

Philosophical Inquiry: A Tool for Drug and Gambling Education



Why does it take so long to make friends, and so quickly to make enemies? What is pure happiness? Why am I here, and what is my purpose in life? Why do adults often pretend that nothing bad is happening in the world? What is my superpower? These are just some examples of real questions that children in BC have raised when given the space to formulate a question close to their heart. All of these questions, be it regarding identity, time, purpose or values, are existential questions that go to the core of what it means to be human and live in an increasingly complex world. These are fundamental questions that go far beyond acquiring competences, skills or knowledge. Yet, where and when do we give children the space to speak about these topics? How do we prepare children for a world that is yet to come? How can we support children to become “professional human beings”?

An inquiry-based pedagogy that facilitates dialogue among children gives the children the space and

tools to develop their own questions. It allows them to become aware of how they feel about those questions. It encourages them to think further together with others, listen and understand different points of view, give reasons for what they say and collaborate in building arguments.

This is particularly important in a world where substance use and gambling are common – people use them to socialize, to provide excitement, to unwind, to celebrate, to dream – children and youth need to learn how to function in this human environment. This involves much more than acquiring knowledge about gambling and drugs and their potential impacts. It involves exploring deeper questions about human relationships with these things as well as developing the capacity to survive and thrive in a world where people seem fascinated by them.



Teaching Philosophical Thinking to Children

It seems that teaching philosophy is more important than ever. Not only has the amount and complexity of knowledge expanded, but our society is becoming increasingly diverse. This is why children need to be equipped with the skills and communicative practices to think for themselves. By doing philosophical inquiry with children early in life, we can help them make better sense of the conflicting messages they are bombarded with every day. We can help them make better

