

Listening philosophically: Developing an ear for emergent philosophising

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Abstract

Emergent philosophising is the spontaneous, tentative philosophical thinking and questioning of young children. Those who work with young children can, with practice, develop an ear for their emergent philosophising. I call this 'listening philosophically'. In this article I report on a qualitative study of preschool education students at the University of Crete as they learn the art of listening philosophically.

Key words

emergent philosophising, listening philosophically, P4C, preschool education

Introduction

Emergent philosophising is the spontaneous, tentative philosophical thinking and questioning of young children. Those who work with young children can, with practice, develop an ear for their emergent philosophising. I call this 'listening philosophically'.

Philosophy for children has often been identified through models such as incorporating philosophy into school subjects, scheduling dedicated Philosophy for Children (P4C) sessions, adding philosophy to the list of subjects in the curriculum, and scheduling sessions dedicated to developing thinking skills in which philosophical inquiry takes the lead (Lewis & Sutcliffe 2017). However, these models omit the philosophical moments that occur spontaneously in the classroom and come directly from children. These moments have been little studied because they are often ignored, as there is no official term for them. Furthermore, teachers are not properly trained to recognise them (Nikolidaki 2018).

In this article I report on a qualitative study of preschool education students at the University of Crete as they learn the art of listening philosophically. The research shows (i) that there is emergent philosophising that occurs in children, and (ii) that it is valuable for preschool education students to recognise emergent philosophising

when it occurs, as it helps them become more aware of children's thinking and more child-centred when they design their teaching.

Emergent philosophising and listening philosophically

Emergent philosophising is a new term for those philosophical moments that naturally occur in the musings, conversations and interactions of young children (Nikolidaki 2022). It is grounded in philosophies that explore the process of thinking as (i) emergence, (ii) doing in the Deweyan sense, and (iii) questioning as a way of life (Theodoropoulou & Nikolidaki 2017). According to Deleuze (1964), thinking is a creation, and there is no other creation that exists beyond it. Therefore, emergence is related to philosophy as a creative and passionate force that makes us think and is not already there to be discovered. Dewey would probably call emergence 'experience' and emphasise its uniqueness, its sense of completeness, and its ability to unify our emotions (Jackson 1998, p. 7). At the first stage, children spontaneously express philosophical thoughts or questions; at the second stage, adults work to identify and clarify the children's emergent philosophical activity (Nikolidaki 2022; Theodoropoulou & Nikolidaki 2017); and at the third stage, children are encouraged to further explore their thoughts and questions and engage in conceptual analysis as relevant to their lives (Hand 2009). Emergent philosophising is not contradictory to P4C, but complementary to it.

Emergent philosophising encourages focusing not only on life experiences as 'what is' but also on 'what has been', reflecting on children's experiences that either go unnoticed or are underestimated, and turning them into a genuine educative experience (Dewey 1965, 2005; Nikolidaki 2011). Emergent philosophising is thus related to philosophy as a way of life, not simply a theory but 'a unitary act, which consists in living logic, physics, and ethics' (Hadot 1995, p. 267). Children, as emergent philosophers, are in a constant state of becoming without rigidly adhering to fixed ideas (Gregory 2009; Hadot 1995; Nikolidaki 2011).

Emergent philosophising assumes that children's lives and experiences are important and celebrates child-centred education, based primarily on the pedagogies of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Dewey. A child-centred approach to pedagogy, in contrast to a conventional didactic method, emphasises the child's autonomy and ability to construct knowledge rather than knowledge being something taught by the teacher as authority (Tzuo et al. 2011). According to child-centred pedagogy, children learn better through action and play when their needs and interests are met (Chung

& Walsh 2000; Essa 1999). Child-centred education, therefore, provides a safe environment for children to philosophise and ensures that their opinions are heard.

What emergent philosophising requires from the educator is attentive listening. In order to recognise the children's philosophical moments, it is necessary to listen to them. According to Fiumara (1995), listening is thinking because it requires the active participation of the listener by concentrating, thinking, creating meaning from what is said, and connecting it to the ideas and beliefs they already have (Fiumara 1995, pp. 29-30). Listening is not just hearing sounds: it involves a process of understanding those sounds and creating meaning. Understanding listening as thinking, as Fiumara suggests, means that there is no clear separation between the two. People listen to others and to themselves and reflect on what they hear at the same time, as if it were a 'meeting of minds with different memories and habits' (Zeldin 1998, p. 9). Creative listening with the 'beginner's ear' (Brady 2009) allows the mind to clear itself of other thoughts and focus on what is being said. Lavery interprets this 'cleansing' as naiveté, which provides a new perspective on what children say as if they had never perceived it before (Lavery 2004, p. 196). Naiveté encourages creative listening to what others have to say and allows for thought-provoking follow-up questions (Haynes 2008; Kneller 1965). Children have this type of naiveté as an innate trait (Matthews 1994) that enables them to creatively listen to others.

Listening to children in a philosophical mood means that the teacher is willing to listen with an open mind, looking not only for what might be philosophically interesting but also understanding the children's different ways of thinking and how those ways of thinking might enrich the content and methods of philosophy (Haynes 2008). Selflessness refers to the listener's ability to withhold their own ideas and prioritise listening to others over speaking (Haynes & Murriss 2012). This type of listening fosters both the creation of a 'we' that is more important than an 'I' (Freire 1972) and a pluralistic and caring way of thinking: I care about the other person and what they have to say; I care about understanding their positions, their possible biases, and why they think the way they do (Daniel 2001; Thayer-Bacon 1998; Waksman 1998; Wegerif 2006). This is the point where children's emerging philosophising can be recognised, praised, and further developed by the teachers. Listening philosophically requires certain commitments from teachers, such as living an examined life themselves and viewing philosophy as their general theory of education (Makaiau & Miller 2012).

So far, I have referred mainly to the creative and emotional dimensions of listening. However, the process of listening also involves a critical dimension (critical listening), the task of which is to examine and correct the arguments used in a discussion (Garrison 1997). Critical listening is attentive listening that aims to gain a deeper understanding of what is being said through processes of reviewing, exploring, clarifying, hypothesising and inferring information (Robin 2004; Whalley 1993). Critical listening allows for gaining information about children's prior knowledge, their assumptions and presumptions about their thinking, their cognitive errors, and the way they understand others and their world (Rinaldi 2006). Listening attentively to children allows for the formulation of questions, both by teachers and by the children themselves, that lead to communication and building on each other's thoughts and ideas (Daniel et al. 2005; Splitter & Sharp 1995).

Research design

I report here on the first phase of an ongoing research project that began in 2021 and is expected to be completed in 2024. The research focuses on why and how philosophising with children might be embedded in the studies of preschool education students and particularly in their practice at schools.

As part of the BA program at the Faculty of Preschool Education of the University of Crete, students are required to complete an internship in local kindergartens. The internship is divided into two stages. In the first stage, students are divided into groups and observe the teaching process in kindergartens and the different ways children learn. In the second stage, students develop and implement their lesson plans in kindergartens. The research conducted in 2021–2022 with Level 1 students focused on how to observe and identify philosophical moments in the classroom, while the research taking place in 2022–2024 with Level 2 and 3 students focuses on how to incorporate philosophising into their classroom practice. Here I present some of the findings from the first year of research with the students. To avoid misunderstanding, I use the term 'students' to refer to BA students on the preschool education programme, and the terms 'children' and 'teachers' to refer to kindergarten children and their teachers.

The reason for conducting this research is to highlight the importance of developing a philosophical ear and identifying philosophical moments that occur in the kindergarten classroom. Students and teachers often lack the attention and flexibility to listen to children's ideas from a philosophical perspective, to highlight children's questions, and to include them in their teaching or begin their teaching from there

(child-centred education). The children's comments are often philosophically fruitful and provide food for thought that can lead to philosophical dialogues that matter, but are usually ignored as a side effect of the students' desire to teach the children as much as possible.

The research questions for the first phase of the study are as follows:

- Can students identify the philosophical moments that occur or could have potentially occurred among children in the classroom?
- Does the students' training in identifying philosophical moments and the laboratory university classes help them identify potential philosophical activity among children in the classroom?
- What are the students' reflections? Do they consider useful and/or meaningful the ability to listen philosophically to children?

The participants in the study were 125 Level 1 BA students completing internships in public kindergartens in Rethymno, Crete. The internships involved students observing children during play and instruction for the whole semester. This is a common practice at the kindergartens in Rethymno and children are used to having students observe them in the classrooms. The students wrote down comments, questions and dialogues among children each time they identified children's comments that were or could have been philosophically interesting. If the children asked why the students were writing down their words, the students explained that they did not want to miss such wonderful thoughts.

Qualitative data, in the form of students' written records and my own observational fieldnotes, was collected in three contexts: (1) in laboratory lessons to prepare students for the internships; (2) in the kindergartens where the students carried out their observations; and (3) in laboratory lessons to facilitate students' reflection on what they observed.

The preparatory phase consisted of four laboratory lessons before the students began their observations in the kindergartens. The students were already familiar with the method of observation and keeping a research diary, so the preparatory phase focused on familiarising students with the concepts of emergent philosophising, philosophising with children, and listening attentively to children. Students were introduced to Lipman's theory and the four Cs of philosophical thinking (critical,

creative, caring and collaborative), to P4C practices around the world (Lipman 1988, 2003), and to philosophical question recognition (Cam 2020).

Additionally, the students were confronted with various real-life incidents among children, mainly from my own experience as a philosopher and a preschool teacher. I shared with students examples of children's philosophising from my own time in the preschool classroom. The students were asked to study these examples and: (i) point out what was (or could have been) philosophical, (ii) analyse the children's dialogues and arguments, (iii) think of questions that would have allowed the children to deepen their thinking philosophically, (iv) think of further questions and follow-up activities to provoke philosophising, and (v) reflect on the role of the teacher.

Student observations in the kindergartens took place once a week for 12 weeks. During their observations, the students kept a log in which they recorded anything that might be philosophically interesting. The students were allowed to talk to the children in the kindergartens, and in some cases, they were able to intervene and ask the children questions to further their thinking. If, for example, during their observations at recess or when the children were playing on their own, the students felt that they heard something that was or could potentially be philosophical, they were allowed to ask further questions and engage in dialogue with the children. However, they were not allowed to interrupt when the classroom teacher was conducting organised activities.

The students were encouraged to reflect on their classroom experiences in laboratory lessons held once a week for 12 weeks in parallel with their time in the kindergartens. During these lessons, some of the incidents among children in kindergarten, as observed by the students, were discussed and analysed. In addition, students received feedback on how to more effectively keep their research log, and reflected on their interventions or non-interventions during their observations.

Findings: Preparatory phase

In the preparation lessons ahead of the internships, students identified, as examples of emergent philosophising, children's expressions of awe and wonder, of their worldviews, and of their sense of right and wrong. Students' recognition of philosophical thinking was based on children's critical thinking (reasoning, making judgements, giving examples and counterexamples, giving definitions and clarifications), caring thinking (being aware of their emotions, taking care not to

insult others with their contributions), and creative thinking (asking questions, generating new ideas, using words metaphorically) (Nikolidaki 2011). Students also reflected on their own metacognitive thinking concerning the ideas that were generated by children's thinking, and on their future roles as teachers.

One of the examples I shared with the students from my own preschool teaching experience was a dialogue I had with a 4-year-old child named Tasos.

How long is the soon? I have the clock in me

Second day at school. Tasos is a toddler. Dad brings Tasos to school, hugs him and is ready to go. Tasos seems uncomfortable with the thought of being left alone. He looks around anxiously. His father says that he is old now, and Tasos does not want to disappoint his father, but he forces himself. He asks for a hug. He gets a second hug and then a third. The father walks away. The little boy looks after the father, who leaves, not wanting to enter the classroom. Tasos announces, 'I am going to sit here and wait'. The following dialogue takes place.

Sofia: But if you stay here, we will not see you. We cannot be outside and inside at the same time.

Tasos: I will take care of the yard. I will stay there. [He points to the bench.]

Sofia: You will be alone ...

Tasos: I do not mind at all.

Sofia: Yes ... but it's starting to rain. You are going to get wet.

Tasos: I'll go under the tree.

Sofia: But if it rains a lot?

[Tasos is convinced to stay inside. I encourage him to play with something he likes.]

Tasos: It's not my time to play yet.

Sofia: Well, when it's your time, you can play. If you want something, I'll be around. You can tell me anything you want.

[A few minutes later, Tasos is ready to cry. I walk towards him.]

Sofia: You do not seem to be very happy.

[Before I can finish my sentence, Tasos starts crying softly.]

Tasos: My dad ... he's coming soon, isn't he? [He tries to convince himself.]

Sofia: Yes, of course! He will come soon!

[With an even bigger shout, Tasos continues.]

Tasos: How long is the soon?

Sofia: Do you know how to read the time? [I show him my watch and get ready to explain to him how the hands of a watch work.]

Tasos: I have the clock inside me!

The students were asked to listen carefully to the above dialogue and identify concepts, questions and key phrase and consider how they might be used philosophically. In their discussions, they focused on three sentences in particular: 'It's not my time to play yet', 'How long is the soon?' and 'I have the clock inside me!'. They highlighted important concepts that might arise, such as time and its subjective perception, adjustment to a new environment, and separation from parents. The following questions were identified as worthy of exploration:

- When is it time to play? Is there a right time to play?
- What does it mean to have the clock inside me?
- How long does 'soon' last?
- How does 'soon' vary from person to person?
- How differently do children experience 'soon'?
- What does 'soon' mean to a child and what does it mean to an adult?
- What is it like to be five years old and to be in an environment for the first time where you do not know someone very well?

The students also analysed the arguments given by the teacher and child to support their respective positions, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' analysis of 'How long is the soon' dialogue

Teacher's arguments	Students' analysis of teacher's arguments	Child's arguments	Students' analysis of child's arguments
But if you stay here, we will not see you.	Hypothesis based on logical and empirical evidence (difficulty in supervising a child outside).		
We cannot be outside and inside at the same time.	Statement of mutual exclusion.	I will take care of the yard. I will stay there.	Statement about the assumption of a function and the place of work.
You will be alone.	Appeal to emotion.	I do not mind at all.	Rebuttal of teacher's statement.
Yes ... but it's starting to rain. You are going to get wet.	Appeal to empirical evidence.	I'll go under the tree.	Report on dealing with potential difficulties.
But if it rains a lot?	Hypothetical situation that causes the child to change his mind.		
The child is encouraged to play with something he likes.		It's not my time to play yet.	Indication that there is a specific time to play or that the child is simply not yet in the mood.
Well, when it's your time, you can play.	Acceptance of the child's suggestion.		

The students also generated ideas about possible activities based on the dialogue. For example, they created activities asking children to think about and report instances when time flies (e.g. when playing at recess or having fun at a party) and instances when time passes terribly slowly (e.g. when they're bored or sick). Creative attempts to time 'soon' were also discussed.

In the kindergartens

The students' observations in the kindergartens revealed many moments from the children's everyday lives that were or could be treated philosophically. Students wrote down the questions or dialogues that took place. They identified concepts

emerging from the children's statements and dialogues that seemed particularly deserving of philosophical attention, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Concepts identified by the students in children's dialogues

Concept	Children's questions or statements	Free time or organised activity	Followed up by the class teacher?
Death	Where do we go after death? Will everybody die? Is a dead snail and a dead man dead in the same way?	Organised	No
Friendship	Maria, you can't have both me and Helena as best friends. One of us must be more best friend of you than the other!	Free	No
Existence/ Reality	Do fairies, monsters, TV heroes, Santa Claus really exist? TV shows are all fake, nothing is true.	Organised	No
Time	Tomorrow, I went to the supermarket.	Organised	No
Gender roles	Mike you can't play with that pink car, this is for girls.	Free	Yes
Quarrels	Whose fault is it when we get angry? Why do we fight?	Free	Yes
Sharing	George does not share. He has all the bricks for himself and we can't build our castles.	Free	Yes
Property	This is my slide. We play here, go and play somewhere else.	Free	Yes
Fairness	Who shall be the leader? What is fair and what is not?	Organised/ Free	Yes
Ethics	Is it OK to lie if the other person doesn't know it?	Organised	Yes
Self-identity	A child draws herself with blue eyes and pink hair and she insists that this is how she actually is.	Free	No
Separating	He cries because we go home with our mothers while he attends extended classes. Why do parents get divorced?	Free	No
Bullying	You can't play with us – you act like a baby!	Free	Yes

The children's philosophising was evident in organised activities in the form of comments or questions to the teacher or during free play. According to the students' observations, most of the actions were related to situations where there was an argument or a problem that disturbed the smooth running of the activity and needed further regulation. Students mentioned that the teacher usually intervened in the resolution of a problem without involving the children in a philosophical inquiry. Students also mentioned that there were so many instances where the children could have discussed issues instead of simply following directions (e.g. separating children who were arguing and having each play in a different learning centre). Students pointed out that many opportunities for philosophising with children were missed or went unnoticed, especially during children's free play. There was not much philosophising during organised activities. Here are the reports of two students as written in their final assessment:

I never realised there was so much philosophy in children's quarrels! So many philosophical ideas emerged out of nowhere! Who is deserving of additional bricks? What exactly is an equal share? Are there toys for girls only? When you learn to listen philosophically, you can nearly always find philosophy in everything. Why do teachers miss out on so many opportunities to philosophise with children?

Listening philosophically can drive you crazy as there are so many things to consider and reflect upon. No matter how tough it is to consider everything as a teacher, being able to listen deeply makes you realise that you are more than just a teacher who provides a lesson plan. Your teaching matters—to you and to your students. You get meaning out of it!

Students' post-observation reflections

One focus of the students' reflections in the laboratory lessons was the following observed dialogue, involving the class teacher and three children—Nick, Maria and George.

Are you really a baby?

It is lunchtime. The children are talking instead of eating their food. George tells the other children to stop talking and eat, and insults Nick, so they begin to argue. Maria, another child, calms them down. The dialogue goes as follows:

George: Children, stop talking! Eat your food in peace.

Nick: We want to talk, what's wrong with you?

George: Yes, but it takes longer and we do not have much time to play afterwards.

Nick: We will talk and eat at the same time. Mind your own business!

George: When we eat, we do not talk, didn't your mother teach you that, little baby?

Nick: You are the little baby!

George: I am older than you!

Nick: And fatter!

George: I am not fat! I did not speak badly to you. I am going to tell the teacher.

Nick: Go and tell her! She will agree that you are fat! A fat potato.

George: [Shouting] Stop that. Say sorry now. Baby, baby, baby!

Maria: Guys, can you stop? You are both acting like babies. You both need to apologise.

George: Why should I apologise? He called me fat. I just said we have to eat without talking.

Maria: Yeah, but you called him a baby and you know he doesn't like that. George, if someone calls you fat, it doesn't mean you are really fat, and Nick, if someone calls you a baby, are you really a baby?

Nick: He says I am a baby to show off, and everyone thinks he's smarter and better than me.

Maria: Who says the older you are, the smarter you are? Someone can be young and still behave well. You called him fat because you wanted to make him sad too. That is not right.

Teacher: That's great Maria! You are absolutely right. We should not be offended when someone says something to us and we should not offend them on purpose.

The students agreed that this particular incident was a case of emergent philosophising and a perfect impetus for a plenary philosophical inquiry. They offered several reasons for this. First, some of the questions asked by the children were philosophical in their own right, such as 'If someone calls you a baby, are you really a baby?' Second, the dialogue raises questions of right and wrong that are common, central and contestable and can be discussed philosophically (Splitter & Sharp 1995). Third, questions like 'Is it wrong to call people names?' can be used to explore such matters as the consequences of an action, different action types, and the motives and characters of agents (Brighouse 2009). Fourth, there are already arguments formulated in the dialogue that can be highlighted and on which the other children can build. And fifth, the children seem to have many presuppositions in their thinking that needed to be further challenged as they affect children's behaviours and dispositions.

The students noted that Maria had a very philosophical attitude, as she is the one asking questions of the type, 'If A calls you B, are you really B?' and making sophisticated arguments for a child of her age.

The students identified a number of philosophically fruitful concepts in the dialogue and suggested questions that might be used to explore them further, as set out on Table 3.

Table 3: Concepts and questions derived from the ‘Are you really a baby’ dialogue

Concept	Questions	Students’ reflections
Right/wrong Good/bad	Is calling names right or wrong? Why? What makes something right or wrong? Is talking and eating at the same time bad? Why? Are there rules regarding how we eat? Is it ever right to make someone sad?	Question 3 could be philosophical because it is easy to argue for and against it. For example, it is not safe to talk and eat simultaneously since you may choke. Or you could add that having a table discussion is enjoyable as long as you take care and chew gently. I’m not sure if that’s a philosophical question... but isn’t it philosophical that you have to think about and decide which questions are philosophical and which aren’t?
Calling people names Bullying	Is it bad if someone calls you a baby or a fat potato? Why? If someone calls you a baby, are you really a baby?	I was struck by Maria’s question. Are we truly what others think of us? Isn’t this philosophical? I believe the child expressed it better than I could.
Aging Being smart Showing off	Who said that the older you get the smarter you are? What does it mean to be a baby? What makes someone a baby? Are you smart if you show off? What does ‘show off’ mean?	It’s a fascinating question (what does it mean to be a baby). It appears to be a philosophical question, but I’m not sure. Babies can’t respond since they do not speak, and as they grow older, they forget what it was like to be a baby. Science does not have empirical data and philosophy... makes assumptions only. I am confused.
Apologies	Should we apologise? When? Why?	I’m not sure if this is a philosophical or psychological question. I think apologising is linked to other concepts such as forgiveness and care. They all, belong to ethical philosophy and may answer the question of how we should live.

The students also attempted to identify the arguments used by the children. They found evidence of arguments invoking the consequences of actions, justifications for behaviour, appeals to authority and categorical norms. They drew attention to cases of argument and counter-argument, of reasoned disagreement and of false generalisation. Here is an extract from the students’ discussion of the dialogue:

S1: Name calling wouldn't be a subject that traditional philosophy would continue to deal with, I think. It seems trivial and superficial. But for children it's important, it's part of their everyday life, it's important to them, and it shouldn't be left out.

S2: Yes, I agree. Bullying also ... is that a philosophical concept? I can't think of any positive reasons for bullying. But bullies may think they're stronger and superior to others. So they have reasons for it. It's mainly a practical problem, but it's also a philosophical problem of why people think the way they do.

S3: I still can't see how this process ... I mean, if we find out what might be philosophical in the children's thinking, how do we develop as teachers?

Me: What do the others think?

S4: Come on! It helps us observe kids better and become more profound. It gives meaning to the lessons! You don't just teach a subject! You teach kids. You see how they think.

S3: Yes, I can see that but isn't it time consuming and so confusing?

Discussion

The observations of the students in the kindergartens have shown that they can learn how to listen attentively to the children and to recognise the children's emerging philosophical moments. What is more important is that this study allows the examination of students' experiences and comprehension of philosophical listening. Children's emergent philosophising is real. It is there. It happens no matter if it is recognised as philosophical or not. What is necessary is a philosophical ear to listen and allow more children's philosophising to take place. Students were often amazed at the children's thinking and the opportunities for philosophising that can occur in the classroom. The students' surprise demonstrates that they did not anticipate children making intellectually fruitful comments and queries. This could be due to a hidden assumption that young children cannot philosophise, or to a didactic conception of education according to which children are the ones who learn and teachers are the ones who know. As seen in Table 2, abstract philosophical concepts emerged in the children's questions and comments, such as the concept of death and whether death feels different to a human or a snail, the different aspects of existence and reality, and the meaning of friendship. Abstract philosophical concepts link well

to children's everyday questions, demonstrating that philosophising is an applied form of philosophy in school that reflects children's ways of living and learning rather than an isolated activity aimed at teaching philosophy at university (Lipman 2003; Matthews 1980).

As also indicated in Table 2, classroom teachers often interfere to address conflicts that arise during children's free play rather than engaging in dialogue with children and listening to their points of view. When children play freely on their own, teachers tend not to listen, as though this time is exclusively for teachers to rest or prepare for the next structured activity. Instead, students found that this time period was really productive to listen and gain a deeper grasp of the children's hobbies, needs or ideas about life. Students also reported that teachers frequently speak without listening or listen solely to what is pertinent to their instruction. Here's an example of a student's reflection:

When a child inquired 'Is it okay to lie if the other person is unaware?' I was overjoyed, since there was a fantastic opportunity for philosophising to occur within an organised activity. The teacher may have highlighted that comment and drawn the attention of other students to it. Instead, the teacher said 'no', and she provided her own rationale and ethical point of view, clearly believing that hers was the only correct one and that this is what children must learn.

Such remarks demonstrate that students recognise potential philosophical opportunities and how they may be overlooked. They also recognise one of the key challenges of listening philosophically to children: how to maintain a constant state of alert listening, including and incorporating potentially philosophical comments and questions into teaching without going insane! Students value such accomplishments because they give significance to teaching and keep it from becoming repetitious, shallow or procedural.

Students participated in the process of philosophical conceptual analysis of the children's dialogues in the laboratory class by searching for arguments and identifying the types of arguments used by the children. They identified the children's false beliefs or thinking errors (e.g. gender stereotypes regarding pink cars, the exclusivity that a best friend should only be one for each person) that can have a negative impact on children's behaviour. However, highlighting and philosophising about children's misconceptions allows children not only to self-correct but also to feel grateful for changing their mind when there are good reasons to do so

(Echeverria 2007). This is a metacognitive skill for children to practise and for students to recognise when it happens (Daniel et al. 2005). Students also stressed the importance of knowing when the teacher should or should not intervene and when it is important to give children space and time to work things out, as happened in the example of Maria's intervention because of the argument between the two boys.

It is worth reflecting on why the concepts or topics chosen by the students are philosophical. Students frequently respected children's thinking and compared their thinking to their own. Students, too, felt perplexed and confused about whether a question was psychological or philosophical. They struggled, arguing, for instance, about what it meant to be a baby. Attitudes or dispositions that challenge students' thinking, express wonder towards children's queries, and generate a sense of perplexity, establish the groundwork for students to become reflective and thoughtful instructors (Nikolidaki 2018; Splitter 2006, 2010).

Students demonstrated the ability to observe children during their free time and organised activities and to recognise comments, questions or dialogues from the children that might be philosophically fruitful. They were also able to formulate philosophical questions and extract philosophical concepts from children's philosophical moments, analyse children's arguments in their dialogues, and develop other activities that could be used to deepen children's thinking and reflect on the role of the teacher. Students argued that philosophising helps the children to illustrate their thinking and the teacher to better understand the children's thinking. Students' comments, such as 'I learned to observe and process the children's messages, something I have never done so consciously and intentionally before', demonstrate that students realise the importance of the teacher's job in the classroom as well as the importance of listening and allowing children's critical and creative thinking to grow.

Similarly, students found their training in identifying children's philosophical moments and discussing them in laboratory classes very helpful. They reported that the preparation phase helped them enormously to learn how to observe the children and highlight philosophical issues that they would never have noticed otherwise. Students' experiences were perceived as enlightening but often stressful, as they were constantly on the lookout for philosophical moments and were never sure if they missed anything. Some students pointed out that listening philosophically is difficult, time-consuming, and may prevent teachers from meeting the educational goals stated by the curriculum. Such notions reflect a didactic approach, which is still

prevalent among students who believe that teachers know more and better how to communicate a particular amount of knowledge to their students. More study is needed to break down such attitudes and enable more child-centred education and, thus, more philosophical listening to take place, as well as to improve educational procedures, the goal of education, and the role of teachers.

However, students argued that the more they practised philosophical listening, the better and quicker they became at spotting emerging philosophical moments in children's activities. Even the more sceptical students, who questioned whether listening philosophically to children was a waste of time, were finally convinced that it was worth the pain. Students claimed that listening profoundly to the children helped them understand better what a child is and what the children's ways of thinking are, which often reminded them of their own ways of thinking when they were children (Egan 1993). Students also claimed that incorporating children's emerging philosophising into their future teaching is a 'win-win situation': children feel they are heard, so they engage in the educational process and learn happily, while teachers feel that all the effort they put into their teaching is worthwhile and get a sense of meaningfulness and enjoyment.

In terms of student reflections, it appears that they found listening philosophically to children incredibly profound and meaningful since they do not simply deliver a lesson plan. Some students agreed that a balance needs to be struck between what is taught and whether it meets the interests and needs of the children. They agreed that learning to listen carefully to children, even if they cannot immediately take everything they say into account, is a good first step. This finding links with the third research question and also highlights the need for achieving synergy between philosophy and education in teachers' preparation (Davey Chesters & Hinton 2017).

In the laboratory exercises, students reflected that identifying philosophising might be stressful initially, but it is liberating afterwards as it allows 'education to be simultaneously fun, deep and meaningful'. The importance of listening carefully to children's emerging philosophising was backed up during the laboratory lessons with broader conversations regarding what the role of education is, what type of people we are looking to develop, what type of thinking matters more, and how important child-centred education is. Students were also invited to remember how they felt as children when their ideas were not carefully listened to and how much more autonomous and creative they might have become if their opinions mattered more.

The research findings also seem to support the idea that the field of preschool education is fertile for philosophy and philosophising because preschool teachers, compared to teachers of higher grades, are more flexible, improvisational, and open to trying new things, which makes it easier for them to listen attentively to children and philosophise with them (Kenyon 2019). In order for students to recognise the philosophical moments in the classroom, they need to listen with naiveté (Laverty 2004); therefore, they need to recognise, as Socrates would claim, their lack of knowledge and begin to 'unlearn' what they thought they knew (Kohan, Santi & Wozniak 2017). As students are not yet experienced teachers, they have more chances to find a balance between ignorance and invention (Kohan, Santi & Wozniak 2017) and become teachers who appreciate listening philosophically to others.

Conclusion

This article highlights the importance of identifying emergent philosophising among children through educating trainee kindergarten teachers in how to listen philosophically to children. Listening to the emergent philosophising that comes from children has the potential to change the way teachers teach, making it more interesting and relevant to the children and themselves. Through attentive listening, children recognise that their opinions have value and are worth listening to, which builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. When children feel that they are being listened to, they are more willing to listen to others and show respect (Splitter & Sharp 1995). They gradually develop into thinking citizens who support their opinions with arguments by listening carefully to each other. Similarly, teachers and trainee teachers can gain a better understanding of children's presuppositions and different ways of thinking by listening carefully to them and allowing space for philosophising. Listening to children can assist teachers in getting to know their students better, having fun with them, and adjusting and modifying their teaching so that children find the learning process more relevant and appealing (Nikolidaki 2022). Eventually, students as future teachers may incorporate children's ways of thinking, through their emerging philosophising, into their teaching and transform, playfully and meaningfully, the whole educational process. If a child-centred education is welcome, then identifying and nurturing emergent philosophising that comes from children and reflects children's needs and interests cannot be left aside.

Teachers are often encouraged by the curricula they follow to teach certain subjects and develop skills considered important for children's learning. Such an attitude can keep them from listening to children and emphasising what is really important to

them. What children's emergent philosophising and teachers' philosophical listening can contribute to the training of teachers is the further development of teachers' skills and dispositions such as (i) the ability to assess what is happening in the classroom and what is important, (ii) the flexibility to make necessary changes and adjustments in the teaching process, and (iii) allowing time for reflection on the educational process. Philosophical listening prevents teaching from becoming trivial, boring, repetitive and exhausting, as if both children and teachers were mice running pointlessly in a spinning wheel. Philosophical listening offers the luxury and necessity of judging what is essential for children and teachers.

How might educational practices change as a result? Philosophical listening can create some space in teacher education for improvisation and for children's emergent philosophising to flourish. Trainee teachers learn how to step back and not intervene immediately so that children's thinking can blossom on its own. However, if children do not realise the value of their thinking, but the teachers estimate that children's thinking should not go undetected, they can highlight children's valuable moments of philosophising, draw children's attention to it, and allow for further discourse. If the youngsters show a strong interest, further activities can be planned. What response is more appropriate in each circumstance is also a skill that trainee teachers must further improve during their training.

More research is needed on the necessity of carefully listening to children, as well as listening to students and philosophising with them at various phases of their growth as teachers. If a more child-centred education is sought, teachers who will carefully listen to children, reflect, revise their teaching, and allow children to express themselves, are required. This is more effective if students experience for themselves what it is like to be philosophically heard. Ongoing research will soon provide more results about whether students at practice Levels 2 and 3, who are familiar with recognising philosophical incidents in the classroom, are also able to incorporate children's emergent philosophising into their teaching, and how they do so.

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