P4C Research

A guide to the evidence that informs our work and demonstrates our impact
SAPERE helps people improve their learning and their lives through philosophical enquiry.

We give people the skills to thrive in school and society.
P4C is a philosophical approach to learning and teaching

P4C enables students to think with others and to think for themselves.

P4C explores the big ideas and issues that arise in all areas of education and life experience.

P4C creates a Community of Enquiry whose members employ philosophical dialogue and enquiry to think, to speak, to listen, to learn and to live together more effectively.

P4C is an inclusive and adaptable pedagogy that meets the needs of learners and enhances the practice of educators in a wide range of settings from nursery to adult education, from SEND schools to business.

P4C explores philosophical content (in the form of contested questions and concepts) using a philosophical method (which involves talking and thinking in a reasonable way).
What’s the impact of P4C?
"Free School Meal eligible children who took part in P4C, made 4 months’ additional progress in reading, 3 months’ in maths and 2 months’ in writing"

2015 Research
Dr Nadia Siddiqui and Prof Stephen Gorard
Durham University

EEF research into classroom pedagogies that impact learning particularly for disadvantaged pupils has shown that interventions that develop Metacognition and Self-regulation give pupils 7 months additional progress to disadvantaged children’s learning.

2022 meta-analysis of research
The Education Endowment Foundation

The same research has shown that pedagogies that develop Oral Language (Communication and Language initiatives in EYFS) add 6 months progress and those that develop Collaborative Learning add 5 months progress to disadvantaged children’s learning.

2022 meta-analysis of research
The Education Endowment Foundation

10-12-year-olds having 16 months of P4C showed significant standardized gains in verbal and also non-verbal and quantitative aspect of reasoning, consistent across intervention schools and gender. The most significant gains were for pupils who started at a lower pre-test ability – these pupils are usually the most socially disadvantaged. The control group did not gain in any aspect.
“The significant pre-post cognitive ability gains in the experimental group in primary school were maintained towards the end of their second year of secondary school ... The control group showed an insignificant but persistent deterioration in scores from pre- to post-test to follow-up.
A recent systematic literature review (Ab Wahab et al. 2022)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reasoning Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creative Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Higher Order Thinking Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating Skills</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free from being labelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Democracy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Civilized Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Culture of Thinking</td>
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<td>5. Safe Environment</td>
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96% of teachers felt that P4C helped pupils to respect others’ opinions

91% of teachers felt that P4C improved pupils’ ability to question and reason

93% of teachers felt that P4C improved pupils’ ability to express views clearly.

2021 Research
Pippa Lord, Afrah Dirie, Kelly Kettlewell and Ben Styles
NFER

“P4C benefits self-esteem, self-confidence, active classroom engagement, enjoyment in learning, critical thinking, creativity, commitment, social-communication skills, social emotional attitudes and motivation to learn.”

Post-intervention comparisons show that pupils who received the P4C intervention were ahead of their counterparts in the comparison schools, and this was generally more so for those pupils living in relative poverty (FSM-eligible).

2021 Research
Dr Nadia Siddiqui and Prof Stephen Gorard
Because of its impact across cognitive and social domains philosophical enquiry develops seven of the top 10 skills for the future:

- Analytical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Resilience, flexibility and agility
- Motivation and self-awareness
- Curiosity and lifelong learning
- Empathy and active listening
- Leadership and social influence

2023 Research
World Economic Forum

Rigid scripts fail to teach the cultural capital of advantaged children: the ability to give excuses, make exceptions, and think for themselves about the importance and application of scripts and rules.

P4C pedagogy enables learners to explore the boundaries and usefulness of their scripts and rules, thereby developing the cultural capital they will need to succeed beyond school.


2021 Research
Joanne W Golann.

Hazel Oak is an all-age special school in Solihull for children with moderate learning difficulties. It supports a wide range of learners with diverse communication and emotional challenges, including autism, ADHD, Down’s syndrome, attachment disorder, and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

“I think P4C is the way forward. It is very empowering for the children. I have seen a massive improvement in speaking and listening skills and the 4Cs of thinking ensure pupils are equipped with real-life skills.”

Key Stage 4 Teacher.

Staff at Hazel Oak report that:

- students are more focused and able to listen to others' views in a respectful way
- P4C has helped pupils to regulate their emotions
- pupils who have previously struggled to voice their opinions and share their thinking feel more able to contribute
- an atmosphere of calm mutual respect has spread to other areas of the curriculum and around school
- P4C language is heard throughout the school
- the modelling of language used during P4C sessions has helped pupils who need a starter or prompt to process and express themselves in other lessons
- teachers have used P4C to engage students with thinking about social skills strategies, discussing questions like ‘What is a friend?’ and ‘Do we have to be friends with everyone?’. P4C has also formed part of Hazel Oak’s restorative justice approach to behaviour management.
We are collaborative, we come up with a big question together. It is not just about the individual's thought power. It helps us to understand others' interpretations. **This is a valuable way of thinking for governments or corporations.** Not just one solid answer, but different interpretations.

- We come up with big thoughts. We are really thinking and being open-minded.

- P4C has been a new way of thinking. **It gets you thinking about the moral and societal implications.**

- P4C is never limited to one answer. It is always open. Even if everyone agrees it still might not be correct. There is always someone somewhere with a different interpretation which you can acknowledge.

- **Thinking critically can help everywhere in life.** You work together to find common ground. P4C gives you confidence.

Feedback from Y10/11 boys interviewed from **Alt Bridge SEND school** about P4C. The boys repeatedly made links with employability during the focus group evaluating the philosophy.
Barbara Priestman Academy is a Secondary Special provision in Sunderland for students aged 11 to 19 who have a diagnosis of ASD and/or complex needs.

The school use P4C to raise the level of challenge and to encourage students to become more active, independent learners.

“Watching our students grow into articulate, resilient young men and women who are able to reflect on their learning and the impact being a member of our school community has had on them, never fails to make me proud. Seeing how they are able to recognise the journey they have been on and sharing their accomplishments with governors, parents and visitors, reinforces our belief that the use of P4C has been invaluable for our students and will enable them to use the transferable skills they have developed in the next stage of their lives.”
Our website
www.sapere.org.uk

Our socials
https://www.facebook.com/SAPEREP4C/
https://twitter.com/SAPERE_P4C

Our colleagues
Contact Grace Lockrobin, Director of Philosophy & Education  gracelockrobin@sapere.org.uk
or
Emma Swinn MBE Director of Operations & Development  emmaswinn@sapere.org.uk