

OVERVIEW

Philosophy is the discipline that prepares students to think in the disciplines. Using the curriculum prepared by the *Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children*, students are introduced to Harry Stottlemeier and his friends who, just by living their everyday lives, begin to search for and discover more effective ways of thinking. By observing the situations in which Harry and his friends find themselves, the students use basic reasoning tools -- the techniques of critical thinking, and both formal and informal logic -- to analyze the predicaments of everyday life. Students work as a group in learning how to object to weak reasoning, build on strong reasoning, accept the responsibility for making their contribution within the context of others' remarks, follow the inquiry where it leads, respect the perspective of others, and collaboratively engage in self-correction. They come to care for each other as persons and for the procedures that they use to inquire. They come to take pride in the accomplishments of the group, as well as in themselves as persons.

GOAL

The goal of this course is to cultivate students' ability to think well for themselves about matters of importance by engaging in philosophical dialogue within the context of a classroom community of inquiry. Such a community concerns itself with

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

- K-2 *Elfie* concentrates on the making of distinctions, connections, and comparisons within the context of a variety of broad philosophical issues.
- Gr. 3-4 *Pixie* concentrates on analogical-reasoning skills and philosophy of language.
- Kio and Gus* emphasizes practice in a variety of reasoning skills that prepare students to investigate nature.
- Gr. 5-7 *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* presents basic reasoning tools-- the techniques of critical thinking, the formal and informal logic which children in later grades will be able to apply to more specific problems in science, social studies and language arts.
- Gr. 7-8 *Lisa* focuses on ethical inquiry.**
- Gr. 9-10 *Suki* focuses on aesthetic inquiry.
- Gr. 11-12 *Mark* focuses on social and political inquiry.

Program Goals

- I. Students will engage in a community of inquiry which is focused on the development of good critical and creative thinking and the cultivation of good judgment.
- II. Students will become better thinkers through a conscious planning for thinking.
- III. Students will practice higher level thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).
- IV. Students will practice divergent thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration).
- V. Students will use thinking strategies consciously to solve problems.

Content Objectives

1. Students will examine:
 - a. what criteria are and how they function;
 - b. the significance of assumptions;
 - c. the process of reasoning;
 - d. the giving of good reasons;
 - e. how to use language reflectively;
 - f. the moral character of situations;
 - g. the relative importance of and proportion between parts and wholes;
 - h. the opinions of other people;
 - i. the interests of the community in which one finds oneself;
 - j. the need to weigh consequences;
 - k. the importance of neither overestimating or underestimating the role of the self in the context of a moral situation;
 - l. the importance of sizing up other people's and one's own intentions;
 - m. the anticipation of possible harm as the result of one's action.
2. Students will explore and implement traditional, Aristotelian, logic as it leads up to and focuses on the syllogism.
3. Students will analyze critical thinking skills.

Oakwood Junior High Critical Thinking Course of Study
Initiated 2002-2003 School Year

Performance Objectives

1. Students will work as a group in exploring ways to see themselves as active participants in the discovery, analysis, and justification of claims to knowledge.
2. Students will contribute to a structured process of inquiry.
3. Students will assess perspectives using multiple choice, rank order, and Likert-scale evaluation instruments.
4. Students will critique the reasoning of themselves and others.