons and was still embedded in the logocentrcism of P4C and Socratic enquiry. In Cycle 2 I studied the work of Ulmer as a way to develop a poststructuralist pedagogy, but as I pursued this line of enquiry I began to realise that I could use digital media to develop a form of writing that would capture the 'flavour' of poststructuralist writing.

As Oswald writes:

> … the cinema seems the ideal object for the application of a theory of textual writing, not only because the polyvalence of the image and the heterogeneity of the film material defy reduction of the signifier-signified model, but also because the illusion of movement itself depends on the retention of past and future images upon the present and presence of meaning to consciousness. Such "memory traces" in film, time and space strain the relation between form and meaning in discourse (Oswald, 1994: 249-50).

A key goal in making the films was to ensure that the pupils would be engaged and find the subject matter interesting. During Cycles 1 & 2 I had been keen to use audio-visual

aids in the philosophy lesson, to capture and sustain the interest of the edutainers and anti-philosophers, and as such I spent considerable time developing my movie-making skills. My new skills were put to good use in Cycle 3's philosophy films, and I was keen to ensure the films were thought-provoking and interesting to watch.

All teachers reported how well their classes had responded to the films, as they were attentive, amused and interested in the subject matter. The cut and paste style of the films aided the pupils' interest and concentration, and the evidence shows that they enjoyed the novelty dimension of the digital writing. It also captured successfully poststructurlist writing that attempts to help us break out of our habitual ways of viewing the world.

As referred to in the literature review, Ulmer (1989) highlighted the work of Eistestein's film montage as a way to represent poststructural writing. This was the inspiration when I came to mix and edit the film: I was less concerned about reproducing the logocentrist belief that thoughts and language are clear and sensible, offering a transparent view of reality; rather, I wished to present the ever-changing flux of reality-différance. The solution was not to produce a purely surreal or experimental film but to find a mid-way point. As Derrida noted, there is no escape from logo-centrism, and we are left to thinking at its borders, in order to examine the foundations of thought. For the poststructuralist, modern art and literature provided this. As discussed in the literature review the structure of the films was based on Glas, which pits a logcocentric line of enquiry (Hegel) against anti-logocentric, experimental writing (Genet), with the effect of destablising and denaturalising orthodox ways of viewing the world.

The progression into poststructural filmic writing led to an expanded notion of philosophy. Instead of being an academic subject for debate and the development of calm and measured thinking skills, it was also becoming a subject of creative activity, and the pupils were developing ideas and then responding in a physical way through drama, art and music. This is also related to Foucault's notion that philosophy should be less concerned with establishing truths and more in line with arts of the self. Cycle 3 saw the development of a philosophy combining ethical, rational and aesthetic domains to help pupils develop a deep understanding of philosophical questions.

Once I embarked on this approach, my aim was to demonstrate Derrida's différance at work within the film, which was attempted by avoiding a non-linear style using film and audio montages. Each of the five-minute films contained a stream of images, music, sound effects and animations to complement the pupils' audio responses, all of which were in stark contrast to their audio enquiry responses that had been recorded in a clear, logocentric manner, with clarity and precision of thought. The aim of the pupils' responses was not to pit one view against the other, in order to settle the matter, but was rather to feature a range of different viewpoints. The films were less about showing what we had done and more about promoting philosophy within the school, and they were now a pedagogical tool to help others think through issues for themselves – Ulmer's use of the conceptual artist Beuys was the inspiration for this approach. Biesta (2009) describes the process of this form of post-pedagogy:

> What Ulmer tries to put across is that these performances were not aimed at transferring a message, but they were designed to "move the spectator into producing a message". The message was produced as memories were explored "not to recover the past but… in order to think with them in the future" (ibid: 200). According to Ulmer, the evocation nature of Beuys' presentations "generated rather than transmitted meaning" (Biesta, 2009:110).

The wish to provide anonymity for the pupils also allowed me to advance the poststructural theme of minimising the role of human consciousness in the generation of ideas. Poststructuralist interrogation of history is less interested in assigning original ideas to an author. Works are not so much produced by a single author but are a product of the ideas and discourse circulating at any one time. The 'work' is part of a broader tapestry of ideas from other people and from within the culture. The philosophy films were more concerned with representing a range of ideas presented at the enquiry, rather than identifying the 'original' author. Furthermore, as part of the ideas for 'The Death of the Author', the originator of the enquiry response did not have sovereignty over the meaning of the audio. The position of the audio in the film, the music and background visuals also affected the meaning in addition to the context and cultural assumptions of each individual viewer.

I provided the background knowledge and enquiry skills, together with my ability to produce films, while the pupils provided their own ideas, dramatic interpretations and a range of artistic contributions. At the start of each enquiry, I had no set plan as to what

shape the structure and development of the films would take. Thus, both the teacher and students were required to use their philosophical and creative skills to work with others to produce the E-criture. An added attraction of the editing process was that with the vast amount of information on the internet (films, paintings, photographs, music and sound effects) I had instant access to a virtual archive to draw upon, to develop the ideas stemming from the children's enquiries. This also assisted in developing intertextual references in their enquiries.

Consequently, the pupils were able to enjoy the creative opportunities of the enquiry, whilst I could enjoy mixing and editing the film with a view to strengthening the poststructural dimension.

2 Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

The three themes examined to answer this question were thinking skills followed by poststructural reflection and knowledge about philosophy. Each will now be examined in turn.

At the end of the three enquiries, I was pleased with the varied approaches adopted in the three-stage model.

> With a three-lesson cycle, I can continually go over the main ideas of the philosopher studied and the skills introduced from Lesson 1, Cycle 1. When we began Cycle 3 we had ten thinking skills and eight 'Food for Thought' reflections from Cycle 2. The three-week cycle has helped to slow down the pace and allowed the pupils to practise and consolidate! *Journal 19.3.10*

Each of the three enquiries within Cycle 3 produced a range of thinking skills that had been developed throughout the series of cycles.

I used a revised assessment sheet (originally devised in Cycle 2) for 'thinking and reflection' skills (Table 5).

Table 5

Assessment Sheet of Thinking Skills

1	Reasons (deduction).
2	Examples (deduction).
3	Sticking to the point.
4	Refining and modifying arguments in response to criticism, drawing inferences.
4	Seeing connections.
6	Open-mindedness.
7	Building on other ideas.
8	Developing intellectual courage to 'think outside the box'.
9	Challenging 'facts' presented to support an argument.
10	Logical fallacies.
11	Induction.
12	False dichotomies.
13	Consistencies.

As in previous cycles, I recorded the lesson and noted the skills used. Sometimes pupil responses resulted in two or three ticks. For example, a pupil's response could involve the use of deductive reasoning, display open mindedness and include the use of building on the ideas of others. By the end of the project, they were drawing on the following skills and reflections. Examples can be heard in the three films made for Cycle 3 (see digital appendix).

The following poststructural reflections were developed in the lessons:

Table 6

Assessment Sheet of Poststructural Reflections

1	Culture encourages us to think in certain ways (archaeology).
2	The way we use language can affect our thinking.
3	We may be compelled to think and behave in certain ways (power/normalisation).
4	Everyday practices are the result of decisions made by past leaders (Foucauldian, genealogy).
5	Awareness of a core belief in relation to an argument (metaphysics of presence)?
6	Challenging totalising arguments on the basis of the local and specific.
7	To challenge the power structure of binary thinking.
8	An awareness of the relationship between power/knowledge.

Examples of poststructural reflection included:

Lesson 1, What is the Good Life?

> J I think it is important to work hard and get a good education. If you don't, you'll get a rubbish job – like working in McDonalds.
> S What's wrong with working in McDonalds? My aunt works in McDonalds and she enjoys it there. She is really keen on drama and is in loads of plays in… [a local amateur dramatics company]. She says she loves being an actress and would like to be professional, but it's really hard.
> J   Well, she'll never make much money, will she?
> S So what? She's really happy. Is that what Socrates went on about? Having a good life is different for all of us. *Journal 29.1.10*

Poststructural reflection: challenging totalising arguments on the basis of the local and specific; to challenge the power structure of binary thinking

Enquiry 2

> In my religion we are not allowed to eat meat, and so I am a vegetarian. I want to be a good Sikh and please my parents, but sometimes at school I will have meat, even though I am not supposed to. I know my parents wouldn't be happy if they found out. So I guess I'll have to try harder to not eat meat. *Journal 26.2.10*

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Poststructural reflection: culture encourages us to think in certain ways (archaeology); awareness of a core belief in relation to an argument (metaphysics of presence)?

Enquiry 3

> I think it is wrong to use physical violence to get your way. But we do know from history that some people were picked on and bullied. No amount of discussion would have helped. So in that case I think it is OK to use violence – but you should always use the minimum amount necessary. *Journal 26.3.10*

Poststructural reflection: an awareness of the relationship between power/knowledge

In addition to improved thinking skills and poststructural reflection, ethical development was also evident. Even though the pupils enjoyed the varied and creative aspects of philosophy, all of those interviewed made reference to the potential of the subject in helping them consider ethical decisions:

> BR: Philosophy is good, because when you go to secondary school you will meet all sorts of kids there – and some might tell you to do bad things. Philosophy helps you, because if you discussed things like bullying, or, say, making good friends before, you'll know what to do in a tricky situation.

> GF: I think it's good, 'cause even though I go to Sunday school and we learn right from wrong, in philosophy you learn what others think, not just those in your religion. I enjoy explaining the way I would do things and how my religion helps me think things through... philosophy also helps me do this.

Unlike the other questionnaires, this survey asked the pupils about their learning over three philosophical topics only (as opposed to nine in Cycle 1 and ten in Cycle 2), although there were far more references (21) to the ethical dimension of philosophy lessons. Examples of these are as follows:

> G You should always try to use the minimum of violence in life.

> G The more peaceful you are, the more others will be.

G Fighting leads to more fighting.

G Animals have rights.

G We should all try to eat less meat.

B War should be a last resort.

B Try to reason with bullies.

B Always get help from adults if you get picked on.

B It is wrong to put animals in cages.

B We should be kinder to animals. If we eat them, give them a good life on a nice farm before they are killed.

B Sometimes, if you have no choice, you have to retaliate.

B A good job, family and friends = a good life.

A further benefit of studying a particular philosophy and topic over a three-week period was that it gave more time for the pupils to be become familiar with the issues studied.

> I feel the study of Socrates over the three-week period was improved by having three "stabs" at him. The first lesson provided the introduction and the pupils were attentive, because they wanted to get the drama correct. The second lesson then began with the film of the first lesson, and together with their research and the film they were attentive during the performance. This input allowed for a successful introduction to the enquiry. I found that Socrates was often referred to in their responses. It also allowed me to develop my knowledge of the philosophers rather than dipping into one philosopher per week. *Journal 29.1.10*

The pupils' increased familiarity with the philosopher was noted by the much higher incidences in Cycle 3, where they referred to them in the enquiry. Typical comments noted included:

S   I am not sure what Socrates would have made of me wanting to be a model.

J   I think Socrates is right – you should always question your goals in life.

P   I don't think it's just a case of having a goal, you need to be determined. Just like Socrates – he was determined not to give in the judges.

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The interviewed pupils said that they preferred studying one philosopher over a three-week period:

> DF I prefer the way we do it now… Last term is like we did too many philosophers and you get confused about who is who. But now, if you hear about them and see them in films and things, you really get what they were on about.

> HD It's much better, 'cause it gives you time to get to know them.

> BR It's better this way. I like to learn about the philosophers, and so it's good to spend more time studying them.

> DF I feel it's less of a rush now… it was like, last term you had trouble remembering who said what. This way is more fun and interesting.

> SH I really found the last lot of lessons fun this term, 'cause instead of doing one philosopher a week, we spent time doing some drama and an extra week doing stuff like pictures and poems and things. It was really good, because we were able to help to make a film of the enquiry. By showing it to the rest of Year 6 and having it on the website, it made us feel important.

I was impressed with the quality of research written by the three pupils who provided the narration at the start of the films in Cycle 3. They volunteered to do the research in their own time, and I recorded their work the day before the lesson. I encouraged them to try to personalise it rather than merely 're-hash' others' works.

One of the interviewed pupils was involved in the research and was keen to give her views on the process:

> KS: As well, at first, I regretted volunteering to do the research... However, I liked the idea of knowing I would have my work read out to start the film. I worked hard on the research... I used the book you gave me, and I found a piece on the internet. I made my own notes and wrote it all up in my own words... I felt I had learnt something before the others, and I felt I did better in the enquiry.

Discussion

Cycle 3 shows a developing ease of moving between using more complex thinking skills through the use of poststructural reflection. The constant revision of the skills and reflections helped the pupils to connect previous learning with the current enquiry. As in

Cycle 2, most of the pupils' contributions in the inquiry were in the domain of thinking skills. A new thinking skill was introduced in the inquiries and a quick review of some of the previous skills was conducted. In Cycle 3, this became important, as there were fewer enquiries (i.e. three in a nine-week period) and therefore fewer skills covered. The poststructural reflections developed from the pupils' responses. If I considered that the response had a poststructural dimension, I developed and expanded the idea with them accordingly.

The emphasis on mainly ethical themes helped the pupils to focus on issues relevant to their daily lives, thus avoiding the possibility of philosophy becoming a dry and abstract subject. Being involved in the introductory part of the film helped them to engage with the philosopher and the key themes of the enquiry.

The evidence indicates that the children were able to explain the benefits of philosophy, to strengthen their thinking skills, and they are also aware of the ethical issues. The responses to the questionnaire show a much more affirmative role in philosophy, thus helping them to think through ethical issues, and as a result they continued to develop a greater sense of confidence in their abilities.

The involvement of the pupils with a philosopher for a three-week period helped them to gain a more thorough engagement. In Cycles 1 & 2, pupil reference to the philosopher was an optional extra whereby some were keen to draw the philosopher into their discussion, but most focused on responding to the enquiry question without reference.

This approach also helped me to develop their ideas, rather than in a quick three-minute overview, therefore allowing me to spend more time deepening my own knowledge of the philosopher and of the themes of the enquiry. I was knowledgeable about some of the philosophers in the first two cycles, but when I introduced a new philosopher my limited knowledge impeded my ability to develop ideas fully as the enquiry developed. The deeper knowledge proved to be helpful, though, particularly when giving the pupils ideas for their creative follow-up in lesson 3 of each of the cycles.

This meant that there was more sustained interest in the philosopher throughout the three weeks. Consequently, the pupils constantly referred to the philosopher when discussing ideas, as opposed to the first two cycles where their reference was an optional extra.

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Whilst some pupils followed up by focusing on developing the enquiry theme, others wanted to draw on the actual philosopher, usually by acting out a scene from the philosopher's life, placing the philosopher in a modern-day setting or composing a picture or piece of music.

3 What are the pupils' perceptions of philosophy?

<u>Data Collection</u>

Comments from the questionnaires indicated the pupils' enthusiasm for the variety of activities offered:

1. B It's good seeing our films.
2. B I enjoy the acting.
3. B Drama makes it really fun.
4. B I enjoy making music to go with philosophy.
5. B I enjoy the music Mr. Gordo uses.
6. B I think the philosopher animations are funny.
7. G I like the film clips that make us think – like Batman.
8. G I like it when my voice is on the film.
9. G I like it when our films are put on the website.
10. G I like to do sketches for the film.

Only 11 pupils in the questionnaire responded to the questionnaire, 'What do you dislike about the subject'?

Four pupils felt they were rushed and would have liked more time for the lessons.

Three felt that there were insufficient musical instruments.

The remaining dislikes were as follows:

1. I don't like it when G [a pupil] bosses us when we are doing art.
2. Doing philosophy in the morning. I would be more relaxed in the afternoon.
3. I don't like it when my work doesn't get chosen.

However, suggestions were made in the questionnaire to improve the subject:

B I would like to have more time in lessons when we are doing things like art and music.

B Have more equipment for us, like more paints and musical instruments.

B Make the films longer.

B Give everyone a chance of being in the film.

B Perform more plays in assembly.

G Have more subjects like this. We need to do more drama, art and stuff like this.

G I think the whole school should do philosophy.

G It would be good to have a philosophy club, to let those who want to spend more time on it.

Suggestions made in the interviews to improve the subject were as follows:

> DF: I didn't always pay attention in the enquiries. I preferred the warm-up game… yes, that was the best. Now I listen carefully in the enquiry, because you get ideas to help you when you are doing things like the film.

> SH: I'd just like to say that I have always enjoyed doing philosophy. It's really good to learn about the philosophers and then to develop our own ideas.

> I really like the way we can have… like serious ideas about important issues like being kind to animals, but when we make the films, we do it in a fun way.

> BR: Philosophy is fun. I am sure other classes will enjoy it as much as we did.

> GF: I liked philosophy right from the start... I would now say it is my favourite subject. I wish more subjects would give you time to think about life and getting on with people.

> KS: I just hope I can do philosophy at secondary school. I'd like to study it at university.

<u>Discussion</u>

As with Cycle 2, there were no anti-philosophers, because now all the pupils reported their enthusiasm for the subject. In addition, there was less of a distinction between the edutainers and the philosophers.

All pupils reported the benefits of philosophy and that they enjoyed the multi-visual and creative approaches developed in the third cycle. In the questionnaires, the pupils made less of a distinction between either the fun aspects or the academic; both were seen as

integral to the subject. Pupils who were less enthusiastic in the past were now keen to take part in the enquiry and to have an understanding of the philosophers, in order to help them develop their ideas. The range of activities and the choices given to them helped their motivation and engagement in the subject. Some were particularly appreciative of this, as they felt they did not have as much autonomy as in other subjects.

For others, the three-week cycle did more than just keep them engaged; it allowed them to deepen their knowledge over the period, rather than move to a new topic each week. They felt the activities were about not only helping them to engage, but also giving them time to explore and deepen their ideas. There was a sense that philosophy does not just produce an instant answer to a philosophic question, but the topic has to be explored and refined over a period. These pupils appreciated the time given to reflect and the encouragement given to continue their thinking after the enquiry was over.

Action Plan for future philosophy lessons in the school

1. Develop the philosophers with a greater sense of chronology. Begin the series of lessons with Socrates, working through to modern times.

2. Continue with the three-week philosophy cycle. Encourage class teachers to develop key thinking skills across the curriculum. Have the list of key skills for each year group available for parents.

3. Invite the pupils to write one philosophy/thinking skills essay during the year. Give them a wide variety of topics to write on, including the enquiries covered during the year. Publish the best essays in a philosophy anthology.

4. Develop links with religious education and collective worship. The philosophical aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism could be incorporated into poststructural reflection.

5. Develop links with primary strategy: social emotional aspect of learning (SEAL). The central principles of the subject, developing myself and working with others, provide a further discourse to support the philosophy lessons.

Conclusion

The change to the three-week cycle led to a less controlling form of philosophy. With only one in three lessons involving the teacher as the enquiry leader, the other two allowed the pupils to develop their ideas in groups, with the minimum of central control exerted by the teacher. Instead, in the first and third sessions, the teacher's role was more that of a facilitator and provider of resources for the class.

By the end of this cycle I was envisaging digital collage writing as a way of presenting a blend of logocentric (the audio recordings of pupils giving their views in a clear and precise way) and non-logocentric (the fast cutaways, mix of music, humour and visuals, and the use of animation) writing. The combined effect would help the students use language and concepts to express their views. The non-linear style of the digital collage films avoided the assumption that the topic of an enquiry aims at resolving a definitive account of the issue; rather, the aim is to provoke a sense of undecidability about the topic under review, in order to challenge viewers to consider their own response to the issue.

In this next chapter I shall argue that I have established poststructural links to my philosophy lessons. The highly engaging lessons that involve active and creative participation, and the use of audio-visual aids, are not simply a case of 'good practice' or a form of 'edutainment' but rather are based on major themes outlined in the principles of poststructuralism.

Chapter 6

Critical Analysis

In this chapter I make the case that the philosophy lessons developed over the three cycles have a strong poststructural influence. I demonstrate how both pedagogy and learning are informed by the applications of the ideas of Derrida and Foucault, and I explore this notion by outlining how I have answered my key research question, namely:

How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10 year olds?

I shall provide a response through my three sub-questions through close critical analysis of the findings.

Do the inquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

In this section I explain how poststructuralist philosophy lessons are effective in developing thinking skills, similar to other philosophy programmes but with an added dimension of developing pupils' awareness of the politics of knowledge. The philosophy programme's emphasis on the study of history also provides pupils with a historical understanding of the constructed nature of our thinking processes in different epochs.

When I started the project, I assumed that a poststructural philosophy would eventually take the form of an enquiry that examined discourses and would involve the deconstruction of binary opposites. Cycle 1's use of traditional thinking skills (as developed in P4C) was intended to provide a gentle start to the project, which would then allow me to develop my confidence and skills as a philosophy teacher. I had envisaged the original P4C style of enquiries would be superseded by the poststructural tools of

analysis. At this stage of the project I was edging towards a rejection of foundationalism, by looking towards developing an antifoundational approach.

However, by the end of cycle 1, I could see the benefits pupils were gaining from developing their thinking skills, and I believed that they would continue to improve by the structured approach I was applying in this area.

By Cycle 2, I decided to develop a philosophy that combined clear and logical thinking with an analysis of the politics of power, i.e. the social and historical influences that form our belief system. As Gashe (1986) reminds us, Derrida does not want to deny the usefulness of 'the philosophical ideal of exhaustive deductivity'; instead, he wishes to include those elements that logic and clarity try to exclude from the rich flow of our conscious intuition. By reducing our thinking to the use of logic, we forget the roles of language, culture and history and the unconscious that also shape our understanding (Danher et al., 2000). Since we can never escape logo-centrism or fully get a God's eye view of our current episteme, we can use reasoning to challenge those who make universal truth claims or foundations to knowledge. Thus, at this stage, I was looking at adopting a post-foundational approach. The aim of this variant of poststructural philosophy is to search for the most intelligible truth possible, without assuming the absolute truth has been gained.

However, deconstruction challenges one of philosophy's first principles of logic, i.e. the logic of identity or the law of the excluded middle. Western philosophy has emphasised the formation of concepts through the use of oppositions. By this reasoning, a statement is either true or false – it cannot be neither or both. Poststructuralists argue that the meaning of a term depends on the other, and thus the process is circular. Moreover, meaning relates to the binary oppositions created in language and not to reality itself (Strathern 2000).

The philosophy programme involves a double strategy to approaching philosophical questions through i) the use of key thinking, logic and debating skills to explore issues and ii) a reflection on the politics of knowledge.

The first step involves an orthodox approach to the philosophical enquiry, i.e. how can we use our thinking skills and a range of debating skills in a coherent, systematic and collaborative way to consider the enquiry's question? The skills of this dimension in the lesson would be similar to any traditional philosophical enquiry for children: logical thinking, creativity, the clear development of ideas and listening skills. I have found the literature and courses provided by P4C and Socratic inquiry valuable, and I shall continue to use them to develop my skills as a philosophy teacher, particularly for the first stage of the philosophy lessons.

The next step involves an opportunity to employ poststructural reflection. This entails the use of deconstruction (the replacement of the law of identity with the law of différance), or Foucauldian 'tools', to reflect on the uncovered or undecidable aspects of the texts – aspects that have largely gone unnoticed by our everyday cultural assumptions. What are the assumptions' underlying points of views? Are there other ways of looking at the issues? What group of people are marginalised by any one discourse? What is the effect of normalisation in forming views? This step does not have to be taken, but it is available to use if it deepens the enquiry. The evidence shows that in some of the enquiries, thinking skills by themselves led to insightful discussions that had a strong ethical component. At other times, the enquiries proved to be fruitful when poststructural reflection uncovered cultural, political or linguistic bias to help the pupils think 'otherwise', which helped them re-examine their limited thinking in relation to their capabilities and the prejudices held against others. In some instances, the challenge to binary thinking helped pupils in this endeavour.

Caputo writes:

> […] deconstruction means to continue the struggle for emancipation but by another key, by taking a second look at the very things the old Enlightenment tended to devalue – literature, faith and the messianic, for example – just in order to look for the sorts of things that tend to drop through the grids of the old Enlightenment… the effect of this new Enlightenment would not be to jettison reason but to redefine and re-describe it… (Caputo 1997: 55).

Philosophical enquiries aim at introducing themes for discussion and encouraging pupils to reconsider ideas discussed in the future. The approach avoids definitive conclusions or conducting a poll on the most popular views (a feature of Socratic enquiry), and instead

it seeks to keep the issues open as a way of inviting a return to the question for further analysis.

At first, I did not have strong feelings on using philosophers to introduce lessons, and I was prepared to stop this approach if the children were not sufficiently engaged. As the project progressed, though, I came to see historicity as a significant feature of poststructural philosophy. With the pupils' acceptance of this aspect of the lessons I could show the way ideas have changed over time – and that current ways of thinking have been influenced by past philosophers. A historical study also allowed the pupils to gain a sense of the contingency and fragility of our ideas today, so from this foundation we can build an awareness of the socially constructed nature of society. Thus, pupils are encouraged to explore discourses not only of the present, but also of the past. If discourses change over time, our discourses of the present are equally likely to change. The historical dimension to the lessons became a core characteristic of my poststructural philosophy programme, and it established some distance away from P4C, Socratic inquiry and other thinking skills programmes.

Blake et al. emphasise the importance of history in postmodern thought:

> Far from a reductivism or debunking of values, Derrida's work brings together an acknowledgement of the influence of the past with a sense of the responsibility of the future. Ethical choices come to be seen not as a matter of deliberation based on stable and calculable values but as themselves creative and interpretative. In *Spectres of Marx* (1994) the trace structure of language reverberates through the way that is beyond the natural, and leaves us in debt. Untimely texts of Marx destabilise the present and reveal responsibility *to come*: foundations tremble as the voice of Hamlet's father's ghost comes to us out of time (Blake, Smeyers, Smith & Standish 1998: 42-3).

The Derridean strand of genealogy examines changing values and ways of thinking about philosophers, from Socrates right through to his modern-day counterparts. There is a focus on how we use language and an awareness of the underlying assumptions (foundations) of our viewpoints. For Foucault, genealogical studies of the past help to understand the haphazard twists and turns of history, i.e. the different ways people thought and acted and were compelled to think and act. How far do our views accord

with the dominant discourses of our time? What are the alternative discourses (history may help here), and how is normalisation at work in one's view?

An emergent poststructural dimension to thinking skills that developed in Cycle 2 was the recognition and acceptance of the foundational principles underpinning the pupils' views. For some, it was their religious beliefs, family values or norms or principles gained at school. It accepts that pupils, from a wide range of backgrounds, will hold different viewpoints, and for some an ultimate source of knowledge will not be human-centered rationality but rather in a belief system, such as in a supreme being. The philosophy programme's post-foundational strand is interested in using lessons to allow pupils to explore their own assumptions underpinning their views. It also gives them a chance to listen to the views of others who think in different ways or to identify a different order of things. The skill of the teacher is to encourage pupils to listen attentively to others and to avoid pupils trying to win over their peers. The teacher helps them to see that our initial assumptions or core beliefs form our point of view, while his or her role is to ensure the pupils have a consistent and logical argument that has developed from their grounding assumptions and to challenge where justice may be an issue.

The philosophy programme promotes agonism, the belief that since humans are bound by different and competing discourses, the best we can hope for in a debate is a chance to express ideas without antagonism developing (Moufee, 2005).While neither the universal truth nor principles were sought, Foucault was keen to find his own truth, though he insisted that others should be free to do the same. He warned the quest for truth should not involve polemics:

> Polemics defines alliances, recruits partisans, unites interests or opinions, represents a party; it establishes the other as enemy, an upholder of opposed interests against which one must fight until the moment the enemy is defeated and either surrenders or disappears… Has anyone ever seen a new idea come out of a polemic?… But it is really dangerous to make anyone believe that he can gain access to the truth by such paths… (Foucault 1977: 112-3).

Instead, he recommends we have conversations with people with a wide variety of opinions, an open mind and a sense of curiosity (Foucault 1990:328-30).

In Cycle 3, involving the three-part series of lessons, pupils were less concerned with feeling they had to produce good arguments in the inquiry to be deemed successful, but instead saw the lessons as a way to be introduced to a philosopher and one of his/her key ideas and then to explore a variety of ideas. Pupils worked collaboratively on creative ideas on the film. Part of being successful in the subject was to have your artistic contributions included in the philosophy films. As Powell (1997:60) writes, '... Derrida's style is more of a **performance**, a song and dance, a mime show than an argument'.

I followed Derrida's view that although foundations may be deconstructed, justice is undeconstructable, and thus pupils will be challenged if their views disadvantage others. This has some similarities with a key principle of P4C enquiries, which encourages responses that are 'caring'. An enquiry underpinned by agonism is characterised by respectful relations and the tolerance of others. The evidence suggests that the pupils developed in such a manner and were particularly respectful to those explaining their views in light of their religious beliefs.

How can I develop an approach to teaching and learning philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

In this section I show that the poststructuralist philosophy lessons developed, involved a constant vigilance to power/knowledge relationships in the classroom. I also use my knowledge of the power of discourses to promote philosophy throughout the school to increase pupil motivation within the classroom. It also employs the use of digital technology, to develop poststructural pedagogical and learning approaches, thus seeking to undermine the metaphysics of presence.

I had originally approached the project with an unclear idea of the direction in which it would progress. This factor, along with my inexperience in the subject, made me, as Rancière (1991) terms, an 'ignorant schoolmaster'. Trying to develop an original approach in a subject I had little knowledge or experience of teaching was a challenging undertaking. Rancière's thesis is that explanation and teacher subject expertise hinder emancipation, i.e. the more teachers try to impart knowledge and comprehensive

explanations, the more pupils are disempowered. I found that, by not having clear ideas about how the philosophy would develop, I was more attentive, throughout the three cycles, to the impact the lessons were having on the pupils. Their feedback about the lessons provided the impetus for seeking ways to include as many children as possible, albeit without losing sight of the aims of the project. More experienced teachers may be less anxious and would have found Lipman's advice that after the early phase of introducing philosophy, pupils would settle down and enjoy the subject. However, I was not simply following a standard P4C approach, and so I had two main concerns. First, I was determined to make writing (which was disliked by most of the pupils) a key feature of my approach. Second, I wanted to see if the pupils would take to the study of philosophers and not be bored by this aspect of the lessons. I felt that any success would be dependent on working closely with the class, to seek ways to engage them and to develop their skills in philosophy and their understanding of the politics of knowledge.

The success of the project was helped by my growing understanding of the role of power/knowledge in the pedagogical process. My reading on poststructuralism heightened my awareness of the potential for unequal power relations in the classroom, particularly as I am the headteacher (as well as being white and male). A key feature of the philosophy programme is the teacher's constant vigilance in maintaining healthy relationships in the classroom, and so innovative and stimulating teaching methods that gain pupil engagement are key features of the approach.

In his own teaching style, Foucault preferred the traditional format of a lecture, as he believed the seminar approach had too much potential for the teacher to dominate or control students (Olssen 1999). The philosophical enquiry method has the potential to become controlling, particularly for those who place themselves in the critical tradition. Such theorists often have clear ideas about an ideal society and wish to show how people have been indoctrinated – they see it as their role to show others 'the truth' and to explain how society could be organised. However, one may wish to enlighten students into viewing the way we wish society should be. I took note of Biesta's (2009) warning that the deconstructionist philosopher should avoid 'critical dogmatism':

> Derrida has tried to show in many different ways that there is no safe ground upon which we can base our decisions, there are no pure, uncontaminated, original criteria

on which we can simply and straightforwardly base our judgements. At the basis of our decisions… lies a radical undecidability… (Biesta 2009:92).

The continuous focus on power relations in my lessons helped me to reflect on ways to improve teaching philosophy and to ensure the teacher avoids dominating pupils. The philosophy teacher must be constantly on the move, to listen to all voices involved in the subject and to seek ways of promoting philosophy and engaging the interest and imagination of pupils (Baxter, 2003). A key principle of a poststructural pedagogy is that the teacher must employ good behaviour management strategies to ensure the pupils are engaged. Moreover, children should work well, not because they are coerced to do so, but because they are absorbed in their studies. In Cycle 1, I concluded that I was too controlling in the circle of enquiry, but a return to a normal seating arrangement allowed for a greater range of dialogic approaches. I found the circular seating arrangement encouraged me to adopt a 360 degree gaze over the class and I was becoming overzealous in ensuring the pupils were conforming to the rules of the enquiry (i.e. sitting still, listening carefully, not rocking in their chairs and not being distracted). Nonetheless, even with the return to normal desk seating, I still found myself having to be at the centre of the enquiry (in the role of enquiry leader) more than I would have liked to have done. As Cycle 2 progressed, I saw the merits in not overusing the discussion/enquiry method as the sole vehicle to progress poststructural philosophy.

In Cycle 3, I developed the inquiry over three lessons. This proved to be the most effective approach, whereby only one week involved a philosophical class enquiry based on a key question, while the other sessions involved drama and a creative follow-up. This gave the pupils far greater autonomy and opportunities to work together to evolve their ideas. It also placed them at the heart of the pedagogical process, as they were invited to contribute to the lesson and to the film that would be used to inform and stimulate other classes.

In the first lesson, I involved one pupil in conducting research into the guest philosopher, and these findings were recorded onto an audio track for the introductory film. A small group of pupils also assisted in helping to perform a brief scene in the film, to introduce an aspect of the question. Thus, pupils were co-creating the first lesson with me. The lesson ended with the pupils being presented with the key question for the following week. The second lesson involved a community of inquiry lesson, which was introduced

with the original research film and the children's drama, before the community of inquiry began. In the third lesson (which completed the inquiry) all pupils chose an aspect of the film to which they would like to contribute (art, singing, poetry), and I allowed them to spend the whole lesson developing their ideas whilst I remained in background, assisting only when asked. When the film of the enquiry was shown to the other Year 6 classes, they were well-received and the pupils were eager to contribute to the next film. Each class would then hold their own inquiry to discuss the issues of the film.

After the first enquiry, the pupils began to see each new enquiry as a joint venture between the teacher and class to make a philosophical film for the rest of the school. All three films made in Cycle 3 resulted in a thoughtful response to the questions, and a range of singing, art, drama and music and philosophical commentary helped the viewer engage in the films. The enthusiastic response from the other Year 6 classes motivated the pupils to work hard on their second enquiry. In the second and third enquiries, those who were selected to 'perform' often chose to stay in during playtimes and lunchtimes, to improve their drama, poem, music or commentary. This approach fits into the late Foucauldian view of the role of philosophy, namely that it should help to make our lifestyles more aesthetic and creative. Rather than seeking to dominate others, we should use power/knowledge to develop ourselves by being engaged in programmes of self-mastery (Foucault, 1997). As Simmons (1995:77) writes of Foucault, 'It is through artistic, creative activity that we experience ourselves as agents with power'.

My role as the teacher of a new and marginalised subject helped me to gain an understanding that the teacher should not think of him or herself at the top of a power structure; rather, the teacher is in a fluid set of power relations with pupils, staff and parents whereby pupils have the power to disrupt lessons, staff the capacity to reject the subject and parents to question the efficacy of teaching a non-National Curriculum subject. I realised from the start of the project that I would be unable to rely on my position as headteacher and needed to win the 'hearts and minds' of the pupils and the wider school community. While Foucault shows us the way discourses unconsciously work on our body and mind to shape who we are, we can also turn this knowledge on its head and use it to our advantage (Smith 2006), in which case the philosophy teacher can use the power of discourse to promote the subject. From the work of Bojee (2001; 2008),

I saw the key role of a poststructuralist teacher as the promoter of the discourse of philosophy. I wished to influence as many children as possible to adopt the values and aspirations of the subject, and I spent a good deal of time as the storytelling leader who promoted the benefits of philosophy for children in schools.

While there are disadvantages in conducting an enquiry as the headteacher (for example, not having as close a relationship with the children as the class teacher, or the possibility that some pupils might feel reserved because of my status), my position allowed me to combine my storytelling role with the power invested in me as school leader. By creating the Philosopher of the Month award in our celebration assemblies, I could create positive narratives about the subject. In the first four lessons, I highlighted the benefits of philosophy (improved thinking skills, understanding how others think and the fact that it is a fascinating subject that would help with other subjects) and showed video clips of the Galleon's Primary School pupils in an enquiry. The school website contained links to the Primary Strategy website on which the benefits of P4C were highlighted, and I also included other philosophy websites. In addition, I believe I gave status to the subject by teaching it; indeed, this is the only subject I teach regularly. Thus, a central role for the poststructural teacher is to be the storyteller of the institutions and produce positive messages about desired changes through which one hopes to influence pupils and wider stakeholders. Initially I had assumed that an exploration of power/knowledge and the uses of language would be the most significant contributions that poststructuralism would bring to the philosophy lessons. As Cycle 1 progressed I realised that poststructuralism could radically transform the pedagogical process.

At the start of the project, I wanted to develop an academically rigorous programme of philosophy lessons, to ensure that any detractor would be impressed with the quality of the pupils' work. At first I was reluctant to overuse audiovisual aids, for fear of casting myself as an edutainer who would be diluting philosophy as a subject discipline. My journal entries in Cycle 1 express my distain for this approach to teaching, and I cast it as the 'other' of my potentially worthier approach: the teacher of young philosophers. However, I was aware that I needed to engage the pupils' attention, particularly during the introduction to the philosopher section of the lesson. As some pupils' attention waned during Cycle 1, I increased the use of audiovisual aids, albeit with the sense that I was compromising my approach and I would be able to return to 'worthier' methods in the

future. In Cycle 1 I cast those not keen on my lessons as anti-philosophers, and I saw it as my role to win them over. In Foucauldian terms, I had established an 'order of things' that constituted good philosophy lessons. This order had been established by my training in P4C and my readings of teaching philosophy to children.

However, some of the pupils' resistance to the lesson proved to be a catalyst for me to return to my readings of Derrida and Foucault (original and secondary sources), in order to find further ways to improve pupil engagement. It was vital that my poststructural project fully engaged as many pupils as possible.

Discovering Ulmer's notion (1986) of a grammatological classroom proved a breakthrough in Cycle 2, and I now considered that I was presenting philosophy in an excessively logocentric manner and that the use of digital technology would help loosen this approach. After my study of Ulmer (1986) and poststructural film theory, I spent extra time developing the introductory philosophy films with a view to making this pedagogical approach a central feature of a poststructural philosophy. I increased the use of animations and mixed in more films clips and different music to create philosophical films in the style of 'pop videos'. The fast-moving digital collage helped to create a sense of difference and temporality and, above all, kept the pupils' rapt attention. The aim in the second cycle was not to dilute my philosophy teaching to appease the edutainers but quite the reverse – to capture a form of pedagogy that was underpinned by différance rather than the metaphysics of presence. Film as a medium highlights spectrality, with the viewer being aware of presence and absence. What is present on the screen is not there. The non-realist and montage style of the film discourages any illusion that presence is possible, producing significations that are neither stable nor univocal. The cutaway music, pupils' voices and visuals become a play of presence and absence, avoiding the linear progression of a narrative. Montage also suits the presentation of Foucault's non-teleological and non-linear view of history. Ball reminds us that:

> Genealogical knowledge, Foucault, was for "cutting" and "dislocating", not understanding... It is based in the value if "refusal", the use of imagination and deployment of irony" (Ball 2013: 87).

While I found the work of Ulmer interesting, I felt he ventured too far into the avant-garde, and I (and even Derrida, 2002) found his developed work to be too experimental and inaccessible – certainly to 10-11 year olds. However, within youth culture, rap

music, music videos, digital media, hyperlinks and mash-ups allowed me to build up a post-pedagogical classroom that engaged the pupils. Movie clips from the Internet (particularly YouTube), the use of computer animations and audio-mixing software further helped to create multimedia approaches to philosophical themes. The use of modern film clips and 'chart music' alongside old films and paintings from the past helped to create the sense of history as a fluid, nonlinear archive – a resource to be excavated and reinterpreted in our times (Miller 2004). While cycle 2 proved a breakthrough in developing a poststructural pedagogy that engaged pupils' interest in being attentive to the teaching part of the lesson, the final cycle led to the development of varied learning approaches to facilitate a form of poststructural writing.

At the start of the project, I wanted to complete enquiries utilising pupils' written responses, but I was faced with mixed reactions from the children. I believed it important that we recorded their views and development over the year, and I also believed that if I had just conducted an oral enquiry I would be encouraging phono-centrism, which would not be in keeping with Derridean influences. I therefore decided to press on in the hope that more pupils would be won over to the written follow-up method. I did my best to encourage them to write in a clear and straightforward manner, but during this period, and despite my keen interest in Derrida, I did find his 'obscure prose style' difficult to read and understand (Dooley and Kavanagh 2007: vii).

Becky Francis's 'Power Plays: Primary School Children's Constructions of Gender, Power and Adult Work' (1998) was one of the first books to introduce me to poststructuralism. I made notes in my copy, and one paragraph clearly impressed me. I not only highlighted the passage, but also placed an exclamation mark in the margin, together with the comment, 'I agree'. Francis argues for writing that is as "straightforward as possible":

> One of the main claims of poststructuralist and postmodern approaches is that they deconstruct dominant traditional discourses and assumptions of society. However, they often do this in exclusive, over-complicated language which excludes most readers, thus perpetuating modes of academic/intellectual superiority in a far from radical way... Poststructuralist and postmodernist theories offer some exciting and radical ideas which may be of wide interest, but if they cannot be explained in a fairly accessible way they will have little impact (Francis 1989: 4).

However, as I was reading Ulmer, to help improve my teaching approaches in Cycle 2, I realised that I could use such methods to develop poststructural writing and that such

writing would provide a record of the pupils' thoughts over the year, although it would also become a piece of performative text that reflected différance and discourses over time. During this period, I read Derrida's 'Of Grammatology' with renewed interest, along with 'Finnegan's Wake' (Joyce 1939), the book that inspired this style of writing.

While I used animations, dance drama, visuals, sampled music and sample film clips, I avoided losing the main threads of the enquiry. The narrative structure began with an introduction to philosophy through a pupil providing a brief biographical sketch of the philosopher and the introduction to the key question. The next section began with a short improvised play that depicted a dilemma connected to the key question, followed by which were the voices of some of the pupils giving their views on the enquiry, accompanied by music and video clips.

Leavey (1989) emphasises that although Derrida was fascinated by the experimental writing of Joyce, he was also intrigued by Husserl's project, which involved using a pure and transparent style of writing that would lead to the discovery of solid foundations to knowledge.

At the end of Derrida's essay 'Structure, Sign, and Play', Derrida distinguishes between reading a text to discern its true meaning and setting the text in play. He maintains that one cannot choose between the two:

> There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology—in other words, throughout his entire history—has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of play. The second interpretation of interpretation, to which Nietzsche pointed the way, does not seek in ethnography, as Lévi-Strauss does, the 'inspiration of a new humanism'... There are more than enough indications today to suggest that these two interpretations of interpretation—which are absolutely irreconcilable even if we live them simultaneously and reconcile them in an obscure economy—together share the field we call, in such a problematic fashion, the social sciences (Derrida, 1978:292).

Instead of trying to choose between these two types of interpretation, he proposed a new style of writing that is characterised by undecidability: "A new writing must weave and intertwine the two motifs" (Derrida 1969:56).

This new approach to the enquiry is both logo-centric and anti-logocentric, or it could also be expressed in terms of representing both foundationalism (absolutism) and anti-foundationalism (relativism). Shults provides a good definition of non-foundationalism which finds favour in extreme forms of postmodern thinking:

> It asserts that we have no foundational beliefs that are independent of the support of other beliefs; rather that we subsist in a groundless web, attempting merely to maintain the web, attempting to maintain coherence in our local praxis. Justifying beliefs is only a matter of determining whether they cohere with all other beliefs in our own web or context (Shults 1999).

My attempt to develop a post-foundationalist poststructural philosophy involved maintaining a middle path between the intuitions of both camps, without collapsing into either extreme.

This is demonstrated in Derrida's performance text 'Glas', the pages of which contain two columns side by side. On the left is Hegel, the (logocentric-foundationalist) philosopher of a highly speculative and totalising viewpoint, and on the right is Genet, the wild (anti-logocentric and non-foundationalist) artist, homosexual and thief. The effect of a double reading causes the reader to reconsider the views of each of the two protagonists. While Hegel tries to proclaim confidently the possibility of philosophy arriving – by means of dialectics – at the ultimate truth, Genet reminds us of the impossibility of philosophy being able to achieve this end (Barnett 1998). Whenever philosophy tries to claim firm foundations in relation to truth or knowledge, it tends to ignore or denigrate all that does not fit into the particular scheme. For Foucault and Derrida, the 'other' is highlighted to question the basis of truth claims. Thus, a deconstructive genealogical enquiry concerns the possibility and impossibility of philosophy improving the quality of our lives, while it also highlights the impossibility of ever getting outside logocentrism. The presence of the anti-logocentric (experimental art and literature) helps to challenge the dogmatism of the logocentric certainty of solid foundations, and whatever we now decide as the truth or the best course of action is contingent and must be re-evaluated in different contexts.

I eschewed the use of early 20th-century advant garde art in favour of experimental popular culture (hip-hop music, fast-moving film montage, etc.) in Cycle 2, and by Cycle 3 I began to draw on conceptual and performance art, to enhance further the anti-logocentric (or anti-foundational) dimension to the philosophy films. This helped to avoid the children viewing the music and artistic side of the films as being edutainment, or the teachers assuming the purpose of the process was to demonstrate best practice. On the contrary, the aim was to reflect the Genet column of Glas: to be disruptive and to unsettle the audio commentaries of the pupils' responses to the inquiry. I was particularly influenced by John David Ebert, who characterises our contemporary world in anti-foundational, poststructuralist terms. For him, art has lost it centre, and now we are in an age where we just have floating signifiers and each artist creates his or own centres.

> The epoch of contemporary art… is shell-less: the Modernist hypersphere has collapsed, and Being has, as Heidegger often put it, abandoned beings in this age. The grand metanarratives are indeed gone apparently for good. The transcendental signifiers… have vanished as ultimate anchoring terms of reference for the signifiers of the art. It is an art without narratives or structuring models of any kind… The contemporary artist must construct his own plane of signification now, with a set of meanings and signified that belong exclusively and idiosyncratically to *his* cosmos and to his alone (Ebert 2013: 24-25).

Whilst my ideas are rooted in a post-foundational, poststructural approach, the use of conceptual and performance art helps (even more than pop videos and 'chart' music) to add a transgressive element to the inquiries, to complement the logo-centric part of the inquiries (i.e. the audio of the pupils' responses to the inquiry questions and the introduction of the philosopher that inspired the central question of the inquiry).

A second dimension of the philosophy programme was the use of Foucault's notion of an experience book (O'Farrell 2008; Mills 2000; O'Leary 2009). Foucault's work does not rely on purely rational argument to convince us of his hypothesis. He wishes to avoid telling the reader what to think, instead intending to open our ideas to new ways of

looking at the world. He also brings to our attention that so much of what we take for granted is contingent and has changed over time. Foucault is at his best and most convincing when he uses his literary skills to capture the reader's emotional response to his work. In 'Discipline and Punish' (see the literature review), it is as much his appeal to our emotions (for example, in his vivid account of an execution scene or the docility created by the prison) as his argument that makes us re-evaluate the way power has been disguised in our disciplinary society. In fact, it was the experience of watching Becket's 'Waiting for Godot' that prompted Foucault to study philosophy (Miller 1993). The multimedia/mash-up pedagogical presentation aims not only to stimulate pupils' thinking, but also to provide an emotional impact.

I agree with Diamond (in Glendinning 2010) that philosophy, in its bid to persuade others, should not just rely on narrow arguments (which she terms 'argumento-centric philosophy') is 'in a sense quite useless but we must bring imagination to bear on observation'. For Diamond, imaginative literature is the key to helping us develop a way of thinking that can touch us. Glendinning writes:

> One of the great virtues of a classic deductive argument is the way it can be used to make perspicuous the internal coherence of a conception, and this might be a very useful contribution. What lacks coherence is the idea that one could create *the impetus for change exclusively from a raft of arguments narrowly conceived* (Glendinning 2010: 79).

The philosophy programme tries to include rational philosophical argumentation with literature and the arts, to open 'hearts and minds' to new, more equitable ways of living. While each enquiry tries to engage the class in a multimedia exposition of the key question, attention is paid to not only rational processes, but also to the emotional content of the film. The use of music, film clips and audio seeks to gain the pupils' engagement in the topic at an affective level.

The programme avoids the charge of Biesta (2011) that philosophies in current popular educational programmes are impoverished by instrumentalism:

> […] philosophy is deployed as an instrument that is supposed to work upon individuals so that they can develop and/or acquire certain qualities, capacities and skills… including cognitive, thinking skills and moral and social skills and democratic skills (Biesta 2011: 306).

For Biesta, such modernist approaches lead to a scientific or psychological form of philosophy that precludes other ways of knowing and makes assumptions about cause and effect. Derrida, by contrast, had quite modest expectations for philosophy: to learn to live together. For Foucault, improvements in society would be made if individuals used philosophy to develop themselves (Simons 1995). I believe that if pupils can develop their critical thinking skills, have more confidence in their abilities as lifelong learners and care for others, the programme will have served its purpose.

How do the pupils perceive the subject?

The pupils felt positive about the benefits of philosophy, and as the project developed they were able to give clear examples of how their thinking had progressed. By the end of the project, most (82%) cited in the questionnaire feeling more confident in the enquiry, and all the interviewed pupils spoke positively about the benefits of having an opportunity to express their views and to hear the opinions of others. Furthermore, they felt that it was important to study philosophers as part of philosophy lessons. There was no negative response to learning about the philosophers, and most responded favourably with this engagement. There was also some evidence of the children developing a more ethical response to others, which ranged from modest improvements such as listening to others in the enquiry and never criticising the person but their ideas, to more profound insights such as being more helpful and kinder to a boy in the class who was the sole carer in his family.

The pupils' interest and absorption in philosophy improved when I extended each enquiry to a three-week cycle, in order to allow for more drama and a choice of creative follow-up activities. They not only enjoyed developing their creative skills, but also felt a three-week cycle gave them more of an opportunity to explore the philosopher and the issues surrounding the question. They took pride in the finished film and were keen to show their 'writing' to the school and have it uploaded on the website.

By the end of Cycle 3, I felt I was achieving Foucault's challenge to teachers to develop a pedagogy that was sensitive to the role power plays in developing interesting and non-authoritarian lessons:

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I see nothing wrong in the practice of a person who, knowing more than others in a specific game of truth, tells those others what to do, teaches them and transmits knowledge and techniques to others. The problem in such practices where power which is not in itself a bad thing must inevitably come into play is knowing how to avoid the kind of domination effects where a kid is subjected to the arbitrary and unnecessary authority of a teacher, or a student is put under the thumb of a professor who abuses his authority. I believe this problem must be framed in terms of law, rational techniques of government and ethos, practices of the self and freedom (Foucault 1989: 298-9).

In summary, the action research project allowed me to develop an innovative and creative approach to teaching philosophy, despite my lack of experience in the subject. Although I was unclear of the direction the project would take, my interest in teaching the subject, the feedback received from the pupils and my continual readings of Derrida and Foucault helped the ideas to emerge. In the next chapter I draw the project to a conclusion and outline the benefits of teaching a poststructuralist-influenced philosophy to 10-year-old pupils.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this chapter I reflect on the development of the philosophy lessons over the three cycles. I illustrate how a poststructural approach has much to offer pupils and would additionally provide, for teachers interested in the paradigm, a way to develop a poststructuralist-influenced philosophy lesson for upper Key Stage 2 pupils.

The action research project allowed me to deepen my awareness of poststructuralism and gave me an opportunity to develop a distinctive approach to teaching philosophy. It provided the pupils the opportunity to develop thinking skills and to consider the way culture, history and language mould our core beliefs. A poststructural-influenced form of philosophy encourages pupils to express their thoughts not only orally and in writing, but also through the arts. My project centred on the question: **How might poststructuralist ideas influence the teaching of 10-year-olds?** In this chapter, project conclusions are presented through the three sub-questions that drove the three research cycles. I shall also reflect on my learning experience during the project and consider the strengths and weaknesses of my methodology. The chapter concludes with a statement of how the project makes an original contribution to knowledge.

How can I develop an approach to teaching philosophy that reflects the style of Derrida and Foucault's thinking?

The approach to teaching philosophy developed over the three cycles centred mainly on three themes. First was the use of non-logocentric (or anti-foundationalist) forms of pedagogy to complement logocentric approaches. Second was the development of digital

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media as a form of poststructural, experimental writing, and finally was the importance of maintaining a vigilant awareness of the power/knowledge dynamic in the classroom. Each will now be examined in turn.

My initial strategy in Cycle 1 was to introduce the philosophy lessons in an imaginative way, in order to capture the interest of the pupils before developing a more challenging and academic approach. To do this I used audiovisual aids: PowerPoint slides, music and films. In Cycle 1, I was disturbed by the idea that I may be reducing the impact of philosophy teaching by developing a form of edutainment, an approach that may be enjoyable but nevertheless lacks in philosophical rigour. I assumed that in later cycles I would be less reliant on such approaches; however, by Cycle 2, I re-evaluated this form of pedagogy, and following Ulmer (1985) I reconceptualised it as a form of non-logic-centric transmission of knowledge. Traditionally the teacher is regarded as a transmitter of knowledge, and by speaking clearly he or she can capture an original presence (Biesta in Peters and Biesta 2009), such as the essence of a philosopher's personality or his or her core ideas. Ulmer, following Derrida, contends that we can never fully capture truth by making it fully present in the classroom, and to try to do so simply deceives our students. An example of this motion would be to show pupils original archive materials in a history lesson. Ulmer proposes instead a pedagogy that highlights the constructed nature of 'texts', a pedagogy of the hyper-representational that consists of a kaleidoscope of montages of audios and visuals. Ulmer's project involved devising a form of non-linear teaching by utilising multimedia approaches to teaching and learning – what he calls 'scripting beyond the book' (Ulmer 1984: xiii). He proposed a pedagogy that used Jacques Lacan's use of puns and diagrams, the German performance artist Joseph Beuys's demonstration of models and the film montages of Sergei Eisenstein (1994).

My influences for the grammatology classroom did not draw on these avant-garde thinkers but instead, in Cycle 2, on pop videos, the DJ remix culture (Miller 2008) and scratch videos (Elwes 1995) – art forms that were part of the pupils' background. As the project progressed, I became aware of the importance of modernist art and literature within poststructuralism, and so I incorporated this into my presentations. The multimedia approach I adopted was an attempt to provide a visual representation of reality, but by following Ulmer I was deliberately attempting to exaggerate representations, to highlight the constructedness of the presentations. The use of cartoon faces to depict philosophers, and other non-realist graphics, was increasingly employed as the cycles progressed. For instance in the inquiry involving Simone de Beauvoir, film clips from a French TV movie (2006) involving Sartre and Beauvoir (played by actors) were used in preference to actual photographs of the two philosophers.

Although the pupils enjoyed the lively presentation of my teaching approaches, by Cycle 2 some of the interest was waning, as I had committed myself to asking pupils to write an account of their weekly inquiries. This proved to be a less favoured part of the lesson, with only the keenest supporting the benefits of writing. I did not want to stop this, for two reasons. First, I felt that poststructural philosophy should not rely on phonocentricism but should base itself on writing. To try to win the pupils over, I continued to work on making the lesson introductions more engaging, by involving them in drama, film clips and music. I was hoping to generate enthusiasm for the subject that would inspire them to develop a love for the subject; however, although I did feel I was compromising the subject and diluting its academic tone, I would reduce the approach once pupils were more settled. Secondly, I felt that by encouraging the pupils to write high-quality text, they would have a record of their developing thinking skills, and their

work could be used as a platform to show the wider school community the benefits of the subject.

As I studied Ulmer and Derrida's 'Of Grammatology' as a way to improve my poststructural pedagogical approach, I began to recognise the need to develop a non-logocentric form of writing as a follow-up to the inquiry – writing that avoided linearity, clarity and simplicity, text relating to the metaphysis of presence. Instead, I needed to develop writing that was experimental and structured by différance and the trace, writing of collage rather than linearity. The answer lay in digital writing (inspired by Sergi Eisenstein, 1994) using digital cameras and movie-editing computer software. Each philosophical inquiry resulted in a film to record the findings, and the pupils were allowed to express their ideas discursively (and record in an audio format) and in non-discursive ways (art, music and movement). I would combine their contributions into a film montage of audio-visuals, to create a kaleidoscope of ideas for the viewer. The films were to appeal to both the mind and to the emotions of the viewer, to engage their attention and to provoke them to ponder on the issues of the inquiry. I was taken with the idea that it was not the well-reasoned argument of a philosophy text that inspired Foucault to become interested in the subject but an 'experimental' play:

> I belong to that generation who, as students, had before their eyes, and were limited by, a horizon consisting of Marxism, phenomenology, and existentialism. For me the break was first Beckett's "Waiting for Godot," a breathtaking performance (Foucault 1986:176).

A poststructural-influenced form of philosophy avoids argumento-centricism (Diamond in Glendinning, 2010), as it does not seek to persuade others by relying on narrow arguments, and it also avoids trying to have the last word on the matter. The films produced are created to provide the audience with a range of views and allow them to

consider the issues and to come to their own conclusions. For Diamond, imaginative

literature is the key to helping us develop thinking that can touch us. Glendinning writes:

> One of the great virtues of a classic deductive argument is the way it can be used to make perspicuous the internal coherence of a conception, and this might be a very useful contribution. What lacks coherence is the idea that one could create *the impetus for change exclusively from a raft of arguments narrowly conceived* (Glendinning, 2010: 79).

Poststructural philosophy tries to include rational philosophical argumentation with

literature and the arts, to open 'hearts and minds' to new, more equitable, ways of living.

While each enquiry tries to engage the class in a multimedia exposition of the key

question, attention is paid not only to the rational processes, but also to the emotional

content of the film. The use of music, film clips and audio not only depicts différance

and the trace, but it also seeks to gain the pupils' engagement in the topic at an affective

level. Furthermore, the role of audio-visual aids is not to entertain pupils or to be a

demonstration of what constitutes 'best practice'; rather its purpose is to function, as the

the transgressive (to use Derrida's term), anti-foundationalist strand acts as the

counterpoint to orthodox logocentric presentations. The intention is to encourage pupils

to consider alternative or more inclusive ideas. Whilst I enjoyed using pop videos, hip-

hop music and clips from films to create montages and collages in the spirit of the early

20th century montage, I felt by Cycle 3 that I needed to increase further the transgressive

or anti-foundational dimension of the films. The use of conceptual and performance art

suited my poststructural philosophy programme.

Egbert (a thinker from an anti-foundationalist perspective) writes:

> … we are living in an age when all the previous structuring Forms of civilization – Derrida's transcendental signified… Heidegger's various turning of Being – are in complete disintegration and disarray. And in such an age of breakdown, the contemporary artist is necessary as a sort of fisherman of forms (2013: 209).

Egbert hopes that through extensive artistic experimentation 'one or all of them might stumble upon a new set of Forms, that will become constitutive of the next, and possibly, the last phase of Western civilization. And it is only the artist, as ontological fisherman, who can do this for us' (2013: 209). Contrary to Egbert, though, I believe the contemporary artist may highlight a world lacking in a universal logos, but it is for the post-foundational, poststructural philosophers to work within communities of inquiries and scholastic traditions to establish suitable foundations – foundations that promote justice. Following Derrida we must be prepared to deconstruct foundations, in order to promote and further improve justice. And, when necessary, we must be prepared to propose new foundations for the cause of justice.

The poststructural approach to teaching involves a constant vigilance of power relations in the classroom, and consequently a key theme that remained throughout the three cycles was the reflection of power relations in the inquiry. The use of stimulating approaches to teaching and learning, good behaviour management strategies and the adoption of reflexivity in my evaluations were utilised to help establish equitable relationships in the classroom

Over the three cycles, I attempted to engage all the pupils in the lessons, to ensure good relationships between the pupils and the teacher, and between the pupils themselves. To achieve this goal, I tried to make the lessons as interesting as possible, using aspects of modern culture such as animations and popular music. I also sought to ensure a high degree of involvement by the children. As the cycles progressed, the pupils were engaged in various creative activities to support their enquiries, and so the role of the teacher at the centre of the lessons became diminished.

Throughout the cycles, each lesson was examined from the point of view of not only the success of the philosophy, but also the engagement and behaviour of the pupils. I believed that a poststructural philosophy must be conducted in an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance. Positive behaviour management strategies, such as praising pupils, ignoring minor poor behavioural issues and, above all, showing an interest in the subject were employed. At first, most of the pupils were engaged in the subject, and I constantly looked at ways of improving the content of lessons by looking towards audio-visual aids to keep their attention and to make them attentive and receptive to new ways of looking at things.

At first, I favoured the seating methods of P4C, which consists of pupils sitting in a circle to discuss the inquiry question. Drawing on Foucault's metaphor of the panopticon, whereby the state seeks to control and normalise its citizens by keeping a constant surveillance of their everyday activities, I began to question the traditional seating arrangements of circle of inquiries. The use of a circle is intended to make for a more open and democratic inquiry, with the teacher sitting in the circle.

While I found that this approach has its merits, as it can lead to a focused and intimate inquiry, it also has the potential of being too controlled by the teacher, who is able to keep the entire class in view. I found the use of normal desks did not destroy the quality of the inquiries and gave extra opportunities for partner discussions to complement the main inquiry. This allowed those who did not always wish to contribute to the main inquiry to express their views to at least one other pupil. I also felt less controlling, and pupil autonomy and self-discipline were further strengthened by allowing them to spend two out of three lessons being involved in drama or producing an artistic contribution for the film. At these times, my involvement was more as a facilitator, and so I tried to let the pupils spend most of the lessons actively engaged in the activities.

In conclusion, I have shown that I have developed a style of teaching philosophy that has captured both philosophers' interest in the Western philosophical tradition but at the same time has had a transgressive element to their oeuvre. This transgressive element was seen in their early experimental texts and had the intention of positing that the ultimate truth could be discovered through clear thinking, based on universal foundations. Poststructuralists emphasise how the individual is caught up in the web of language, with its cultural biases, and therefore we must tune ourselves to unreason (Foucault) and challenge the metaphysics of presence (Derrida). This was achieved by using digital media in an experimental fashion, to emphasise that we do not have a clear view of reality, as if looking through a window. Rather, the view is opaque, as we have to negotiate the networks in language, culture and in our unconscious. The use of music, montage, multi-layered audios, fast cutaways, graphics and animations helped to convey this line of thinking. This approach to philosophy endeavours to accommodate the theoretical perspectives of both logocentrism (foundationalism) and anti-logocentrism (anti-foundationalism), without collapsing into absolutism or relativism. Instead, we must be prepared to adjust and amend our foundational assumptions, to ensure greater justice for all. Philosophy lessons should also reflect the ethos of justice for all through the promotion of positive behaviour management strategies that seek to give pupils as much autonomy as possible.

2. Do the enquiry and follow-up demonstrate pupils are developing philosophical skills?

I had assumed the inquiries would take the form of discussions on ethical themes. In Cycle 2, I was intending to introduce a modified form of archaeology, genealogy and deconstruction which would be the basis of the children's philosophical skills. However, in Cycle 1, I found that the pupils needed help and encouragement to develop their ideas in a coherent and clear manner. Deep thoughts and ethical themes could be explored by traditional thinking skills. I found it important in the project to develop a poststructural philosophy, to encourage pupils to develop traditional thinking skills alongside a consideration of the politics of knowledge. A range of thinking skills was developed, such as giving reasons and examples to support an opinion, challenging facts presented by others, building on the ideas of others and detecting logical fallacies.

From the outset of the programme, I tried to develop a philosophy that was not rooted in foundationalism and edged instead towards a postmodern or anti-foundationalist approach. However, with the realisation that traditional philosophy has much to offer, the adoption of a post-foundational philosophy, rather than anti-foundationalism, helped to steer the lessons in a more constructive manner. Rather than adopting the attitude that all views are equally valid, the logic and core assumptions of each view point would be open to scrutiny and evaluated in terms of their ethical implications.

'Glas' (1986), one of Derrida's major experimental literary texts (influenced by Joyce), develops the theme of the in-between: the search for ideality and the celebration of the free play of language (difference). The text has two vertical columns, the left of which contains quotations from Hegel, an authoritarian philosopher noted for his totalising view of philosophy that asserts solid foundations by using dialectal reasoning (Hegel, in 'Glas', provides a justification (thesis) for the authoritarian Prussian state). The right-

hand column features the antithesis: extracts taken from the writings of Jean Genet, a writer, homosexual prostitute and thief. For Derrida, there is no overcoming of the thesis and antithesis to create a new thesis, but only the interplay of each.

Thus, the first mode of analysis is logocentric and focuses on epistemology's concerns in relation to truth and objectivity. This intuitions of this mode are contained in foundationalism, whereby pupils are encouraged to develop their reasoning, reading, language and interpersonal skills. I conceptualised this first mode of analysis at the Hegelian column of 'Glas' – the confident logocentric thinking that conceptualised history as moving towards a telos, i.e. full truth. There is a focus on providing explanations that could be applied to a wide variety of contexts.

The second mode of analysis, which I term 'poststructural reflection', is grounded in hermeneutics and focuses on the interpretative elements of epistemology. The intuitions of this anti-foundational paradigm propose that knowing is subjectively bound to the knower, and there can be no 'truth' independent of the knower. Truth, then, becomes relative. Poststructural reflection raises awareness of how culture, history, normalisation, power, language and binary thinking influence our thinking. This represents the Genet Column in 'Glas', the wild Hegelian side that disrupts the over-confidence of logocentrism and challenges us to think of all that is undervalued, marginalised or excluded, Exploring the ways we are forced to think, an analysis of cultural norms and an awareness of other ways of thinking offer pupils the opportunity to think differently.

The philosophy programme developed, particularly in Cycle 3, focuses on a middle way between the intuitions of both camps. What is required is a shuttling back and forth

between the issues raised by both perspectives, in order to interrogate logocentric assumptions from the perspective of marginalised perspectives. This engagement with experimental and unorthodox thinking does not involve advocating a slide into relativism; rather, it encourages pupils to rail against the dangers of absolutist and universal foundations; it suggests the establishment of fallible foundations that can lead to an intelligible truth – a truth that must always be open to revision.

Derrida's promotion of philosophy in schools was done not only to provide pupils with the skills of philosophy, but also to provide them with a philosophical heritage. In the first cycle I introduced the key philosophical question of each lesson (see Appendix 1) through a 'famous' philosopher, but I did not feel that this would be a well-received approach and that I would be able to dispense with the philosopher and just use the key question to lead the inquiry. My motivation for introducing philosophers was to have an approach that was distinctly different from P4C lessons which rely on developing skills. However, the pupils liked learning about philosophers and felt that this was an important part of 'doing philosophy'. As the cycles progressed I realised the tracking of different systems of thought from the time of Socrates helps pupils to understand how 'truth' has been socially constructed over time and that our current ways of discovering truth are also likely to be superseded by other approaches in the future.

Derrida continually plays gratitude to philosophers in the cannon and recommends that we stand on their shoulders in our quest to move closer to the truth. Thus, it is important that we are familiar with the development of Western philosophy and are able to read the texts carefully and respectfully. In the second cycle I realised the importance of grounding the children in tradition. In hindsight, I would have carried out the project

again in chronological order, beginning from Socrates and concluding with Peter Stringer (animal rights), in order to promote a clearer development of the tradition.

In conclusion, pupils improved their philosophical thinking skills over the course of the project, and the approaches used followed the advice received from P4C courses and books, in addition to other materials for teaching traditional philosophy to children. I would see this part of skill development as being aligned more to foundational philosophy.

The second component to the pupils' skills development was the emphasis placed on poststructural reflection, which allowed them to see that although their thinking skills were important, it was also important to explore the way our foundational assumptions impact on the process through religion, peers, family, culture and use of language. In inquiries, the pupils displayed the ability to ask others in the class about their grounding assumptions, which helped them gain a sense that they did not have to stand outside culture and history to achieve an unbiased view of reality.

Finally, the pupils were able to use the ideas of the philosophers when responding to others in the inquiry. They were able to 'stand on the shoulders' of others to help them express their views, rather than using the P4C approach, which is more concerned with developing thinking skills. In addition, the study of philosophers from the past and present helped them understand that ideas change across different epochs and in different cultures.

3. How do the pupils perceive the subject?

The increase in the poststructural influences in my lessons led to greater pupil involvement with the subject. They enjoyed not only the formal thinking skills and reflection, but also the opportunity to develop poststructural writing involving them choosing to develop creatively the ideas of the inquiry.

The pupils were engaged in the use of films to introduce the philosophy theme, particularly when class members were involved in the play. The films developed for the inquiries in Cycle 3 also fully engaged class members, who wanted to see if their oral and artistic contributions had been included and enjoyed by their peers. When the films were shown to the other three Year 6 classes, they were equally attentive during the whole film. The use of popular music, film cut-aways, spliced music and the pupils' philosophical ideas and artistic contributions were originally employed to avoid a logocentric form of writing, a writing that demonstrated the flow of différance.

The use of pupils' audio recordings, expressing a variety of viewpoints (heteroglossia) in the films, was not only a way of involving as many children as possible, but it was also employed to enrich the poststructural dimension of the project. In a written account of a presentation given by Derrida, at a conference in May 2001 in Kolding, Sorensen writes:

> Derrida spoke about the heteroglossia he had felt impelled to practice ever since his first attempt to write the two columns of *Glas*. He said, "I have always been compelled to write in more than one voice. I have a number of texts which are haunted by a multiplicity of places and voices, and marked – and the sexual difference is essential – by always at least one feminine voice" (Sorensen 2005 15-6).

An unexpected outcome of this approach was that it did attract the full attention of pupils from other classes who watched the films, which have characteristics of what Langer terms 'Mindful Learning' (1989; 1997). Langer's research shows that people often approach learning as a way of establishing certainty, an order of things. Instead of accepting that reality is always changing, we try to gain control by freezing it, and we

allow our past to over-determine the present and then trap ourselves in adopting single perspectives. Once some expertise is established, learners pay less attention to new material (that is, they become mindless) and do not engage fully in the experience presented to them; this leads to limited learning. Her studies show that mindful learning occurs when the stimulus is varied and contains novelty and a variety of perspectives. This was borne out in my action research project. When one of the philosophy films was shown to 480 pupils, they watched in silence and stillness for the entire six minutes and were keen to give their responses to the key question.

The pupils saw the study of key philosophers as important to the discipline and recognised its importance in developing their thinking skills and their ability to live lives that were more ethical. The use of presenting the philosopher in a film clip format or animation proved to be an effective way of gaining their attention. This was combined with a pupil providing an audio commentary of the research undertaken, which added to the other pupils' engagement.

The final cycle provided the most satisfaction. The three distinct and varied phases for each inquiry provided a range of learning opportunities for the pupils, who felt their thinking skills had improved and expressed confidence in articulating their ideas in the inquiry. They enjoyed the active learning opportunities in the third part of the lesson and felt it was important that they did not just spend one week on an inquiry. The three-week inquiry meant they could revisit the philosopher under study, which deepened their understanding, and they enjoyed the chance to be engaged in a creative response to the inquiry, particularly as they were given choices of activities. The culmination of each three-week inquiry in a film motivated the pupils, as many reported they were keen to have their contribution included in the final movie.

In conclusion, the pupils enjoyed the philosophy lessons and felt they were engaging in a worthwhile school subject. They regarded the study of philosophers as important, giving the subject a worthy academic tone, and they felt that their philosophy skills were developing and that they had gained in confidence in the subject. The pupils also found that the ability to use poststructural reflection was an important tool in the lessons. My interest in the late Foucault's use of philosophy as a way to make one's life a 'work of art' was the main inspiration for increasing the pupils' use of the arts to develop their thinking in the third cycle. This final cycle was the one pupils found the most fruitful, and their involvement and concentration in philosophy were at their highest. The fast-paced experimental style of the philosophy films captured the attention and appreciation of pupils from other classes.

By the start of Cycle 3, I felt I was achieving Foucault's idealised view of learning:

> The first thing one should learn – that is, if it makes any sense to learn such a thing – is that learning is profoundly bound up with pleasure... Imagine how it would be like if people were crazy about learning the way they are about sex. They would knock each other over in a rush to get into school (Foucault 1996: 135-6).

Methodology

I shall begin this section with a discussion on the limitations of my research, and I shall also provide an explanation as to why my approach suited the project.

This action research project is grounded in French poststructural theory and would not be easily understood or appreciated by those used to working in the positivistic or even the naturalistic paradigms, as it could appear to be too subjective and lacking in objective methods to prove the efficacy of the programme.

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A criticism of the project is that the benefits may well be short term and would not be sustained over a longer period. Certainly, if the project included a longitudinal dimension by examining the pupils' responses a year or two later, the findings would be strengthened. However, the action research project is intended to show the impact of a teacher and class beginning to use philosophical enquiry, and (following Derrida) it argues that the subject should be taught throughout the school system.

At the start of the programme, I had assumed I would develop a radically different form of philosophy. My readings of secondary sources were leading me to a relativistic variant of poststructuralism, and I supposed that the lessons would explore discourse and binary thinking only. Cycle 1 showed me the benefits of traditional philosophy with the use of disciplined, clear and logical thinking, and I became reluctant to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater'. By Cycle 2 I began to develop a post-foundational approach, which meant that I did not have to invent a new way of teaching philosophy 'from scratch'. This meant I could draw on current 'good practice', which included using good behaviour management practices, the programmes of P4C and Socratic inquiry and the use of clear, skill-based lesson planning and delivery. However, it also gave me a chance to explore the role of unreason or anti-logocentrism, which led me into the disciplines of experimental filmmaking, conceptual art and popular culture. A key role for the poststructural philosophy teacher is to record faithful versions of the children's audio responses to the inquiry, but equally to have the skill to make the movies in an experimental style, in order to represent adequately anti-logocentrism or unreason. There is a danger that without a feel for the avant-garde or experimental, the philosophy films would not capture this adequately and would be reduced to a form of edutainment. I believe the films made in Cycles 2 and 3 would have had an even more poststructuralist influence had I employed the use of conceptual and experimental art more extensively.

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Teachers should be encouraged to engage in formal philosophy teaching training, and to immerse themselves in conceptual art in its allied offshoots – as well as developing movie-making skills. The post foundational, poststructural teacher should immerse themselves in the worlds of reason (philosophy) and unreason (conceptual art and experimental art forms).

Finally, my role as Headteacher as well at the teacher could be seen as a restricting the pupils in expressing their true feelings throughout the project. However, I was conscious of the weakness of this aspect and therefore reflected on the power/knowledge relationships in each cycle.

Action research proved to be strength of the research process. Action research follows the poststructural view that the researcher is unable to adopt a scientifically detached view when discovering the 'facts' of the matter. Instead, in this project, I was located within the action, which allowed me to record my 'findings' in a text that can be studied in order to reveal new insights that could lead to improved practice.

As I did not have a clear direction of the way the lessons would develop (apart from the idea of using deconstruction and some form of discourse analysis with the pupils), action research allowed me to develop the ideas as I progressed through the project. This accords with the poststructuralist strategy of not having fixed ideas or concepts but to be more open to 'the other', that is, new ideas, opinions and experiences of other people. Derrida often wrote of a 'Democracy to Come', to which he was heralding a new direction to offset the impact of increased globalisation. He did not give a clear outline of what the new order would be like, as he believed that citizens should themselves contribute new ideas. Action research allowed me to develop a philosophy to come, and

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because I was open to new ideas (from pupils and my extensive reading during the project), I could develop in a direction I had not anticipated.

The Learning Process

Over the period of the action research project, the Headteacher's role under the present coalition government has become increasingly instrumentalised through the accountability and standards agenda. Appraisals, governing body meetings, the constant scrutiny of test data, benchmarking data of 'similar' schools and meetings with School Improvement Partners have placed enormous pressure on Headteachers to ensure year-on-year improved test results in Mathematics, English and Science. All aspects of the Headteacher's performance are under constant scrutiny, particularly if judged to be underperforming or (in Ofsted's term) 'required to improve.' This normalisation process has given Heads a limited chance to focus beyond the government agenda and to find the freedom to develop their own innovative ideas. For many Headteachers the aim is to keep stakeholders at bay and to try to survive the next Ofsted inspection. The majority of courses offered to teachers and Headteachers focus on achieving better academic results, purely to secure good and outstanding Ofsted grades. Such courses apparently promote 'best practice' and rarely consider theoretical issues.

The project has allowed me to explore the critical paradigm of poststructuralism, which has not only impacted on my approach to teaching philosophy, but also now informs my approach to education. My action research project had the unusual feature of engaging with theory as well as action as the cycles progressed. Not only did I analyse the data, to seek ways to improve the lessons, but I also re-read the theories of Foucault and Derrida, to find additional ways of improving my approaches. Problems such as the pupils'

reluctance to write-up accounts for the inquiry, the use of audio-visual aids in the introduction of the lessons and the merits of introducing philosophers to children were resolved by studying both research findings and the writings of the two philosophers. As I deepened my knowledge of poststructuralism, my approaches to teaching, learning and leadership became influenced by the paradigm. In short, I became a poststructuralist philosophy teacher, and a poststructuralist leader.

Contribution to knowledge

I developed the theory of poststructuralism into a pedagogical practice at the case study school, and I used modern technology to make the complex theories of Derrida and Foucault accessible to 10-year-old pupils. The use of digital technology and the availability of information on the Internet allowed me to give poststructuralism a 21st-century revamp. Pupils found this approach to philosophy engaging, creative and a stimulating way to develop their thinking skills, because an awareness of the politics of knowledge complemented the pupils' ability to think clearly, carefully and in a logical manner.

The action research provided evidence of the pupils' increased ability to use critical thinking skills and creativity to explore a range of philosophical themes. The poststructuralist-influenced philosophy programme has much to offer practitioners who wish to explore the practical application of poststructuralism in a classroom.

Schools interested in poststructuralism may wish to develop the approaches I have undertaken, and a poststructural-influenced philosophy module could be run as a standalone series of lessons involving a three-part programme that could be developed

with new technologies. Alternatively, this approach may be used as a supplement to more traditional philosophy lessons. Since deconstruction relies on the ability to read texts closely and accurately – and to use a logical approach to philosophic questions – training in traditional thinking skills would be useful. A poststructural-influenced form of philosophy could be used as an occasional three-week break away from the more traditional inquiry methods. Topics involving ethical themes (for example animal rights and environmental issues) would be particularly useful. A school interested in a poststructural and post-foundational form of philosophy should also consider developing creativity in the arts and English as a way of promoting ways for pupils to explore a different order of things, a Democracy to Come.

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Philosophy Cycle 1

Lesson 1.

What is a good life?
Socrates 10.5.09

Lesson 2.

How to write up a philosophical inquiry.
18.5.09

Lesson 3.

What makes a good friend?
Aristotle 25.5.09

Lesson 4.

Should You Ever Lie? Immanuel Kant 8.6.09

Lesson 5.

'Will having fun make you happier than studying?'
 John Stuart Mill – Utilitarianism   15.6.09

Lesson 6.

If many people believe that something is true, is it true?
Aristotle   22.6.09

Lesson 7.

Does anything depend on everything else?
Georg Hegel 29.6.09

Lesson 8.

Do two wrongs balance out and make an action right?
Immanuel Kant 6.7.09

Philosophy Cycle 2

Lesson 1

Do the advantages of technology outweigh the disadvantages?
Martin Heidegger
(Environmentalism) 21.9.09

Lesson 2

Can We Change Who We Are?
Soren Kierkegaard 28.9.09

Lesson 3

Does a tree make a sound in a forest if no-one is around?
George Berkley (Idealism) 5.10.09

Lesson 4.

Do you really have a free will?
Thomas Hobbes 12.10.09

Lesson 5

Should you let the little things bother you?
Marcus Aurelius (Stoicism) 19.10.09

Lesson 6.

Should you criticize people or the opinion people have?
Socrates (Ethics) 2.11.09

Lesson 7.

Do girls/women have to work harder to be more successful?
Simone De Beauvoir (Feminism) 16.11.09

Lesson 8

What does being loyal mean? Socrates 23.11.09

Philosophy Cycle 3

<u>Lesson 1</u>

What is a Good Life?
Socrates   11-29.1.10

<u>Lesson 2 .</u>

Do animals have rights?
Peter Singer 1-26.2.10

<u>Lesson 3</u>

Are there times when you should be violent?
Gandhi 1-26.3.10

Appendix 2

Format of lesson Cycle 1 Between traditional philosophy lessons and P4C

Morning

Warm-up game

Pupil Questionnaire

Introduce the Key Question and the Philosopher

Outline the Key Skills

Whole Class Discussion (circle)

Conclusion

Afternoon

Write up of the inquiry

Format of lesson Cycle 2 Towards a Poststructural Philosophy

Morning

Warm-up game

Pupil Questionnaire

Introduce the Key Question and the Philosopher via a film

Outline the Key Skills

Discussion in small groups

Whole Class Discussion

Conclusion

Afternoon

Write up of the inquiry

Format of lesson Cycle 3   A poststructuralist influenced philosophy

Week 1 Drama

Week 2 Warm-up game

Philosophy film (including a pupil acting)

Introduce the Key Question and the Philosopher

Outline the Key Skills

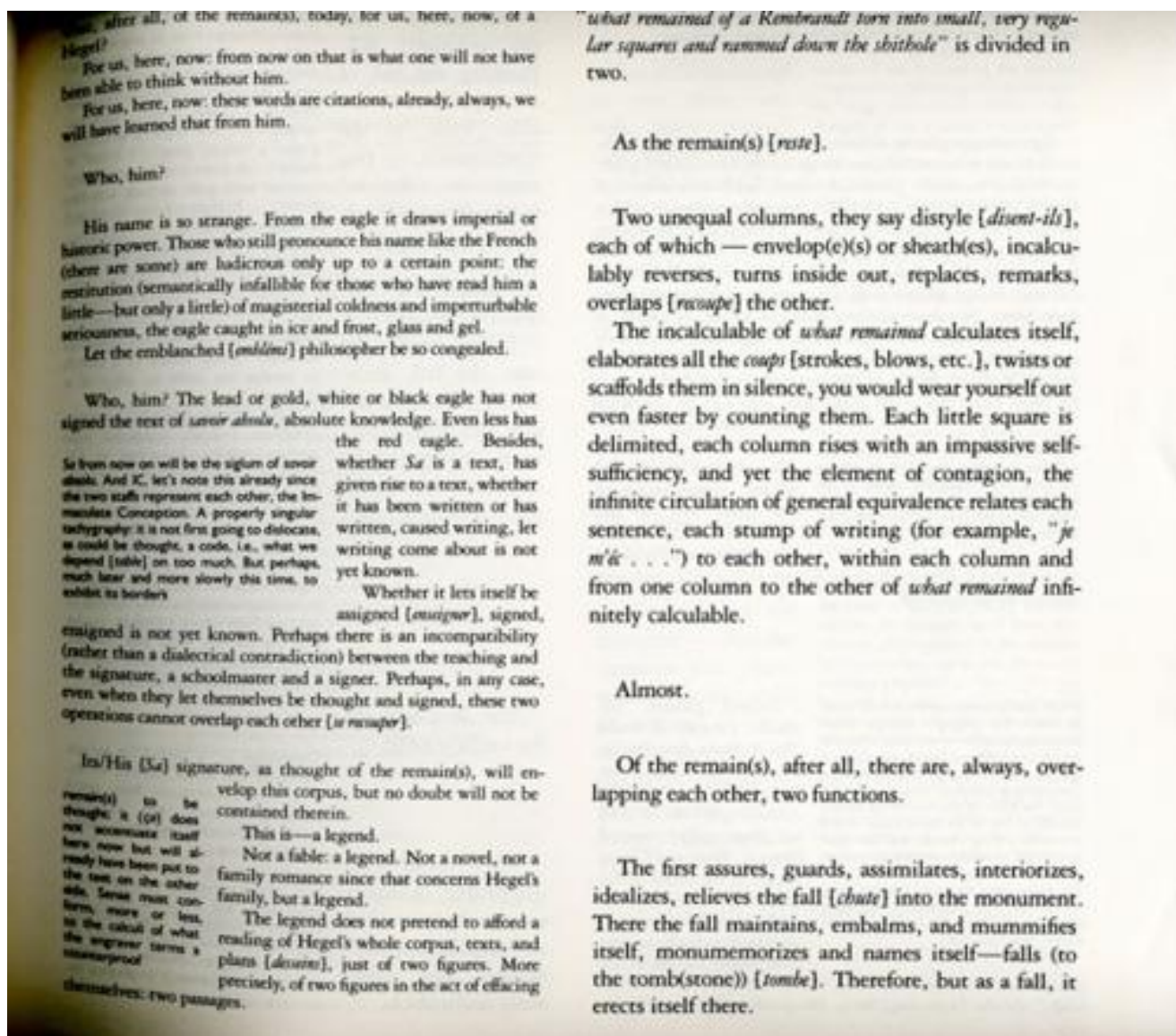Discussion in small groups

Whole Class Discussion

Conclusion

Week 3 Follow up to the inquiry

Making part 2 of the film: art, graphics, music, and poetry

Glas 1974

... after all, of the remain(s), today, for us, here, now, of a Hegel?

For us, here, now: from now on that is what one will not have been able to think without him.

For us, here, now: these words are citations, already, always, we will have learned that from him.

Who, him?

His name is so strange. From the eagle it draws imperial or historic power. Those who still pronounce his name like the French (there are some) are ludicrous only up to a certain point: the restitution (semantically infallible for those who have read him a little—but only a little) of magisterial coldness and imperturbable seriousness, the eagle caught in ice and frost, glass and gel.

Let the emblanched [emblème] philosopher be so congealed.

Who, him? The lead or gold, white or black eagle has not signed the text of *savoir absolu*, absolute knowledge. Even less has the red eagle. Besides, whether *Sa* is a text, has given rise to a text, whether it has been written or has written, caused writing, let writing come about is not yet known.

Sa from now on will be the siglum of savoir absolu. And IC, let's note this already since the two staffs represent each other, the Immaculate Conception. A properly singular tachygraphy: it is not first going to dislocate, as could be thought, a code, i.e., what we depend [table] on too much. But perhaps, much later and more slowly this time, to exhibit its borders

Whether it lets itself be assigned [*consigner*], signed, consigned is not yet known. Perhaps there is an incompatibility (rather than a dialectical contradiction) between the teaching and the signature, a schoolmaster and a signer. Perhaps, in any case, even when they let themselves be thought and signed, these two operations cannot overlap each other [*se recouper*].

Its/His [*Sa*] signature, as thought of the remain(s), will envelop this corpus, but no doubt will not be contained therein.

This is—a legend.

Not a fable: a legend. Not a novel, not a family romance since that concerns Hegel's family, but a legend.

The legend does not pretend to afford a reading of Hegel's whole corpus, texts, and plans [*dessein*], just of two figures. More precisely, of two figures in the act of effacing themselves: two passages.

remain(s) to be thought: it [ça] does not accentuate itself here now but will already have been put to the test on the other side. Sense must conform, more or less, to the calcul of what the engraver terms a counterproof themselves

---

"*what remained of a Rembrandt torn into small, very regular squares and rammed down the shithole*" is divided in two.

As the remain(s) [*reste*].

Two unequal columns, they say distyle [*distyle*], each of which — envelop(e)(s) or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps [*recoupe*] the other.

The incalculable of *what remained* calculates itself, elaborates all the *coups* [strokes, blows, etc.], twists or scaffolds them in silence, you would wear yourself out even faster by counting them. Each little square is delimited, each column rises with an impassive self-sufficiency, and yet the element of contagion, the infinite circulation of general equivalence relates each sentence, each stump of writing (for example, "*je m'éc* . . .") to each other, within each column and from one column to the other of *what remained* infinitely calculable.

Almost.

Of the remain(s), after all, there are, always, overlapping each other, two functions.

The first assures, guards, assimilates, interiorizes, idealizes, relieves the fall [*chute*] into the monument. There the fall maintains, embalms, and mummifies itself, monumemorizes and names itself—falls (to the tomb(stone)) [*tombe*]. Therefore, but as a fall, it erects itself there.

Examples of pupils' follow-up to the Enquiries

Philosophy Cycle 1

<u>Lesson 4</u>

Should you ever tell a lie?

Emmanuel Kant- Ethics

Pupil 1

> Sometimes you have to tell a lie because if you are a lawyer and you know your client stole something you still have to lie. I would tell a lie. I would tell a lie if enemy soldiers came to my house and were chasing the person in my house. I would say that the person was not inside. By lying I could save the life of someone.

Pupil 2

> I think you should sometimes tell a lie because you can make a friend feel better but you shouldn't really tell a lie because you're in trouble and by telling a lie you will be in more trouble.

<u>Lesson 5</u>

Will having fun make you happier than studying?

 John Stuart Mill –Utilitarianism

> My thoughts are that I wouldn't have a whole life of fun though I would not have a life of studying either. This is because if you had a life of fun in the end it will be quite boring, say if you wanted to be a singer you need to know how to read and so you have to study for that. However you shouldn't study all the time because you could end up being a boring dull person. My best thoughts are that you should pick both a little bit of studying and a little bit of fun.

If many people believe that something is true, is it true?
Aristotle - epistemology

Pupil 1

I think that God exists but that is my opinion. If someone doesn't believe in the existence of God then that's their opinion. I believe in God because I feel the presence of God with me wherever I go, and even if I don't feel God's presence in my heart. The Sikhs God is in our holy books the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and to some it may just be a book but to me it's got a spirit and that's the spirit with me. If I said that to someone who doesn't believe in God they might just say I'll bear that in mind. They'll bear it in mind because I said God exists, I gave my examples. Just because someone says something to you it doesn't mean its true. If you think somethings true or know it is, then believe it is or is you think somethings not true then don't believe in it.

When I was young, people used to tell me to do stuff otherwise the bogeyman will come. I used to be scared of him but now I'm not because I know he is not real. The only bogeyman left is the weather.

Pupil 2

Our enquiry today was: Do many people believe something is true, is it true? I think that someone around the time the Bible was created could have just made it up. There is no proof to show that all these stories are true. For example: The Bible was made such a long time ago none is around from then to prove it.

Philosophy Cycle 2
Lesson 1.

Do the advantages of technology outweigh the disadvantages?
Martin Heidegger - ethics

I'm in the middle because technology is killing our planet and people can cause accidents. If you're talking on the phone and driving at the same time that can cause a traffic collision. On the other hand, it is good because it entertains you and in hospitals they have generators that help people breathe. If we didn't have technology lives would be lost. So I think that it is good and bad.

Lesson 2.

Can we change who we are?

Soren Kierkegaard – self development
Pupil 1

I don't agree with Kierkegaard because someone doesn't actually change, instead you

probably improve on something or maybe act. For example if you have plastic surgery you don't change because that would mean you have different everything. So you just improve your appearance. Also when I was little I used to be scared for a number of things but now I'm not scared on that many things but that doesn't mean I've changed, it means I've improved.

Thank you for reading!

Pupil 2

I agree with Soren Kierkegaard. I think we can change who we are because if we take a huge life experience in another country for a long time we will change to how we act because they will make us fit in. Not everyone, but some people change all the time. I think this is because people have some hard friends who are in gangs and a friend who is a real softie and has only a few friends. I only think some people because hardly anyone has a friend in a gang unless they are in one themselves.

I personally think hard people don't grow up very nice and others grow up and have a laugh with others. I know hard people are tough but they still have their hearts.

<u>Lesson 8.</u>

Do girls/women have to work harder to be more successful?
Simone De Beauvoir (Feminism)

Pupil 1

We began the lesson by watching a clip about Simone De Beauvoir who was born in 1908 and died in 1986. She was a philosopher who thought that women had the right to the same jobs as men. She is right. I think that there are no jobs that neither men nor women can do. They can be firefighters, police officers, carpenters and florists, etc.

All jobs can be done by men and women so I think all jobs should be open for both. I agree with Simone De Beauvoir and also what N…. [a pupil] said, men do sometimes treat women as inferior. Most of the time they say they that can do jobs better than women and they always come up with an awful excuse for if a women can do it better than them. All in all, I do agree with Simone that all jobs should be open to men and women.

Pupil 2

I think that its fair for women and men to have the same jobs, for example Kelly Homes is a famous Olympian and men can be exactly the same. I also think women should have the opportunities as men but they won't get as much money as men would. For example if you had men footballers and they would get paid say £1000 a week but women would get paid, say half of that amount so I think it is unfair for women to get paid less because they are different and people think that men are better at different sorts of sports. But they are not, women are as good as them.

I agree with Simone De Beauvoir because women can change by doing anything they do and women shouldn't be housewives. They shouldn't pick up after men, men should do it themselves.

Appendix 5

Semi-structured interview questions:

1. What is the best thing about philosophy?

2. What is the worst thing about philosophy?

3. What would it be good to do more of?

4. What have you learnt?

5. What would make it better?

6. How could Mr Gordo improve the lesson?

7. Do you wish to say anything else about the philosophy lessons?

A Pupil Questionnaire

An example of a questionnaire, completed at the end of Cycle 1.

Thinking about Thinking Skills (Philosophy)

~~Boy~~/Girl

What is the best thing about philosophy?

> I think the best think about philosophy is doing drama and sharing your views together.

What is the worst thing about philosophy?

> There isn't a worst thing but when we write it gets a bit boring because we have already shared our views with the class and when we share our views, when it comes to writing, I forget my ideas.

What would it be good to do more of?

> I think it would be good to do more drama because it's fun and as well as learning we are always having fun.

What have you learnt?

> I have learnt that you can always change your views on things and you don't have to say the same view just because everyone else has got it.

What would make it better?

> I think we could do more drama because it's fun and it makes the lessons more fun.

How could Mr Gordo improve his teaching of the lesson?

> I think that Mr Gordo doesn't need to improve anything but do <u>more</u> of the fun things like drama and stuff.

Do you wish to say anything else about philosophy?

> No, not really.