



The effect of philosophy for children practices on the approaches of children towards aesthetic, art, and music concepts

Peyruze Rana Çetinkaya ¹, Tuğçe Ebeseek Büyükuğurlu ²

Abstract

The Philosophy for Children Program (P4C) is an approach based on philosophical inquiry and discussion. This program aims to help children generate ideas within a democratic "community of inquiry." Reflecting on topics of art and aesthetics constitutes an important component of the P4C program. This study aimed to examine the effect of P4C sessions on children's approach towards aesthetic, art, and music concepts. Designed as a single-group pretest-posttest model, this study was conducted with 15 volunteer children attending secondary education across various provinces in Turkey. Data gathered through Word Association Test (WAT), P4C sessions, and interviews with participants were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method. Findings indicated that P4C practices increased awareness regarding art and aesthetics, enriched and deepened expressions, significantly transformed conceptual misconceptions, and had a positive, informative impact on children's artistic ideas.

Keywords

Philosophy for/with children
Aesthetics
Aesthetic inquiry
Art
Music

Article Info

Received: 10.14.2024
Accepted: 06.03.2025
Published Online: 04.30.2026

DOI: 10.15390/ES.2026.2471

Introduction

Since the beginning of human history, human beings, in alignment with their fundamental nature of thinking, have asked questions regarding their identity, life, nature, the world, and beyond. Philosophy, which prioritizes asking the right questions rather than finding definitive answers, has been an important companion on humanity's journey of self-understanding from ancient times to the present day.

The inclination toward philosophical questions stems from the innate curiosity and desire for understanding. Human life is characterized by exploration, particularly in early childhood; everything that exists is new and awaits discovery. Questions are essential tools for these discoveries, and children's questions, as Jaspers (2003) noted, indicate humans' existential orientation toward philosophy. Children's questions often contain profound philosophical thought.

Philosophy for/with Children

Critical thinking, considered an essential characteristic of modern individuals, fundamentally aligns with philosophical thinking. Matthew Lipman, the pioneer of the "Philosophy for Children" approach, argued that this ability should be developed and encouraged during childhood. Lipman founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children and developed a specially

¹ Dokuz Eylül University, Buca Faculty of Education, Department of Fine Arts Education, İzmir, Türkiye, peyruze.rana@gmail.com

² Bağımsız Araştırmacı, Türkiye, tugceebeseek@gmail.com

designed curriculum to nurture children's natural curiosity, inquiry tendencies, and philosophical thinking abilities (Haynes & Murriss, 2011). The Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach has also been referred to as 'Philosophy with Children' (PwC) by various philosophers who have specialized in this field following Lipman.

Socratic inquiry is at the core of P4C—a program that can be considered both a thinking education and a collective thinking process. Known also as the Socratic method, Socratic dialogue, or Socrates' technique, this approach involves analytic thinking and discussions that seek truth through unbiased questions and answers (Rondhuis, 2005). P4C supports respectful engagement with diverse perspectives and assumptions, encouraging peaceful resolution of conflicts arising from differences in opinion. This approach is valuable in fostering a participatory and democratic "Community of Inquiry" (CoE) (McLeod et al., 2020). Such a community enables young children to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively within a supportive environment, express and develop their ideas respectfully in diverse perspectives, thus contributing positively to their identity development (Clark, 2017, cited in McLeod et al., 2020).

The P4C program allows children to develop ideas on all philosophical issues related to the world and life, approach them inquisitively, and integrate these concepts into their own experiences (Oral, 2013). Aesthetics, a field of philosophical inquiry, is a significant theme in P4C practices, explicitly designed to support philosophical discussion and reflection on values that inspire philosophical inquiry. The program supports aesthetic education through multiple texts and diverse methods (Hamrick, 1989). For instance, in the P4C curriculum developed by Matthew Lipman and his colleague Ann Margaret Sharp, aesthetic inquiry is exemplified in the novel "Suki" (Lipman, 1978), where characters reading poetry, visiting art museums, and discussing music provide grounds for aesthetic inquiry (Gregory, 2017).

Aesthetics and Aesthetic Inquiry

Aesthetics, which investigates and questions the nature of artistic beauty, explores the elements and laws of beauty, asking why we find something beautiful (Erinç, 2011). It can be defined as an area of thought and theory examining how individuals respond to artistic beauty. According to Kagan (1982), aesthetics does not solely focus on beauty but also includes values that transform into or derive from beauty, such as gracefulness, sublimity, dramatic, as well as their opposites, like ugliness, banality, or comedy. Hence, aesthetics investigates all these artistic values. Paying attention to different qualities of our experiences—such as beauty, ugliness, elegance, and garishness—is part of the domain of aesthetics (Lone, 2012). Human beings have a fundamental need to experience the meaning and value of life through aesthetic experience (Alexander, 1994). Art, as a source of aesthetic thought, directly addresses humanity's effort to create meaning and render life meaningful.

In P4C practices, which involve discussions about aesthetics, art is employed more to ask questions rather than merely convey truths. Engaging in dialogue and encountering others' thoughts and reactions towards artistic works and aesthetic stimuli are significant for individuals, allowing them to question their own experiences and inclinations and contributing to developing their understanding of art (Santi, 2007). A community of inquiry can help enhance the aesthetic against the non-aesthetic (Leckey, 2017). Learning to recognize and appreciate aesthetics enriches the capacities of both our mind and senses and can elevate us to the peak of humanity (Madeja & Onuska, 1977).

From ancient times, human beings have established aesthetic relationships with their surroundings within civilization and left artistic traces upon the world (Nutbrown, 2013). "Aesthetic experience always exceeds aesthetics [...] it is a manifestation, record, and celebration of a civilization's life, a tool for promoting its development, and simultaneously, the ultimate judgment on its quality." (Dewey, 2005). Providing aesthetic experiences and promoting curiosity may help children see existing beauty and the possibilities of beauty. Children who engage with beauty might be inspired by it and

motivated to create even more beauty (Wilson, 2010). According to Lipman and Dewey, an aesthetic experience includes capabilities such as judgment, interpretation, creative expression, and empathy (Leckey, 2017). P4C practices, providing an aesthetic experience through aesthetic stimuli and fostering an inquiry approach based on curiosity, can support these capabilities.

Questions concerning aesthetics, pervasive throughout all aspects of life, encompass more than simply reflecting upon art forms; they include perceptions of our life experiences and how we feel about them. "Reflecting on questions such as the nature of beauty and ugliness and the relationship between our aesthetic experiences and our emotions can help us better recognize and understand the way things feel to us in everyday life." (Lone, 2012). The significance of aesthetics in education lies in supporting children's artistic potential, curiosity, creativity, thought processes, awareness, and ultimately fostering enriched personalities (Chou et al., 2014). Aesthetic experiences during childhood indirectly become part of aesthetic experiences in adulthood, as all adults were once children; thus, excluding childhood from overall aesthetic experience would be inappropriate (Leddy, 2002).

The idea that humans should possess an aesthetic understanding in general, not only in artistic terms, constitutes the core of aesthetic theory. Lone (2012), emphasizing aesthetic sensitivity, argues that individuals with such sensitivity perceive qualities of art forms in ways others cannot. Similarly, Read (1931) highlights the importance of sensory education, noting that our behavior is influenced by aesthetic experiences, which are inherently sensory. Engaging critically in aesthetic reflection through carefully chosen stimuli as part of a community of inquiry and sustaining this thinking environment can effectively foster aesthetic sensitivity and education.

Aesthetics in Philosophy for Children Practices

Notable examples stand out among the practices of Philosophy for Children, which focus on aesthetic thought. In her study, Liptai (2005) emphasizes the differences created by using not only texts but also art and craft objects, as well as everyday natural objects, as stimuli to initiate aesthetic inquiry. Santi (2007), in a qualitative analysis-based study where six famous artworks were used as stimuli to initiate aesthetic discussions, found results supporting the hypothesis that P4C practices in aesthetics could encourage cognitive and cultural advancement through increased aesthetic awareness. Leckey (2017), using a renowned painting as a stimulus to engage high school students in philosophical discussion, detailed the discussion contents and analyzed these dialogues by coherently comparing them with Dewey's and Lipman's ideas on art and aesthetics.

Research on P4C in Turkey

In Turkey, the importance of P4C studies has increased, supported by postgraduate theses and scientific research. Particularly notable practical studies examine the effects and contributions of P4C practices on children's conceptual achievements; critical, inquisitive, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills (Işıklar & Abalı Öztürk, 2022; Karadağ & Demirtaş, 2018; Pala, 2022; Türksoy, 2020); levels of creativity (Pekkarakaş, 2020; Taş, 2017); attitudes toward human values (Mehdiyev & Tozduman Yaralı, 2020); assertiveness, cooperation, and self-control skills (Okur, 2008); philosophical attitudes, behaviors, and sensitivities (Dirican & Deniz, 2019; Kaya, 2020); thinking and communication skills in life studies classes (Boyraz, 2019); ideas regarding various philosophical themes (Karasu, 2018); intellectual, emotional, and social levels (Akkocaoğlu Çayır & Akkoyunlu, 2016); and levels of philosophical inquiry and answering philosophical questions (Demirtaş et al., 2018).

These studies predominantly focus on thinking skills and philosophical attitudes. However, research specifically focusing on aesthetic thinking, or the potential effects of P4C approaches on thinking and perceptions related to aesthetic, art, and music concepts, was not found. Considering that several studies conducted in Turkey identified noticeable conceptual misconceptions regarding aesthetics across different educational levels (Çetinkaya & Kalay Meydan, 2023; Demirel, 2018; Kılcan & Akbaba, 2014; Özalp, 2020), there is a need for scientific findings from studies designed to raise

awareness about aesthetics and art within a community of inquiry. Since aesthetics is an abstract and complex learning domain, P4C practices may offer a suitable option to address this need with a program compatible with children's playful and joyful nature (Battin, 1994), rather than from a theoretical and didactic perspective. Similarly, these practices could help support the idea that questioning music, as the most abstract form of art, can help people understand it more deeply, see it as an aesthetic experience, and engage with music and art more consciously and meaningfully.

In line with this, this research aims to examine the effects of P4C practices on children's approaches toward aesthetic, art, and music concepts and present them within a thematic framework. This objective emphasizes the idea of systematically integrating art-focused philosophical discussions into the learning environment. It is believed that this study holds practical significance as it provides awareness and examples for art educators, music educators, and classroom teachers who conduct art classes. Additionally, addressing philosophical discussions on abstract artistic concepts scientifically within younger age groups indicates theoretical importance. Based on this, the research question is as follows: What is the effect of P4C practices on children's approaches toward aesthetic, art, and music concepts?

Sub-questions derived from the research problem are as follows:

1. What are the pretest and posttest results of Philosophy for Children practices?
2. What are the themes regarding Philosophy for Children discussions?
3. What are children's views regarding Philosophy for Children practices?

Method

Research Design and Model

This study used a single-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design (Creswell, 2013) to investigate the impact of P4C practices on aesthetic thinking processes within a single group. Accordingly, a small participant group was selected. The group size was limited to 15 children, enabling deeper interaction and intellectual progression in philosophical discussions. The research design is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design

| Group | Pretest | Implication | Posttest |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| G ₁ | O ₁ | X | O ₂ |

The application process consists of P4C activities spread over three sessions. A music educator and a P4C trainer planned and conducted these sessions. Research data were collected using the Word Association Test (WAT) as a pretest-posttest tool and through interviews conducted after the posttest.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted experimentally, with a small participant group of 15 elementary school students. Therefore, the study has limited generalizability to other individuals within the same age group.

Study Group

The study group consists of 15 children aged 10-12. Among the students, there are 10 girls and 5 boys. The sampling method followed in this research is random purposive sampling. In this method, the researcher specifies characteristics that align with the research purpose and seeks individuals who possess those characteristics. Once a target group is identified, individuals who meet the pre-determined criteria are expected to participate in the research (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Decisions must be made regarding whom or what to sample and how many individuals to sample (Creswell, 2012). For this study, considering the abstract and complex nature of the concepts to be discussed, the criteria necessitated that participants should be 10-12 years of age, the number of individuals in each group should be limited to 15 owing to the nature of the P4C sessions, and the group should consist of individuals who could regularly attend sessions on specified days and times. Following necessary permissions, the first 15 volunteers who met these criteria formed the sample group. The participants' names were changed to pseudonyms. Additional information about them is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants

| Participants | Gender | Age | School | City |
|---------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Nehir | Female | 10 | State School | Tekirdag |
| Sahra | Female | 11 | State School | Eskisehir |
| Cesur | Male | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| Rüzgar | Male | 10 | State School | Tekirdag |
| Leman | Female | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| Bulut | Male | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| Yaprak | Female | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| İlkim | Female | 12 | State School | Istanbul |
| Ali | Male | 11 | State School | Eskisehir |
| Arya | Female | 10 | State School | Tekirdag |
| Eylül | Female | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| Güneş | Female | 12 | State School | Hatay |
| Doğa | Male | 10 | Private School | Istanbul |
| Parla | Female | 10 | State Conservatory | Istanbul |
| Aslı | Female | 11 | State School | Eskisehir |

Data Collection Tools

Word Association Test (WAT):

To examine the impact of philosophy sessions with children on the study group's perceptions of concepts such as aesthetics, art, and music, a WAT was administered as a pretest and posttest tool for each session.

The WAT, which consists of a list of words from which associations are to be gathered, is also known as a relational experiment. Respondents must associate each word in the list with the first word that comes to mind (Kostova & Radoynovska, 2010). This alternative assessment technique helps reveal individuals' cognitive structures regarding a specific topic or concept. The WAT can be used before and after the application to observe changes in perceptions regarding related concepts; after a period of conceptual development, the test can be repeated to examine the changes and learning that have occurred (Bahar et al., 1999; Balbağ & Kaya, 2019).

In this study, the WAT was prepared separately for the three focus concepts (aesthetics, art, and music) to reveal conceptual connections. First, the relevant concept was written five times in a column, and participants were asked to write five words that the key concept evoked in them within 30 seconds. Then they were expected to form a "related sentence" regarding the key concept. As a holistic and fluent form of expression, this related sentence allows participants to "validate" the five separate words they provided for the key concept. The process allows for the broad observation of perceptions regarding the

concepts and helps researchers identify any misconceptions. The word association test used in the study is presented in Figure 1.

| |
|---|
| <p>Which "related" concepts does the concept of "MUSIC" evoke for you? Write down the first 5 concepts that come to mind, which you think are related to music, within 30 seconds. Then explain what this concept means to you in one sentence.MUSIC:</p> <p>MUSIC:</p> <p>MUSIC:</p> <p>MUSIC:</p> <p>MUSIC:</p> <p>Related Sentence:</p> <p>.....</p> |
|---|

Figure 1. Word Association Test for the Concept of Music

- **Interview Questions:**

During the research planning phase, the researchers prepared an interview form consisting of closed- and open-ended questions. Following the final session, individual and private interviews were conducted with the students, and each was asked to respond to the following questions: *"Have your thoughts about aesthetics, art, and music changed compared to before the sessions? If so, how would you describe these changes?"*, *"If you were to explain your discussions in the philosophy sessions to someone else, how would you describe them?"*, *"What was the most impactful or memorable thing for you in the sessions?"*, *"What are your views and suggestions regarding the philosophy discussions? How might they be improved?"*.

Data Collection Process

1. Word Association Tests, P4C Sessions, and Interviews

The philosophy program with children was planned as three sessions, each conducted online once weekly for 60 minutes. The researcher, a P4C trainer, facilitated the sessions.

In the first session, aesthetics was discussed; in the second, art; and in the third, music. Before each session, the WAT form related to the respective concept was sent to the students as a pretest in an online format, and after each discussion, they were asked to complete the form again as a posttest.

During the first session on aesthetics, three famous works by Kandinsky and Van Gogh and an example of graffiti were shown to the students as stimuli. The discussion was initiated by asking which painting they liked best and why. In the second session on the concept of art, the video "The Painting Elephant" was shown as a stimulus, and the discussion began with a question about whether the images should be considered art. In the final session, where the concept of music was discussed, a song by The Beatles was played as a stimulus, the notes of the song were shown, and a discussion was initiated with the question, "Where is the music?". In the following minutes of the session, John Cage's silent piece 4'33" was presented, and the discussion shaped by this stimulus continued with the listening of a Billie Eilish song structured around the rhythmic pattern of a traffic light. All stimuli used in the sessions and the questions directed to the children are shown in Table 3.

Following the posttest administered after the third session, individual interviews were conducted with each student using the prepared questions to capture their thoughts on the philosophy discussions related to the concepts of aesthetics, art, and music.

Each session was recorded and later transcribed by the researchers.

An example of a discussion focusing on the importance of own will and effort in art from the session discussing the concept of art is as follows:

Facilitator: So, in that case, can only humans create art?

Güneş: If it has been done willingly, even if an elephant does it, it can be art. If it is forced, it is not art.

Nehir: Art cannot be forced. Nevertheless, non-human creatures can also create art.

Rüzgar: Humans are unnecessary; for example, robots can create art. If they want to, they can do it.

Facilitator: Do you think robots have their own will?

Rüzgar: I think they will in the future. If a robot creates art with its own will, it can be considered art. If it is forced or done by command, it is not art.

Nehir: I agree. If we code a robot to do it, it is not art. If a robot gains its own will, it can be art.

Cesur: I think every drawing is art, even if it is by command.

Parla: If something is forced, it cannot be art.

Arya: Robots do not exert effort; they do it rotely, so it is not art.

1.1. Stimuli and Questions Used in Philosophy Sessions with Children

Information regarding the stimuli and questions used in the sessions is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Implementation Process of P4C Sessions

| Session | Concept | Stimuli | Questions |
|---------|------------|--|--|
| 1. | Aesthetics | Images: Vincent Van Gogh/ Starry Night Wassily Kandinsky/ Color Study: Squares with Concentric Circles Wassily Kandinsky/Composition VIII A graffiti | Which of these paintings do you think is the most beautiful? Why do you think that one is the most beautiful? Can everyone find the same things beautiful? What criteria do we use to find something beautiful? If I say a picture or an object is "very aesthetic," what comes to your mind? What do we find aesthetic? Are "aesthetic" and "beautiful" the same or different things? |
| 2. | Art | Video: "The Painting Elephant" | Do you think this is art? Does art contain a distinguishing feature that does not exist in other things? Does a work need to be famous and enduring to be art? Can something be art even if no one likes it? Can a painting that no one has seen be a work of art? What is needed for something to be art? Can only humans create art? |

Table 3. Continued

| Session | Concept | Stimuli | Questions |
|---------|---------|---|--|
| 3. | Music | Pieces of Music: 1. The Beatles: "All My Loving" 2. John Cage: 4'33" 3. Billie Eilish: "Bad Guy" | Where do you think music resides? Does pressing any key on an instrument make music? Is there music in sheet music? Is there music in sheet music for someone who cannot read it? Is there music in silence? Is sound necessary for music? Is every sound vibration music? If a composer considers silence as music, can silence be music? Is the idea of whether something is music subjective? Are listeners the criteria for music? What is necessary for something to be considered music? Is rhythm music? Is a rhythmic traffic light sound music? What transforms sounds into music? |

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the WAT was analyzed using the content analysis method. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis is a research technique that derives valid and repeatable inferences from texts or other meaningful materials based on their contexts. In this analysis method, the words in the research data are segmented into units, and units with similar meanings are coded under the same categories (Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990).

Words provided in response to the key concepts in the WAT were examined, and frequency tables were created to identify how often each word was repeated. Prominent words were visualized using the word cloud technique. This technique, which visually summarizes content analysis results, enables quick understanding and interpretation, even by those not specialized in information visualization (Fronza et al., 2013).

Responses to each key concept in the WAT were categorized and presented in a table with examples. Subsequently, responses given by each student in the pretest and posttest were compared internally to examine expected positive changes in personal contexts.

Dialogues in P4C sessions were analyzed using content analysis, categories were determined based on coding, and examples were presented in a table with sample sentences.

Finally, responses to interview questions were analyzed using content analysis. Repeated expressions were identified and coded, and themes were determined accordingly. The findings were presented in a table, and participant statements were noted.

Results

This section presents research findings on the effects of P4C activities on children's perceptions of aesthetic, art, and musical concepts.

Pretest and Posttest Results of P4C Practices

• *Findings from the Word Association Test*

The data collected from the pretest and posttest Word Association Tests were examined in two stages: In the first stage, the words associated with each key concept were examined, and frequency

tables were created. Words that appeared three times or more were visualized using word clouds. In the second stage, related sentences were categorized and analyzed.



Figure 2. Words Associated with the Concept of Aesthetics in Pretest and Posttest

As seen in Figure 2, the most frequently associated word with "aesthetics" in the pretest was beauty ($f=11$), followed by surgery ($f=6$), botox ($f=3$), and limber ($f=3$). In the posttest, the concept was associated with beauty ($f=13$), art ($f=6$), painting ($f=4$), posture ($f=4$), appearance ($f=4$), subjective ($f=3$), and pleasant ($f=3$). In the pretest on aesthetics, the word "surgery," which reflected a misconception and was the most frequently repeated term, was found to be excluded from the network in the posttest. Similarly, words like "botox" and "limber", which reflected conceptual misunderstandings, were also excluded. Instead, aesthetics became more connected to terms directly related to its philosophical and artistic context, such as "art", "subjective", and "pleasant".

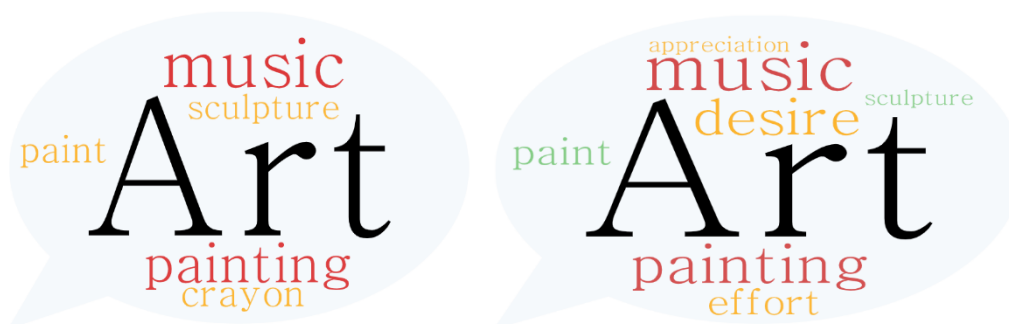


Figure 3. Words Associated with the Concept of Art in Pretest and Posttest

As seen in Figure 3, the words most associated with art in the pretest were painting ($f=13$), music ($f=11$), sculpture ($f=3$), paint ($f=3$), and crayon ($f=3$). In the posttest, the associations included painting ($f=9$), music ($f=7$), desire ($f=4$), effort ($f=4$), appreciation ($f=3$), paint ($f=3$), sculpture ($f=3$). While the pretest words focused mainly on art forms and materials, the posttest associations included terms like "desire" and "effort", which relate to the creative process, and "appreciation", which links to aesthetic judgment.



Figure 4. Words Associated with the Concept of Music in Pretest and Posttest

As seen in Figure 4, the most associated words with music in the pretest were note (f=7), instrument (f=7), piano (f=6), song (f=5), art (f=4), sound (f=4), Mozart (f=3), and relax (f=3). In the posttest, the associations shifted to sound (f=12), rhythm (f=7), art (f=7), note (f=5), instrument (f=6), and creativity (f=3). In the pretest, words primarily focused on musical tools and names, whereas in the posttest, emphasis shifted to core musical components like “sound”, “rhythm”, and “creativity”.

- **Related sentences expressed in the Word Association Test**

The sentences expressed in WAT were examined and classified based on their meanings and informational content. The sentences constructed by participants were categorized into three groups: sentences containing conceptual information, which parallel the given key concept and include a conceptual definition or association; sentences containing personal interpretations or interests related to everyday life and personal views regarding the concept; and sentences containing misconceptions, where expressions differ from or misinterpret the meaning of the key concept within the scope of the research. Frequency tables and sample sentences based on these categories are provided below:

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Relevant Sentences Categorized by Pretest and Posttest Concerning Key Concepts

| Key Concept | Number of sentences containing conceptual information | | Number of sentences containing personal opinion/interest | | Number of sentences containing misconceptions | | Empty responses | |
|-------------|---|----------|--|----------|---|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest | Pretest | Posttest |
| | Aesthetic | 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Art | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | - | - | - | - |
| Music | 5 | 12 | 10 | 3 | - | - | - | - |

As seen in Table 4, sentences containing conceptual information increase in both pretest and posttest responses for all key concepts, while sentences containing personal opinion/interest decrease. Sentences containing misconceptions are only associated with the aesthetic key concept, and a decrease in such sentences is observed between pretest and posttest responses.

Sample sentences related to the aesthetic key concept are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Sentences related to the Aesthetic Concept Obtained in Pre-test and Post-test

| WAT | Sentences containing conceptual information | Sentences containing personal opinion/interest | Sentences containing misconceptions |
|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Pretest for Aesthetic | "Every art form has a relationship with aesthetics." | "I find ballet very aesthetic." "One's posture while playing the piano is very aesthetic." | "My mother is against getting plastic surgery." "Many people have had cosmetic surgery on their nose." "I think aesthetics is the same as the word 'limber'." |
| Posttest for Aesthetic | "Aesthetics is a philosophical concept." "Aesthetics is a perspective that can vary from person to person." "Aesthetics can even be liking something that appears dreadful or strange." "The emergence of grace along with aesthetics will add courtesy to society." | "The details in this table are very aesthetic." "This orchestra looks very aesthetic." "The brush strokes in some paintings add a very aesthetic appearance." | "My mother is against getting plastic surgery." |

Sample sentences related to the art key concept are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Sentences Related to the Art Concept Obtained in Pretest and Posttest

| WAT | Sentences containing conceptual information | Sentences containing personal opinion/interest | Sentences containing misconceptions |
|------------------|--|--|--|
| Pretest for Art | "Art is written, visual, and sensory beauty." "Music, painting, architecture, and other areas where beautiful works are created and things people love are art." | "I am interested in the art of painting." "Art helped me realize my interests and talents." "I really liked the art he/she created." | - |
| Posttest for Art | "Art is a pursuit that requires effort and hard work." "Art shows itself everywhere in life." "A painting or music piece that has been given effort and diligence is art." | "I really love the art of painting." | - |

Sample sentences related to the music key concept are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Sentences Related to the Music Concept Obtained in Pre-test and Post-test

| WAT | Sentences containing conceptual information | Sentences containing personal opinion/interest | Sentences containing misconception |
|--------------------|--|---|---|
| Pretest for Music | "Music consists of organized sounds." "Music is an art form." | "I really enjoy listening to music." "I can play the guitar, which is a musical instrument." "I try to keep up with the rhythm of the music." | - |
| Posttest for Music | "Music is an art form that encompasses the composition of sounds and silences." "At the core of music is sound, but not every sound is music." "Rhythm is one of the fundamental elements of music." "Music is an art form heard by the ear and felt by the heart." | "The rhythm of this music is very beautiful." | - |

Findings Related to P4C Sessions

Based on the coding of discussions in the P4C sessions, prominent words were identified and categorized, and sample sentences were provided.

Table 8. Coding and Categories Related to the Aesthetic Session

| Session 1 | Coding | Categories | Sample Sentences |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Aesthetics | appreciation impact curiosity subconscious subjective perceive | aesthetic subject | "The reason we find something aesthetic may lie in the <u>curiosity</u> it arouses and its ability to attract our attention." "If we find something aesthetic, it is because we connect it with things embedded in our <u>subconscious</u> ." "Only things we can <u>perceive</u> can be considered aesthetic – things we can see or hear." |
| | colour music painting nature appearance posture artistic abstract | aesthetic object/resource | "Not only things we can see, but also <u>music</u> can be aesthetic if captivating." "Aesthetics is a concept related more to <u>artistic</u> images than people's appearances." "Not only things perceived through the senses but <u>abstract</u> things can also be considered aesthetic." |
| | elegant pleasant beautiful original harmonious | aesthetic value/qualifiers | "Aesthetic refers to things that appear <u>elegant</u> ." "In my opinion, aesthetics has multiple meanings, which is why <u>beauty</u> and aesthetics are both similar and different." "The colors look very <u>harmonious</u> ; they impressed me." |

According to Table 8, based on the participants' responses and dialogues in the session where the aesthetic concept was discussed, three categories emerged: aesthetic subject, aesthetic object/source, and aesthetic value/qualifications.

Table 9. Coding and Categories Related to the Art Session

| Session 2 | Coding | Categories | Sample Sentences |
|-----------|--|------------|--|
| Art | appreciation popular beautiful recognition | artwork | "Things that multiple people appreciate can be considered works of art." "This is an artwork because it is <u>beautiful</u> ." "If it gains <u>recognition</u> , it is a work of art. What matters is not being liked, but being recognized." |
| | thought diligence effort desire own will | artist | "Even if no one likes it, the important thing is that the artist can express their <u>thoughts</u> through the artwork." "For something to be art, the artist's <u>desire</u> and <u>effort</u> are necessary." "An act becomes art when carried out through the <u>artist's will</u> . It is not art if it is forced or done by command." |

According to Table 9, based on the participants' responses and dialogues during the session where the concept of art was discussed, two categories emerged: artwork and artist.

Table 10. Coding and Categories Related to the Music Session

| Session 3 | Coding | Categories | Sample Sentences |
|------------|---------------|------------------------|---|
| Music | brain | musical perception | "Music is in the <u>brain</u> ." |
| | heart | | "Music exists in the <u>heart</u> and <u>love</u> of the audience." |
| | love | | "When you like a song, it <u>sticks in your mind</u> and you just feel like listening to it and singing it repeatedly." |
| | listening | | |
| | understanding | | |
| | ear | musical terms/concepts | "Music is in the <u>notes</u> ." |
| | stick in mind | | "At the core of music is <u>sound</u> ." |
| | note | | "Music is not just sound; <u>silence</u> is also part of music." |
| | sound | | "Not all sounds can be music; a certain <u>rhythm</u> is needed." |
| | rhythm | | |
| | silence | | |
| | melody | | |
| | song | | |
| | composer | | |
| harmony | | | |
| instrument | | | |
| vocalist | | | |

According to Table 10, in the session where the concept of music was discussed, two categories emerged based on the participants' responses and dialogues: musical perception and musical terms/concepts.

Findings Related to Views on Philosophy Sessions with Children

The themes derived from participants' responses to the interview questions in the final stage of the research are presented below.

The themes related to the answers to the question 'Have your thoughts about aesthetics, art, and music changed compared to before the sessions? If so, how would you describe these changes?' are presented as a word cloud in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Themes related to the changes observed after the P4C sessions

The following are sample participant responses related to these themes: "Yes, it did. I only knew aesthetics in the context of surgery. In art, I saw things I had not noticed before. In the music session, I got confused and encountered thoughts I had not considered." (Nehir), "I started thinking more philosophically. I used to think more superficially about these concepts. After the philosophy sessions, I started thinking more deeply." (Cesur), "With what my friends said and thoughts that came to my mind later, my ideas changed. My way of thinking changed." (Güneş).

The themes of the responses to the question “If you were to explain your discussions in the philosophy sessions to someone else, how would you describe them?” are presented as a word cloud in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Themes related to the expressions in the P4C sessions

The following are sample participant responses related to these themes: *“I would say that my ideas about these concepts have changed and that I started to think differently.”* (İlkim), *“I participated in a philosophy session, and it expanded my thoughts. I learned many things about these concepts and understood the connection between the concept of aesthetics and art.”* (Yaprak), *“We had useful and fun discussions about the three concepts.”* (Leman).

The themes of the responses to the question “What was the most impactful or memorable thing for you in the sessions?” are presented as a word cloud in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Themes related to the statements about the most memorable aspects of the P4C sessions

The following are sample participant responses related to these themes: *“I wondered whether music is in the ear, brain, or sound. I thought about it and was influenced by this discussion.”* (Bulut), *“The idea that music is not only sound but also silence affected me. I used to think aesthetics was just surgery, but I learned that pleasing things are also aesthetics.”* (Arya), *“I learned the artistic meaning of aesthetics, that session was beneficial for me. Also, the idea that music can include silence impacted me.”* (Leman), *“Aesthetics stayed with me the most. I realized the relationship between aesthetics and beauty.”* (Rüzgar).

The themes of the responses to the question “What are your views and suggestions regarding the philosophy discussions?” are presented as a word cloud in Figure 8.

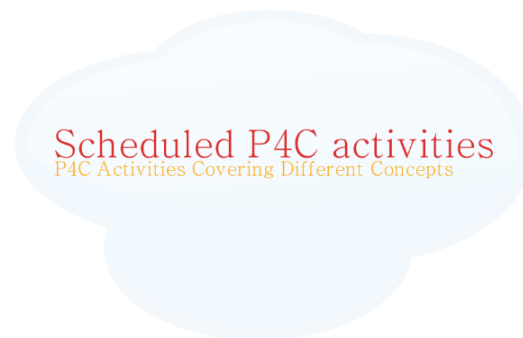


Figure 8. Themes related to the opinions and suggestions regarding P4C practices

The following are sample participant responses related to these themes: “I think it was an enjoyable and nice event. We could delve even deeper into aesthetics, art, and music. I wish there were more and different concepts and topics covered.” (Parla), “I wish these sessions were held every day. It was very fun.” (Cesur), “It was an event I would like to participate in again.” (Doğa).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to examine philosophical thinking and discussions with children regarding three closely related concepts: aesthetics, art, and music, and how this journey changed their modes of thinking. The findings can be summarized based on word association tests, session observations, and interviews.

Conclusions Based on Pretest and Posttest Results

Before the sessions, aesthetics was most commonly associated with the word “beauty.” However, when evaluated in the context of other words and sentences the children produced, it became clear that they were referring to beauty as it is achieved through an aesthetic operation like plastic surgery, which is a widespread conceptual misunderstanding of the concept of aesthetics in their cognitive structures. After the sessions, the children continued associating aesthetics with “beauty,” but in a different sense. Their sentences established relationships among aesthetics, art, and philosophy through the concept of what is beautiful, and referred more to artistic beauty rather than that resulting from surgical intervention. While their sentences related to the concept before the sessions largely contained personal interpretations and conceptual misunderstandings, there was a marked increase in sentences displaying conceptual knowledge after the sessions ($f=12$).

Before the sessions on art and music concepts, children's associations were more object/material-focused. However, after the sessions, it was observed that they began to interpret these concepts from the perspective of their processes of emergence, fundamental elements, and existential meanings. Although a transformation as distinct as that observed in the concept of aesthetics was not evident in the derived words, the sentences constructed before the sessions mostly contained personal interpretations and superficial information. In contrast, after the sessions, sentences involving conceptual knowledge and depth increased in number ($f=12$).

Conclusions Based on the Themes Emerging from P4C Discussions

In the philosophy session where children discussed the concept of aesthetics, they interpreted aesthetics through concepts related to the aesthetic subject, such as appreciation, perception, and the subconscious; the aesthetic object/source, such as music, painting, nature, and abstraction; and aesthetic values/qualities, such as elegance, beauty, and harmony. In the session where they discussed the concept of art, their interpretations focused on the themes of the artwork and the artist. In the music session, they reflected on how music is perceived by the individual and explored its fundamental elements.

Conclusions Based on Interviews

In one-on-one interviews, most children expressed that they had experienced changes in their thoughts and knowledge about aesthetics, and that their initially superficial thinking had deepened after the sessions. They noted that they encountered different perspectives during the discussions, that their expressions and vocabulary related to these concepts became enriched, and that their curiosity about philosophy arose due to the process. After the sessions, they continued to question and think about the concepts, gained new information, and engaged in respectful discussions with their peers. Moreover, they desired to engage in additional P4C activities and discussions on various concepts and topics.

Based on the results obtained, it can be stated that the "acquisition of new knowledge" expressed by the participants occurred spontaneously during the P4C sessions; due to the nature of the process, the facilitator did not explicitly or implicitly present a definition or perspective regarding any concept. Participants' learning and awareness of a concept developed due to the group's collective discussion and inquiry process. All these inferences were made within a limited framework defined by the selected participant group, the period in which the research was conducted, and the cities/regions in which the participants were located; therefore, the generalizability of the findings is limited. It can be said that the data obtained from the research contributes to the literature. Still, there is a need for further research with larger, diverse samples and different methodologies to support these findings.

In a final statement on aesthetics, Eylül remarked, "The emergence of grace with aesthetics will add courtesy to society." Philosophy can contribute to society by noting beauty through aesthetics. To understand an aesthetic experience, it is necessary to think about it systematically, i.e., to philosophize. For this, one needs to know how to philosophize and make philosophical practices a habit (Marquez, 2017). In this sense, learning to think and create opportunities and spaces is a valuable approach. The P4C program can facilitate creating this space in children's worlds, as Güneş mentioned in the interviews, "Despite our young age, it was nice to think about such abstract concepts."

Parsons (1994) mentions the necessity of integrating aesthetics into art classes by arguing that images given to children as stimuli can support their thinking and discussions about beauty, what we find unattractive, and the goals of art. Similarly, Nutbrown (2013) suggests that the aesthetic need, described as an innate human need, should be considered in educational programs and that children's artistic experiences need to be nurtured for artistic development.

The aesthetic approach is not exclusive to the arts and artists; it is a mental capacity rooted in human intelligence that can be developed (Clough, 2002, as cited in Nutbrown, 2020). To achieve the idea of an aesthetic society created by adults, integrating aesthetics into the world of children, who will become those aesthetic adults, should be a priority. To enable children to become aesthetically mature individuals who can understand, interpret, evaluate, and critically analyze artworks within a specific context (Parsons, 1994), they need an environment and experiences from which they can acquire these skills.

Suggestions

In future studies on Philosophy for/with Children practices related to aesthetics, art, and music, the following could be suggested:

- Investigating the effectiveness over a more extended period by increasing the number of P4C sessions focused on aesthetic and artistic thinking,
- Examining the effects on different age groups and educational levels,
- Raising awareness among art educators regarding P4C practices to bring opportunities for inquiry and critical thinking about art and music into the classroom, and designing in-service training programs for educators.
- Planning seminars, workshops, and projects related to this approach for prospective teachers studying in the Fine Arts Education and Primary Education departments could be recommended.

Acknowledgements

We want to sincerely thank our “Little Thinkers”, who are the participants in our study.

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