
THE PATCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PHILOSOPHY

Rationale:

Philosophy is an exciting subject that encourages students to ask questions, listen carefully, evaluate reasons, uncover assumptions, clarify ideas and concepts, make judgements and draw inferences.

Philosophical inquiry is primarily concerned with the search for meaning through activities that help us to develop a framework in which questions of how we think and know are considered alongside equally fundamental questions of how we ought to treat one another and the world itself.

The practice of philosophy in schools is implemented through the community of inquiry where both abstract (conceptual) and concrete thinking are explored. Although it is ideal to form communities of inquiry across all disciplines and subject areas, when it comes to teaching children to be inquirers the discipline of philosophy has a special role to play.

Philosophy commits us to persistent and disciplined thinking with social, ethical, aesthetic, affective and political components. Philosophy is not so much concerned with final answers as it is with coming up with and exploring better questions and tentative answers.

Aims:

To develop the following capabilities:

- Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas
- Generating ideas, possibilities and actions
- Reflecting on thinking and processes
- Analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning
- Understanding ethical concepts and issues
- Reasoning in decision making and actions
- Exploring values, rights and responsibilities
- Evaluating and giving reasons for opinions
- Recognising and assessing value judgements
- Developing problem-solving strategies
- Predicting outcomes
- Articulating own views
- Seeing what is relevant in a given context
- Thinking imaginatively
- Distinguishing between should and faulty reasoning, fact and opinion
- Defining terms, justifying statements and beliefs, basing assumptions on evidence
- Reading and listening intently
- Wondering, inquiring, speculating, criticising, hypothesising and drawing inferences

To build ‘communities of inquiry’ where students are able to:

- communicate effectively with one another
- value one another as individuals with interesting and diverse ideas
- consider and develop multiple perspectives
- criticise, modify and challenge ideas via classroom interaction
- negotiate and resolve conflict
- challenge stereotypes and prejudices
- mediate cultural differences
- accept responsibility for their own views

- value the process of inquiry

Implementation:

- The teaching of Philosophy in the classroom will be run on a weekly 'rotations timetable' by a specialist teacher.
- Teachers are encouraged to undertake appropriate training courses before implementing the program in the classroom.
- Philosophy, based on the manual, should be taken weekly.
- Parents trained in the program may participate to maintain small discussion groups.

Thinking Curriculum

Rationale:

In the Victorian Curriculum, students develop capability in critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts and ideas, seek possibilities, consider alternatives and solve problems. Critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require students to think broadly and deeply using skills, behaviours and dispositions such as reason, logic, resourcefulness, imagination and innovation in all learning areas at school and in their lives beyond school.

Aims:

- For students to develop within themselves, the abilities to think effectively and to make positive choices based upon sound thinking practices.

Implementation:

- Thinking is an essential learning that needs to be taught, practised and developed.
- Thinking is demonstrated by the choices we make, and involves the thought processes used to arrive at those choices.
- Our school curriculum will be developed in accordance with the Critical and Creative Thinking Learning continuum and will be organised into four interrelated elements, each detailing differing aspects of thinking. The elements are not a taxonomy of thinking. Rather, each makes its own contribution to learning and needs to be explicitly and simultaneously developed.
 - Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas
 - Generating ideas, possibilities and actions
 - Reflecting on thinking and processes
 - Analysing, synthesising and evaluating reasoning and procedures
- All students at our school will have the opportunity to develop the skills to think systematically, to reason, to think laterally and creatively, to think caringly and ethically, and to think reflectively.
- The development of thinking skills will be interwoven into all curriculum areas with students being active participants in their own learning.
- Learning activities will be characteristically open-ended and will employ quality thinking tools and strategies.
- Students will accept greater responsibility for their learning goals and progress by critically reflecting on their progress to date, by increasing participation in the development of their own individual learning plans.
- Students will be active contributors to their own half-year and end of year academic reports, which may include: self-evaluations and reflections on their personal learning goals.
- All staff will be encouraged and supported to undertake professional development related to the teaching of thinking skills.

Thinking Process

Rationale:

Our world and the world of the future demand that all students are supported to become effective and skilful thinkers. Thinking validates existing knowledge and enables individuals to create new knowledge and to build ideas and make connections between them.

It entails reasoning and inquiry together with processing and evaluating information. It enables the exploration of perceptions and possibilities. It also involves the capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate one's own thinking, and refine and transform ideas and beliefs.

Aims:

The study of Thinking Processes aims to:-

- develop students' thinking to a qualitatively higher level, to the development of higher-order processes required for creative problem solving, decision making and conceptualising.
- develop the capacity for metacognition – the capacity to reflect on and manage their own thinking.

Implementation:

- Our school seeks to develop a culture that values and promotes thinking; where students are provided with thinking skills and tools, time to think, to reflect, and engage in sustained discussion, deliberation and inquiry. Where students are provided with and seek challenging tasks which stimulate, encourage and support skilful and effective thinking.
- All students at our school will study a sequential Thinking Processes program which will be embedded in all subject areas and taught by teachers throughout the school.
- The Thinking Processes program will be based upon the learning standards contained within the Victorian Curriculum.
- Learning activities will be characteristically open-ended and will employ a range of quality thinking strategies and tools.
- A student's individual abilities must be measured at the commencement of each unit of work, and learning opportunities must be provided that cater for the identified needs of each student.

Evaluation:

This policy was originally formed, and will be reviewed in consultation with all members of the wider community (all staff, parents, students, and interested members of the community) as part of the school's five - year review cycle.

References: <http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/about>

Principal



School Council President

