

Malaisie : la philosophie pour enfants en Malaisie

Hashim Rosnani, professor at the Centre for Philosophical Inquiry in Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, rosnani@iiu.edu.my

It is only last year, 2006, that I was able to set up a Centre for Philosophical Inquiry in Education, with the consent of the university, in the Institute of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur.

Although you may observe that we have quite a number of teachers training workshops, it is unfortunate that those teachers have not been able to practice the programme in school, because it is considered as additional and the school does not have the time for it.

In term of instructional materials, we do use selection from M Lipman's novels. Before 2003, I have translated Pixie and Elfie for use in the schools during the experimental stage. In the translation, I only translated the children's names, the food and festivals eg. Thanksgiving or Halloween to Malaysian names and terms. We don't find much things that are really offensive to the culture, especially in the moral aspect. The teacher guide was not translated. We only translate those that we need to use with the children as exercises. We hope to create new resources such as our own stories and activities materials in the future that is more common to our culture, for example there is a story on dating in Lisa that is offensive in the Muslim culture. However there was a shift in the language policy in the country towards English and thus, I have been using Lipman's novel in English since then. I find that the children like Pixie, Elfie and Nous, also acted parts of the novels. We have used the Community of Inquiry method and have not attempted a different method.

Our activities are entirely located outside of the formal school curriculum. We have been trying hard to "talk" to the Ministry of Education but so far we have not been successful. For your information, philosophy is not taught as a school subject in both primary and secondary schools. What's worse is that it is also not taught in Universities as a field of study. It is taught as philosophy of education, science etc., but there is no Department of philosophy. It is for this reason that I have not used the Philosophy for Children in the Centre's name. For the research and my attendance of P4C Programme in Mendham in 2001, I was funded by my university research grant. In all the other activities, we either require the children or the school to pay a nominal fees as honorarium to our teachers. The university has been kind to allow us to use its premises.

In addition to the above, I have close collaboration with a colleague in Singapore: Prof Ho Wah Kam, of the Singapore Teachers' Union, who is also into this Program. In fact, he is already training the teachers in collaboration with the Australian group".

CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY IN EDUCATION (CPIE)

Institute of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia.

The Institute has obtained consent from the IIUM Executive Management Board for the establishment of the Centre for Philosophical Inquiry in Education (Deputy Rector Academic letter ref. IIUM/103/14/12 dated 25 January 2006). Prior to that, Prof Rosnani Hashim has also gained approval to set a Centre for Philosophy for Children in Malaysia which is affiliated to the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), Montclair State University (letter dated February 19, 2005).

Vision of the Centre

To revive the spirit of philosophical inquiry and intellectual tradition as called upon by the Qur'an [within the parameter of the Islamic Worldview].

Mission statement (Goal)

To become an excellent centre for the development and practice of philosophy education with the end of producing individuals capable of making good judgement,

Objectives of the Centre

The Centre aims to promote philosophy education and to provide an opportunity for individuals (participants):

- 1) To understand and appreciate Islamic thought, in particular Islamic educational thought.
- 2) To understand and appreciate philosophy and its 'use', and how it relates to Truth, Knowledge, Values and Wisdom.
- 3) To think logically, critically and wisely so that they will make good judgement.
- 4) To deliberate over moral issues rationally.
- 5) To experience 'doing' philosophy and being in the Community of Inquiry, that will foster the growth of shura or democratic processes.
- 6) To develop ethical understanding, creativity, personal and interpersonal growth and to find meaning in experience.
- 8) To better appreciate the Holy Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Universe.

Services to be provided by the Centre. The Centre offers the following services :

- 1) Training for students in the universities and in the schools in philosophical inquiry, the community of inquiry and the democratic processes.
- 2) Training for university educators and teachers in philosophical inquiry, the community of inquiry and the democratic processes.

- 3) Collaboration with schools, the Ministry of Education and other educational institutions in implementing the Philosophy in School Program.
- 4) Training for interested public citizens or employees of organizations in philosophical inquiry, the community of inquiry and the democratic processes.
- 5) Modules on Islamic philosophy in education, educational thought and curriculum.
- 6) Research on philosophical inquiry in education, Islamic educational thoughts and other related subjects.
- 7) Publication of indigenous instructional materials.
- 8) Organizing local and international seminars for enhancement and exchange of ideas on the subject.
- 9) Certificate courses on (a) Philosophy for Schools and (b) Philosophical inquiry for the Public.

Organizational structure

Organizationally, the CPIE is headed by an Associate Director appointed from among academic staff with the relevant professional training. The Associate Director of CPIE should report to the

Director of INSTEAD.

Human Resource

Trainers or instructors for CPIE programs and services will be gathered from among academic staff of INSTED, and trainers who have been trained previously based on the needs.

Centre for Philosophical Inquiry in Education

Past Activities 2002 - 2007

School Programme

1. Experimental Programme in Primary Schools - Sek Ren Puteri Seremban, Sek Ren Islam Al-Huda, Gombak, Sek Keb Pulau Sebang, Melaka, and Sek Ren Tunku Besar, Tampin 2002-2003.
2. After School Programme in Sek Berasrama Penuh Integrasi Secondary School in Sg Pusu for Form Three, February - May 2005

Holiday Camps for children of the International Islamic University Malaysia staff

1. School Holiday Camp for Primary Group in December 2003 (2 groups)
2. School Holiday Camps for Primary and Secondary Groups in December 2004 (2 groups)

3. School Holiday Camps for Primary and Secondary Groups in December 2005 (4 groups)

Teacher Training

1. Training Primary teachers for Philosophy for Children (P4C) Programme Seremban Hilton, October 2002.
2. Training Primary teachers of Sek Rendah Islam Alor Setar, Sg Bakap and Pendang, Training teachers/trainers for P4C in December 2004, Institute of Education
3. Training Primary teachers of Tampin District in Sek Keb Tampin, April 2005
4. Training teachers/trainers for P4C in March 2006, Institute of Education
5. Training Primary teachers of Sek Rendah Islam Sg Ramal, Kajang, April 2006.
6. Philosophy for teachers Introductory Workshop by Janette Poulton, 24th February 2007.

IAPC-Mendham Course

Two PhD students attended the May Session of the Mendham Seminar in 2005. One of them was given scholarship for tuition and lodging.

Research

- 1) Three different studies on P4C in elementary and secondary schools 2002-2003. Effects of P4C on the reading and reasoning skills of average and high achievers in Malaysian Primary schools.
- 2) Ph.D. Research: Critical Thinking and Reading Skills: A Comparative Study of The Readers' Response and Philosophy for Children Approaches - Sr Moomala Othman (January 2005).
- 3) Form three students' views of the After school Philosophy for Children Programme (June 2006).
- 4) Ph D Research: Philosophy for critical thinking among International Islamic University Malaysia students (ongoing)

Presented papers:

- 1) Moomala Othman and Rosnani Hashim, "Critical thinking through English lessons: Readers' Response and Philosophy for Children Approaches." Paper presented at the 8th English for South East Asia Conference, University Malaya, 8-10 December 2003, 25pp
- 2) Moomala Othman & Rosnani Hashim. "Critical Thinking and Reading Skills : A comparative Study of the Reader Response and the Philosophy for Children Approaches". Paper presented at the National Seminar on Thinking, organized by Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris at UiTM Resort, Shah Alam, 20-22 March 2004

3) "Pengembangan daya berfikir dengan penggunaan Pendekatan "Falsafah untuk Kanak-Kanak": Dua kajian kes di sekolah rendah." Paper presented at the National Seminar on Thinking, organized by University Perguruan Sultan Idris at UiTM Resort, Shah Alam, March 20-22, 2004

4) "Philosophy for Children: Its Effects on the Reading and Reasoning Skills of Average and High Achievers in a Malaysian Primary School", Paper presented in the 12th Learning Conference at the Universidad de Granada, Spain, July 10-13, 2005.

5) "Philosophy in Schools in the Malaysia Context," in the Philosophy in Schools: Developing a Community of Inquiry organized by Singapore Teachers Union, at Suntec Convention Centre Singapore, April 17-18, 2006.

6) "Philosophy enriched English Programmes," in the MICELT Conference, Melaka, Malaysia, May 8-10, 2006.

Translations: translation of two novels: Pixie and Elfie, for use in the schools 2002 - 2003.