

ERASMUS+-PROJECT
YOU THINK critical

A GUIDE TO DEVELOP AN ONLINE VERSION OF A P4C WORKSHOP

Accompanied by PR activities



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INTRODUCTION

The method “Philosophy for Children” (P4C) trains people to think critically. This is an essential skill in an online world full of manipulation, fake news, images and videos created via artificial intelligence. In order to reach young people with the offer of a P4C workshop, as many different approaches as possible should be pursued. The most obvious and tried-and-tested is to hold workshops on site, for example with classes in schools or with other youth groups. The advantages are obvious: Most workshop leaders have experience in conducting workshops on site; classes and youth groups are easy to reach. Body language, facial expressions, gestures, mood, energy level: all these components are much easier to sense in a group on location. Both - participants and workshop leaders - benefit from these aspects. Also, critical thinking workshops deal with big questions and difficult topics. It is usually easier to pick up on the participants' reactions if everyone is physically present in the same room.

However, young people spend a lot of their time online. To reach them as best as possible it is just logical to also provide an online version when it comes to offering the P4C workshop. Also as you will see below, there are actually quite a few advantages of delivering P4C workshops online and ways to tackle the hurdles of online communication and cooperation.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS TOOLKIT

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This guide was created during an ERASMUS+ small scale partnership. Anthropolis from Hungary - expert in P4C workshops - and Youth Agency - expert in online youth work and public relations wanted to give a digital version of the P4C workshop a try. This is the result.

In front of you is a guide for youth trainers and educators that supports tangible knowledge on how to run a proper workshop online on P4C. Additionally, you'll find tips and tricks on how to accompany your workshop with public relations.

For young people in particular it is crucial to know how to think critically and how to exchange different opinions in a polite way. The authors are convinced that “Philosophy 4 Children” is the right method to teach those skills - online and offline.

Have fun creating your own P4C workshop and good luck for passing on those critical thinking skills to the young generation!



PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN/ COMMUNITIES – A METHOD FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

The ability to think critically has become more and more valuable in the 21st century. In a world of post truth and fake news, unverified information from often unknown sources is flooding in, in almost endless quantities. If we don't want our thinking to be influenced by political parties, movements or multinational corporations to suit their own interests, we need to create a kind of mental immunity for ourselves and our students.

Cindy Scheibe and Faith Rogow (Scheibe-Rogow 2012: 39)¹ highlight the five components of critical thinking:

1 CURIOSITY AND THE DESIRE TO QUESTION: critical thinkers reject simplistic answers, seek evidence; they do not accept the first explanation, and they do not seek a single truth - especially when it comes to information from the internet.

2 CONSTANT COMMITMENT TO INQUIRY: critical thinkers spend their lives accessing, analysing and evaluating information - exactly what information literacy expects. This inquiry also precedes their behaviour and decisions.

3 THE INHERENT SCEPTICISM IN EVERYONE: The word 'critical' often has a negative connotation in everyday speech. However, 'critical' thinkers differ from cynics in that they approach the issues they examine (for example, messages from the media) with confidence because they know what questions to ask and how to ask them.



4 EVALUATING GOOD REASONING: critical thinking is the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion. Critical thinkers know what can be considered as credible evidence, look for it and evaluate it. This skill cannot be underestimated when judging the credibility of information, which is one of the most important skills for safe internet use.

5 FLEXIBILITY AND OPEN-MINDEDNESS: critical thinkers are aware of their own assumptions and constantly question them. They are informed by many sources and are aware of the complexity of the world's problems.

Critical thinking is a general skill that can be developed. The method we offer is a possible tool for developing students' reasoning skills. This method is based on the Philosophy for Communities (P4C) method of dialogue. Its users learn to argue for their own statements and to listen to the arguments of others. They can learn that it can be mutually beneficial if the participants in a debate disagree with each other, if they seek to understand each other rather than to defeat each other. Thus, the use of P4C also has a strong community-building function. Through dialogue learners experience the sense of ownership in a discussion, since the teacher is only a facilitator of the process.

¹Scheibe, Cindy - Rogow, Faith 2012. The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy. Critical Thinking in a Multimedia World. Corwin, Thousand Oaks, California.

2.1 PHILOSOPHY FOR COMMUNITIES – ORIGINS

Philosophy for Children (P4C) has gained significant traction across the UK and in over 60 countries globally. In the UK, the Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) actively promotes P4C, drawing inspiration from Lipman's 'Philosophy for Children' program. Lipman's initiative aimed at fostering children's capacity for reasoned thinking and sound decision-making. Referred to as Philosophy for Communities when tailored to specific age groups, P4C involves participants and a facilitator engaging with short stories, pictures, poems, objects, or other stimuli. Subsequently, participants generate their own questions, briefly discuss them, and then choose one for more in-depth exploration.

2.2 CREATING A SAFE SPACE

The first step is to create a safe environment in which participants can freely express their thoughts and opinions on anything that comes up during the enquiry. This is a prerequisite for any meaningful conversation.

The facilitator can suggest rules for cooperation, but it is better if the ground rules come from the participants. The facilitator should suggest rules if he or she feels a basic rule is missing from the list created by the participants.

The rules should facilitate cooperation in a safe space. If the group wants to vote on a rule that the facilitator thinks does not help the enquiry, the facilitator can vote against it because he or she also has the right to vote as a member of the group. This is to avoid group members making meaningful discussion impossible.

These rules should always be put to a vote (and hopefully should be agreed on finally):

- **REFER TO THE OPINIONS NOT TO PEOPLE**
- **WHEN ONE SPEAKS EVERYONE LISTENS**
- **RESPECT DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEWS, EVEN WHEN YOU DISAGREE**
- **DON'T USE SMARTPHONES DURING DISCUSSION & DISCUSS WITH PEOPLE DIRECTLY**
- **AND MOST IMPORTANTLY: THE LAS VEGAS RULE**

The rules should include the obligation of confidentiality: whatever is said in the meeting must be kept private between the people who were in the room and should never be repeated to others. This is also known as the "Las Vegas rule". The term comes from the saying "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas." In this way, all participants can share their thoughts and beliefs free from the fear of being judged by others.

2.3 TEN STEPS OF AN ENQUIRY

After creating a safe environment for the enquiry, you can start the discussion with your group. This process of an enquiry can be outlined in ten steps as follows:

- 1 PREPARATION**
This is about getting the group into P4C 'mood / mode'. In the early days, activities might be geared to building a sense of community, but they might focus more on the development of thinking and enquiry skills.
- 2 PRESENTATION OF STIMULUS**
The stimulus should be engaging, relevant and meaningful to the group. It should contain some 'big' (i.e. Common, Central and Contestable) ideas / concepts that will inspire philosophical questions.
- 3 PRIVATE THINKING TIME**
Time for private reflection on the stimulus. The opportunity for silent thought is important and should ideally be extended to a minute or more.
- 4 SHARED THINKING TIME**
Opportunity to share and compare personal responses to the stimulus.
- 5 QUESTION-MAKING**
Groups or individuals create open, discussable questions to put forward to the class. (Usually groups of 3 to 5 to end up with 6 to 10 questions).
- 6 QUESTIONS-AIRING**
Questions, prominently displayed, are celebrated, analysed and compared. Ambiguities or vaguenesses are cleared up, links often suggested, but also significant differences noted.
- 7 QUESTION-CHOOSING**
1 question is agreed on for the focus of the enquiry / dialogue to follow. The question is chosen by the community, usually by voting.
- 8 FIRST WORDS**
Getting the enquiry / dialogue started. One way is to invite the group whose question is voted to explain their thoughts on it. 'Think-pair-share' can be a good starter, too, or asking for a proposal / response to the question.
- 9 BUILDING**
Once the question / dialogue opens up, the metaphor of 'building' is key: building on each other's ideas and towards better understanding of the concepts / issue(s) arising.
- 10 LAST THOUGHTS**
A chance for pupils to say their final words on what has been discussed. Often those who haven't contributed during the session do so here and show they have been engaged. Different focal points may be suggested.

Participants are supported to express their opinions and listen to others and are guided through key principles such as: there may be more than one right answer, facts or opinions need to be backed-up with evidence, it is okay to change your mind after listening to what someone else says. Sessions are conducted in a circle to emphasise that everyone is an equal participant and usually start with “community-building” activities to help create trust and co-operation.

2.4 THE STIMULUS

Choosing the initial stimulus is a key factor for the enquiry. Through careful selection of the stimulus, the educator has the opportunity to influence the topics that will be discussed by the group and diminish the chances that they choose to talk about something different.

The stimulus is the starting point for the enquiry. With the stimulus, you can try to draw the attention of your group to different topics, issues, questions, without directly specifying them. This is its role in the process: to raise themes and provoke the formulation of philosophical questions.

2.4.1 WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD STIMULUS?

Are there ‘unsuitable stimuli’ at all? This could easily be a question to discuss within the frame of an enquiry with fellow P4C trainers or colleagues. Whether a stimulus is good or less so depends on the goals as well as the educator. A stimulus is good if it fits the agenda and the desired learning outcome.

2.4.2 WHAT TYPE OF PROMPT / STIMULUS CAN YOU USE?

Only imagination can limit what type of stimulus is used in the P4C process. At the beginning it is best to start with simple prompts. Once learners are used to framing philosophical questions, an inquiry can be set off by almost anything.

When choosing a stimulus, always bear in mind the time you have to present it to the group. Even though you may have to shorten it (e.g., if it is from a novel or a movie), always respect the original author. You can use a citation from a literary work—in some cases giving the context might be necessary (“This poem was written in a concentration camp during WWII”).

IN GENERAL, A PROMPT IS GOOD IF IT:

- has a clear agenda or theme
- is appropriate for the group composition and does not offend any ethnic or religious group or minority, etc.
- fits the age group of group members
- catches the attention of every group member
- gives an opportunity to everyone in the group to express their own opinion (even if it radically differs from that of the rest of the group)
- speaks for itself (in other words: it does not require an interpretation)
- focuses on the specific realities the group encounters on a daily basis.

You can use your own photos, or even make photos specifically to serve as a stimulus for an inquiry. If you use newspaper or magazine articles or research data, always credit the source. Let’s see some examples of possible P4C stimuli:

POSSIBLE P4C STIMULI

The infographic lists the following stimulus types with brief descriptions:

- VIDEO CLIPS**: music clips, TV adverts, movie teasers, etc.
- SONGS, RAP, POEMS**: lyrics can be printed and handed out
- SHORT ANIMATIONS**: single stories with a clear message work with any age group
- STORIES**: fiction or personal, written or told
- CARTOONS**: cartoons are almost always controversial
- FILMS**: fiction or documentary
- ART**: paintings, sculptures, etc.
- NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ARTICLES**: mark your source
- DIALOGUES**: can be dramatised with group members
- PHOTOS**: a picture is worth a thousand words; landscape pictures (both local and exotic) are great stimuli
- DATA**: pure facts can be shocking and thought-provoking

Remember, these are only examples. Use your creativity when choosing a prompt.

2.4.3 HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE A STIMULUS?

When choosing a stimulus, bear in mind some advice concerning a successful enquiry which, in turn, leads to the desired learning outcome:

- Define the topic or theme you want your group to discuss clearly for yourself.
- Know the context of your stimulus.
- Adjust the stimulus to your group (age, language skills, ethnic, religious diversity, when adequate, etc.).
- When you feel stuck in finding the proper stimulus, ask for help (from e.g. colleagues).
- Use your imagination and creativity. Anything can serve as a prompt; always keep your eyes peeled.
- Never let the group know your personal view or opinion on the stimulus. It is probably better to avoid using stimuli that have already been discussed in a different school context.

The stimulus is the starting point for the enquiry. With the stimulus, you can try to draw the attention of your group to different topics, issues, questions, without directly specifying them. This is its role in the process: to raise themes and provoke the formulation of philosophical questions.

2.5 THE BASICS OF ENQUIRY: THE 4 CS

Philosophy for Children/communities creates space for dialogue with four crucial elements:

- **Collaboration** - the space for dialogue is created by participants with a little help from the facilitator, guided by ground rules established by the group and also opening many possibilities for exchange between participants, building on their ideas and creating answers or another question by peer-to-peer learning.
- **Critical** - the space of dialogue is organised around questions and trying to find answers on one of them, but also to analyse big concepts, formulate opinions and arguments often critical or challenging to other points of views or mainstream ideas. Worth noting that critical thinking has broader meaning than

disagreement only, but also judgements to separate facts from opinions, defining meanings of certain terms in the group and recognizing complexity of ideas and issues.

- **Creative** - the space for dialogue is open-minded and flexible for unusual turns in discussion. Thanks to giving ownership to participants/ students, the facilitator has to be ready for innovative and unexpected ideas coming up from the group. The younger the group is, more creative ideas will be discovered. Creativity for a facilitator could be challenging, so remember not to judge any ideas, but think how to find a way to incorporate them into the discussion by asking additional questions etc.
- **Communication** - the space for dialogue is great to develop communication skills among students/ participants. As a facilitator you can use dialogue to strengthen communication inside the group and change the dynamic of the communication process from teacher centred to free, multidimension exchange between participants. You can also work on some improvements of communication skills by adding some special tasks to discussion such as asking participants to emphasise linkages between their inputs, highlight if they agree or disagree with opinion already expressed and using specific phrases or sentences such as: Your example inspired me to share my story..., I have different experience than your story showed..., Building on your opinion I would like to say..., In contrast my idea is... etc.

2.6 ACTIVITIES

Some examples of activities below help to introduce P4C and create the atmosphere for an enquiry.



P4C BINGO

objective: Getting to know each other
content: Icebreaking, teamwork
materials needed: pen or pencil for each participant, bingo sheets

Instructions:

1. Hand the bingo sheets and the pencils/pens to the participants. Ask them to gather as many signatures from group members as possible. They can't write their own name into the boxes and one participant can only appear once on a sheet.

I BELIEVE THAT...

1) ... there is a God/there are Gods.	2) ... sometimes people fall in love at first sight, like in movies.	3) ... robots will one day be smarter than humans.	4) ... the hole in the doughnut is part of the doughnut.	5) ... animals have the right not to be eaten.
6) ... I am the same person I was yesterday.	7) ... something is only true if it can be proven.	8) ... you can only prove something if it's true.	9) ... people are inherently good.	10) ... the world would be a fairer place if all jobs were paid equally.

2. The participants walk around and ask others from the group to answer the questions on the bingo sheet. If the asked person can affirm the question, they sign in the field of the statement.
3. The person who is first to have 10 (different) names on the sheet shouts "BINGO".
4. When all (or most) participants finished "Bingo", ask the group to sit down in a circle. Ask them if they liked the exercise and:
 - Was it easy/hard to get the task done?
 - Did you learn something new and what?
 - Did you get interesting information about group members?
 - What was the most common statement?
 - What was the rarest?
 - Did you realise something you knew before but never reflected on?
 - What else could be added as a statement in the sheet?

QUALITY OF LIFE

objective: prioritise personal needs & compare personal / collective needs
content: facilitated discussion
materials needed: prepared expressions - 1 expression for 1 sheet of paper

Instructions:

1. Put the printed expressions on the floor (these are just examples) and ask the participants to choose one of the expression (per person):



2. Ask them to put it in order from most important to least important, meaning they have to stand in a row or in a half circle with the expressions where the first is the most important and the last is the least important.
3. During the process, encourage them to talk to each other, to reason, to persuade, to negotiate etc.
4. Once they think the order is finalised, initiate a group discussion - ask them about the process and what is their opinion about the final result/order.

FOUR CORNERS

objective: collect arguments and practise reasoning publicly
content: debate
materials needed: Prepared 4 posters on 4 different basic film genres: e.g. COMEDY, ACTION, ROMANCE, FANTASY

Instructions:

1. Place the four posters (with the words of COMEDY, ACTION, ROMANCE, FANTASY) on the four different corners of the room.
2. Ask students to choose and stand beside the genre they like the best - individual work.
3. Ask the individuals who made the same choice and stand at the same genre to write a list with arguments why the genre they have chosen is the best.
4. Ask each group to appoint one speaker who will present the listed arguments for the other groups.
5. After each presentation, give a short time for students to change their position if the reasoning was convincing (they can change corners after each presentation).
6. If somebody changes their position, ask why they did it.

NAUGHTYOMETER

objective: prioritise particular moral concepts of behaviour
content: facilitated discussion
materials needed: prepared set of cards - one set of cards per 4-5 people

Instructions:

1. Ask your students to group as teams of 4-5 people.
2. Give the following set of 10 cards of "naughty activities" to each group²:



3. In groups they rank the sheets from most to least naughty. Most of the cards are paired to bring out dialogue about particular concepts.
4. After each group has committed to a decision, they can ask each other questions about their choices.

The teacher at point 4 facilitates the discussion and helps them to find similarities and differences and supports them to find their arguments, reasoning on their choices.

² source: <https://www.thephilosophyman.com/> You can find the whole set of cards on <https://www.thephilosophyman.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Naughtyometer-with-pictures.pdf>

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONING

objective: introducing philosophical question in a playful way
 content: presentation on what a philosophical question is
 materials needed: preparing 1 closed, 1 open & 1 philosophical question

Instructions:

1. Ask students to find a pair and exchange names and ask each other "How old are you?" - They can lie.
2. Ask students to find another partner, exchange names and ask each other "When will you be old?"
3. Ask students to find a third partner, exchange names and ask: "What does it mean old?"
4. After the three rounds ask them to think and discuss what are the differences between the three questions.
5. By the end of the discussion you should come up with the solution, what is the difference between CLOSED (first question), OPEN (second question), and PHILOSOPHICAL (third question) questions.

ABC – BIG IDEAS

objective: collecting various possible philosophical concepts/big ideas
 content: presentation of philosophical concepts/big ideas
 materials needed: flipchart papers (1 per group), markers for each group

Instructions:

1. Ask students to group as a team of 4-5 people.
2. Ask each group to write the English ABC to the flipchart - beside each letter they should leave a space.
3. Ask the groups to find a philosophical concept/big idea by starting with each letter, e.g.: A - Ability, B - Beauty, C - Cosmopolitan, D - Diverse etc.
4. Ask the groups to share the list with the whole class.

To save time you can prepare the English ABC before the session. Clarify any concepts or ideas which are not clear or unknown to participants!



image: Frepik.com

3

WORKING WITH YOUNGSTERS IN DIGITAL SPACE

As a project group, we asked ourselves whether it would be a good idea to be able to hold P4C workshops online. The idea was born out of the experience of the coronavirus pandemic (approx. 2020 to 2022) when meetings in person were no longer possible from one day to the next. Young people suffered particularly badly from this situation and struggled with the after-effects even after the restrictions were lifted. This is because diverse peer contacts are fundamental to the development of young people's identities. Accordingly, they missed face-to-face meetings during the lockdowns, especially in larger groups. A 2021 survey of 14 to 27-year-olds conducted by the Ministry of Culture in the German federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate clearly shows that it was essential for them to communicate using digital tools (text messages, voice messages, video chat, etc.) during the pandemic. Are these findings the best prerequisites for transferring educational work and workshops with young people to the digital space? Unfortunately, it's not that simple.

During the pandemic daily routine in youth work, many ideas have emerged on how to stay in touch with young people in a digital world and how to carry out activities with young people there: methods on relationship work and knowledge transfer cannot be carried over 1:1 to the digital space. Even experienced youth workers had to realise that different rules apply online. Relationship work requires more than basic technical equipment and a certain knowledge of how to use digital tools. Know-how on the use of interactive methods and the design of an inviting digital space for relationships and collaboration must be learned and practised.

Online events in youth work are not a sure-fire success - even if young people choose to spend many hours every day with online offerings. However, digital meeting places have great advantages and offer real potential for youth work as a supplement to face-to-face events. Clear advantages can be summarised as followed:

- Online events are much less resource-intensive: no need for a physical space, no need to travel, for equipment or catering. All of this saves time and money. Less travel also helps to protect the environment.
- At the same time, online events can be more inclusive: they do not exclude anyone who lives in a rural area or people who cannot afford to travel. Groups of people who live far apart can meet up easily. People with disabilities can participate more easily, as no barrier-free space is required, there is no need to travel and supporting services (subtitles in meetings) are more accessible. Online events can also be beneficial for people with social phobias or limited mental resources, as they are alone in their familiar surroundings during breaks and can easily leave the event if necessary. Online events can therefore appeal to people for whom a face-to-face event is not an option and it allows people to meet who might never have met in person.

Nevertheless, in order to conduct online workshops successfully, a number of aspects must be taken into account (this means that there are still significant socio-economic hurdles for and demands on participants):

3 Bericht der Bundesregierung Deutschland zu den Gesundheitliche Auswirkungen auf Kinder und Jugendliche durch Corona: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/resource/blob/214866/fbb00bcf0395b4450d1037616450cfb5/ima-abschlussbericht-gesundheitliche-auswirkungen-auf-kinder-und-jugendliche-durch-corona-data.pdf>

4 Dittmann, Eva/Joos, Magdalena/Kühnel, Sybille/Müller, Heinz/Reez, Julia/Schrappner, Christian (2021): 3. Kinder- und Jugendbericht Rheinland-Pfalz – Gelingt Inklusion? Teilhabe am gesellschaftlichen Leben für alle jungen Menschen als Aufgabe und Herausforderung für ein Aufwachsen in öffentlicher Verantwortung in Rheinland-Pfalz. Online verfügbar unter: <https://mffjv.rlp.de/zuletzt-abgerufen:25.01.2023>.

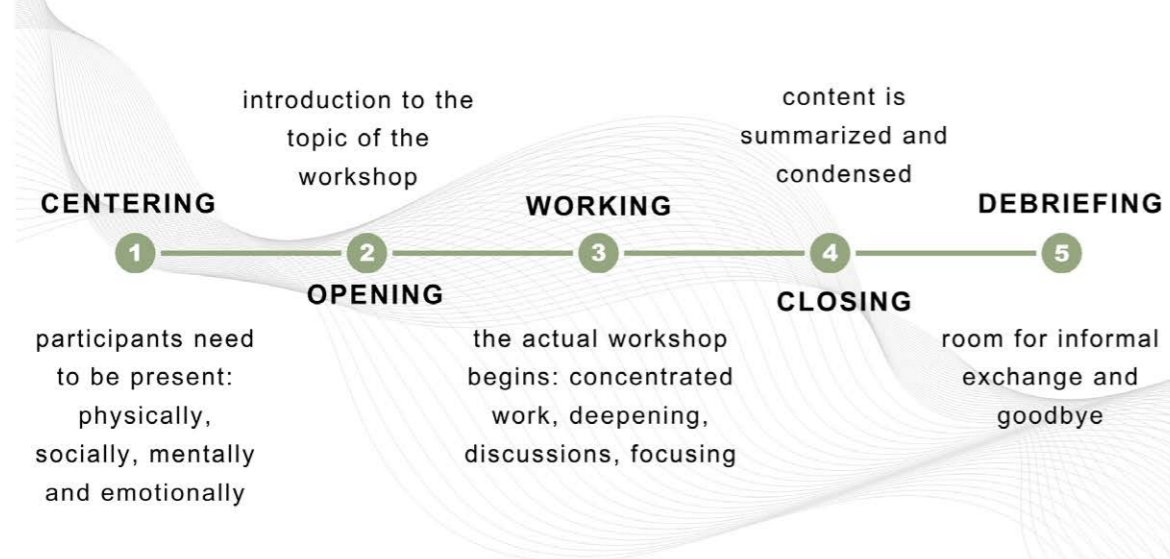
TECHNICAL ASPECTS

- It cannot be taken for granted that everyone knows the tools used.
- Registration is sometimes needed.
- Not all tools are for free.
- Stable Internet is a must (online workshops are therefore not fully inclusive).
- Adequate technical equipment (a mobile phone is not always enough) and a private room is needed.
- Data protection has to be taken into consideration.

SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

- Be aware that perception of each other is different online.
- You need rules that are the basis for interacting online.
- Arriving in the digital space needs more effort.
- Communication culture: no interruptions, various channels can be used (voice, chat, separate "rooms" etc.)
- Emotions: perception is different (and harder) online.

DESIGN OF THE PROCESS FOR ONLINE EVENTS



CHECK LIST

- To keep in mind as a facilitator: onboarding and digital cooperation
- Take care of not only content, but social and technical aspects and issues.
- See yourself as a host and create a welcoming, "warm" space.
- Actively involve the group, for example through icebreakers and energizers (by group members).



image: Frepik.com



P4C MEETS DIGITAL: OUR PILOT WORKSHOP AND WHAT WE LEARNT FROM IT

4.1 IDEA OF AN ONLINE P4C WORKSHOP

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We are convinced that the “Philosophy for Children” method is very well suited to train young people in critical thinking. This skill has always been valuable, but is becoming even more important nowadays, feeling an increasing difficulty of identifying fake news on the internet. Young people are also influenced by (new) conflicts and wars in the world, extending the need for the ability to think critically and discuss respectfully.

As described above, there are a few hurdles to overcome with online workshops. In view of the various advantages - especially in terms of accessibility and resource efficiency - and our in-depth knowledge of online (relationship) work with young people, we would nevertheless like to present an approach to how P4C can work online.

Therefore, we have developed, tested and evaluated a P4C pilot workshop - which we reflect on in the following chapters. They shall help you understand which aspects of the method can be easily transferred to the digital space, which points need to be considered and where the limits of transfer lie.

4.2 PLANNING A DIGITAL P4C WORKSHOP

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The basic idea behind the concept was to present the course of the previous face-to-face workshop as similarly as possible in the digital space. At the same time, it is essential for an online adaptation that the special features of digital meetings are taken into account. Above all, these are:

- Sufficient time for technical challenges
- Special icebreakers that also create human closeness in the digital space
- Taking into account the generally lower attention span and ability to concentrate online

The focus of the online adaptation was the selection of suitable digital tools. These were selected on the basis of experience and suggestions from the face-to-face

4.2.1 DIGITAL TOOLS

The following tools are particularly suitable for implementing a P4C online workshop (next page):

ZOOM

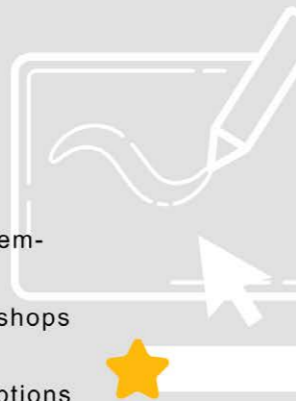
- widely used video conference platform
- communication online in real time, user-friendly interface
- features: video and audio calls, chat, screen sharing, ability to create breakout rooms
- different subscription plans including a free version with basic features



<https://zoom.us>

MURAL

- digital collaboration platform
- virtual whiteboard where users can share and modify images, texts and other media
- teams work together on ideas, projects, problem-solving or even play together in real time
- used for brainstorming sessions, design workshops and project management
- free version (limited features) or paid subscriptions



<https://www.mural.co/>

GATHER.TOWN

- virtual event platform, interactive, spatial environment
- participants move through virtual spaces to interact: talk, share files, work together in groups
- events such as conferences, workshops and virtual trade fairs mimic the interactivity and sense of community of a physical meeting
- self-designed rooms vs. existing ones can be used
- price range from a free version to paid plans



<https://www.gather.town/>

STORYDICE

- free website (as of 2023), serves as a creative tool to tell stories or generate ideas
- virtual dice with different images
- random combinations of images serve as inspiration for stories, poems or other creative projects or brainstorming sessions

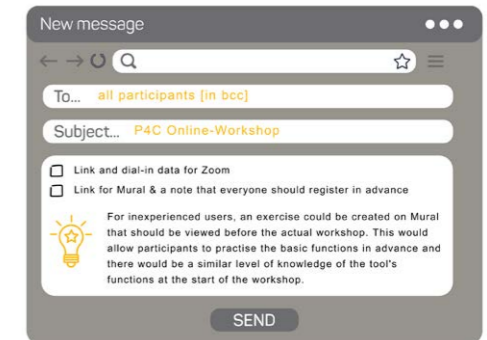


<https://davebirss.com/storydice>

4.2.2 PROCEDURE OF THE ONE-AND-A-HALF-DAY ONLINE WORKSHOP

With these preliminary considerations in mind, the following workshop procedure was developed:

An email was sent to all participants in advance, in which information about the project and the objectives of the workshop were communicated, but also very practical procedures were clarified:



WORKSHOP PROCEDURE DAY 1 (APPROX. 5 HOURS INCL. BREAKS)

- 0 PRESENCE OF THE TRAINER TEAM IN THE MEETING ROOM
15 minutes before the start of the workshop | Zoom
- 1 ICE BREAKER AND INTRODUCTION GAMES
25 minutes | Zoom
 - "Fetch objects" or "Name Bazar"
- 2 GETTING TO KNOW THE MURAL PLATFORM
40 minutes | Zoom and Mural
 - "Place of desire" (25 minutes)
 - Agreement on rules for collaborating (15 minutes)
- BREAK (10 minutes)
- 3 ACTIVITIES INTRODUCING CRITICAL THINKING / P4C
65 minutes | Zoom and Mural
 - Quality of Life (25 minutes)
 - Naughtyometer (25 minutes)
 - ABC big ideas (15 minutes)
- LUNCH BREAK (60 minutes)
- 4 RECAP OF THE MORNING
10 minutes | Zoom and "Storydice"
- 5 GETTING TO KNOW THE GATHER.TOWN PLATFORM
50 minutes | Gather.town
- 5 INTRODUCTION TO THE P4C METHOD + EXERCISES
90 minutes | Gather.town
 - Introduction P4C method (10 minutes)
 - Asking philosophical questions (20 minutes)
- BREAK (10 minutes)
 - Clock Game (25 minutes)
 - Questions quadrant (25 minutes)
- 5 FAREWELL AND SHORT FEEDBACK ON THE DAY

WORKSHOP PROCEDURE DAY 2 (3 HOURS INCL. BREAKS)

- 0 PRESENCE OF THE TRAINER TEAM IN THE MEETING ROOM
15 minutes before the start of the workshop | Gather.town
- 1 WARM-UP GAME
5 minutes | Gather.town
- 2 RUN THROUGH A COMPLETE P4C ENQUIRY
120 minutes in total | Gather.town
 - Preparation
 - Presentation of the stimulus
 - Time for individual reflection
 - Time for reflection in groups
 - Formulation of a philosophical question in groups
 - Presentation of the questions
 - Selection of a question
- BREAK (10 minutes)
 - "First Words" - start of the discussion about the question
 - "Building" - discussion unfolds
 - "Last thoughts"
- 3 REFLECTION ON THE P4C WORKSHOP
20 minutes | Gather.town
- 4 EXPECTATIONS FROM DAY 1
10 minutes | Gather.town
- 5 FAREWELL

⁵ Tip: a good tool to plan your workshop is SessionLab (not free of charge). For more info see <https://app.sessionlab.com/>

DAY 1

4.3 CONDUCTING THE P4C ONLINE WORKSHOP

4.3.1 TECHNIQUE AND METHODOLOGY

For the successful implementation of the workshop, we recommend to check the following aspects:

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP ACTUALLY STARTS:

- the workshop leaders familiarise themselves with the tools used
- the workshop should be rehearsed with colleagues or other test persons before it is held
- the power supply, video and audio functions are checked beforehand
- the workshop leaders provide an internal technical schedule for the workshop that specifies exactly what happens when and on which platform

WHILE THE ACTUAL WORKSHOP IS CONDUCTED:

- a stable internet connection is guaranteed for the duration of the entire workshop
- a second screen is helpful (but not a must)
- the workshop is led by at least two people
- ideally: there is another person who is available to answer technical questions
- the person not currently moderating should keep an eye on the time
- scheduled breaks should be adhered to and the workshop should end on time as online events are more strenuous than face-to-face events.

4.3.2 PROCEDURE

Icebreaker and introductory games | Zoom

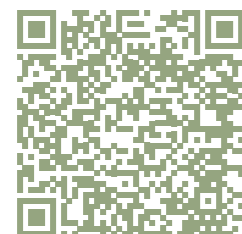
Fetch Objects on Zoom: Participants are asked to fetch an object from their surroundings and point it at the camera that they can use to describe themselves or their current situation.

“Name Bazar” on Zoom: Participants are asked to replace their name in Zoom with as many underscores as there are letters in their name. In this way, “Jenny” becomes “_ _ _ _ _”. In the meantime (or beforehand), the workshop leader creates a few breakout rooms according to the number of participants. The group’s task is now to move through the rooms and find the letters of their name. Only someone with an “a” in their name can assign an “a”. The winner is the person who first collected all letters for his/her name. Attention: Remember to ask people to change back to their full name after the game.

Getting to know the Mural platform | Zoom & Mural

In the “Place of Desire” exercise, the workshop leader creates a world map on Mural before hand. During the exercise, the participants’ task is to mark their favourite place using sticky notes, add photos, draw lines etc. In this way, the participants become familiar with the basic functions of the platform.

Please check out Mural for more examples:

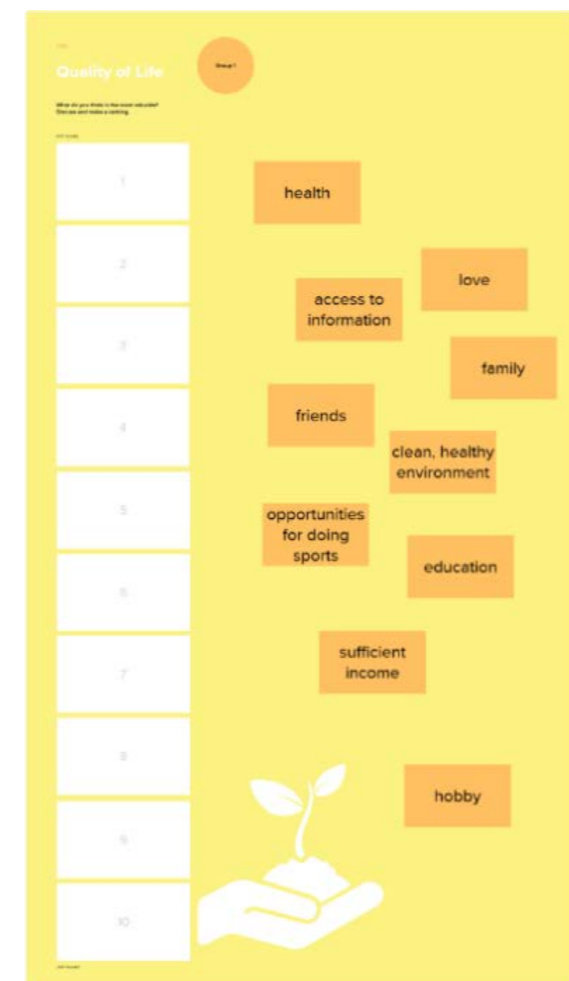


Zoom Mural

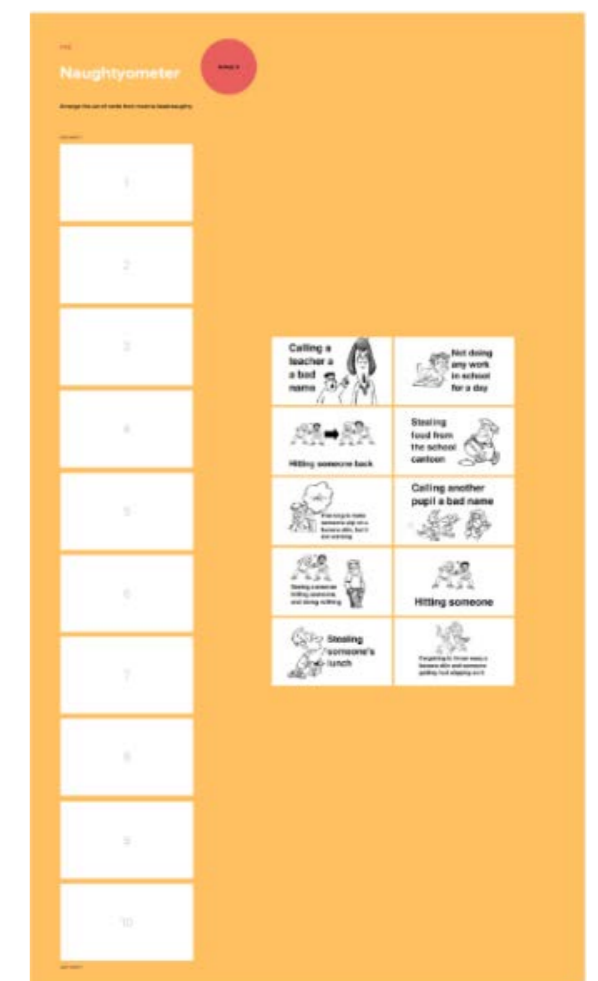
Agreement on rules for collaboration in the workshop | Zoom & Mural

Agreement on mural: Only one area with the heading “Agreement” needs to be prepared. The participants discuss via Zoom which rules they want to agree on (e.g. letting others finish, active participation, etc.). These are recorded in writing or as notes. If all participants are satisfied with the result, they sign by hand.

Activities to introduce the topic of critical thinking/P4C | Zoom & Mural



Quality of Life on Mural



Naughtyometer on Mural

Recap of the previous workshop with Storydice | Zoom

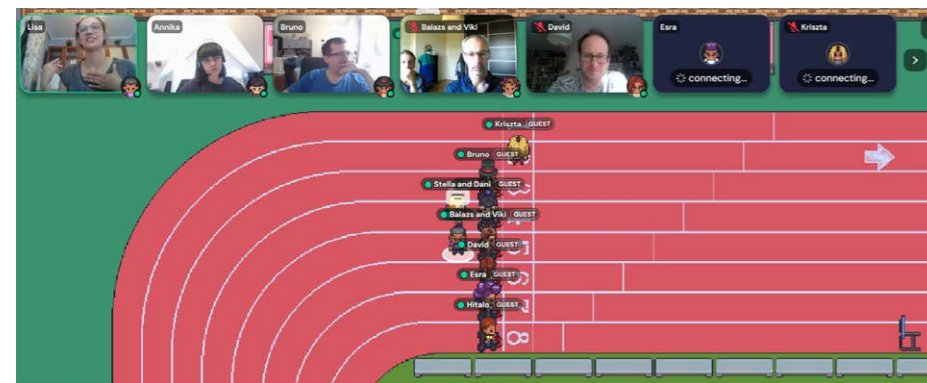
The workshop leader opens Storydice (see above) and shares the screen. He or she rolls the dice and asks one of the participants to choose a graphic and use it to briefly summarise e.g.

- What he or she took away from the previous day/previous activities
- How he or she feels (about the day, about a topic)
- What he or she expects from the day/the workshop etc.

Getting to know the platform Gather.town | Gather.town

The workshop leader explains the [basic functions](#), which everyone can try out straight away: Walking, changing rooms, “private spaces”, “spotlight”, following each other, dancing and throwing confetti. Afterwards, other functions like interacting with media (texts, films, photos) are introduced.

A kart race is also a fun way to get to know the platform.



Gather.town

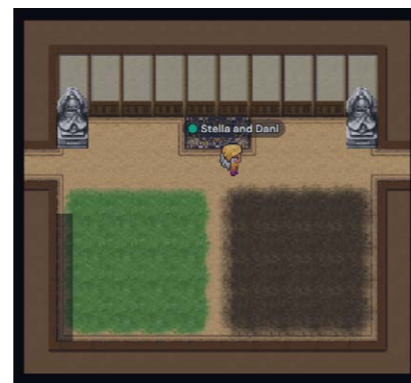
The rooms and games must be prepared in advance. Enough time should be allowed to deal with technical difficulties. The more advanced and homogeneous the group is in terms of technical understanding, the easier it will be to get to know the platform.

Introduction to the P4C method | Gather.town

The workshop facilitator (or an external expert) places themselves in the “spotlight” on Gather.town so that he or she can be heard by all participants. There he or she gives a brief introduction to the concept orally - possibly including parts of the screen (see chapter 2).

Activity “Asking philosophical questions” | Gather.town

This activity works in exactly the same way as the face-to-face workshop. However, instead of answering the question “Is this question philosophical?”, the participants’ avatars go to the green field (yes) or the brown field (no). If they feel like they have made up their mind and want to stay with their position, they are asked to start dancing. That way the facilitator knows who is still thinking and who is ready to proceed.



Gather.town

Activity “Clock Game” | Gather.town

Each participant will be asked to grab a piece of paper (or virtual whiteboard) to draw their own clock, representing their schedule. Participants will interact with one another to schedule appointments, ensuring a complete set of appointments on their clocks. The facilitator will ensure no participant has an empty schedule. The facilitator will assign a set of intriguing questions to each hour on the clocks. Questions could be for example:

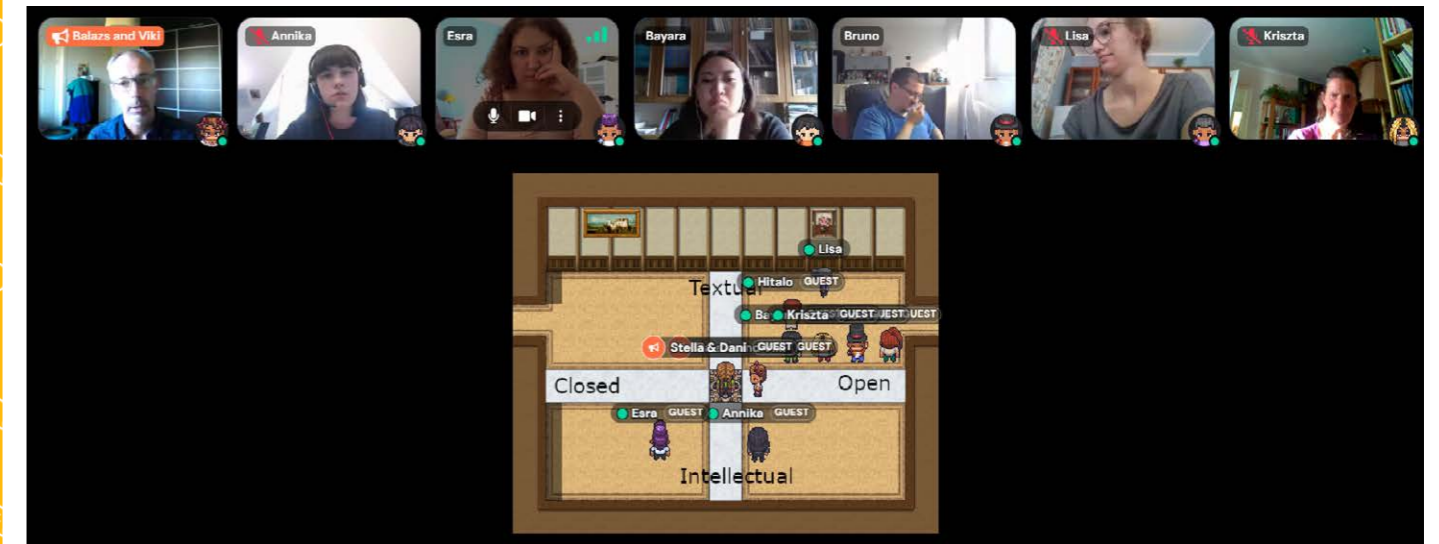
What chore do you hate doing?

Who do you consider to be your hero?

What was your favourite age growing up?

If you had only one sense (hearing, touch, sight, etc.), which would you want?

Participants will meet their appointed counterparts in private spaces and engage in meaningful conversations based on the assigned question. The facilitator will determine the duration for each conversation, typically ranging from 3 to 5 minutes.



Activity “Questions Quadrant” | Gather.town

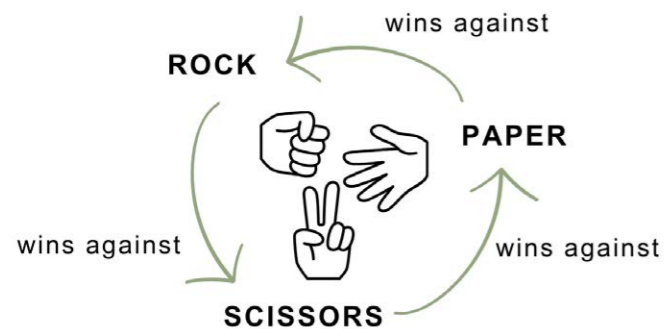
To save time you can prepare the English ABC before the session. Clarify any concepts or ideas which are not clear or unknown to participants!

DAY 2

Warm-up game | Gather.town

The well-known children's game "Rock, Paper, Scissors" can also be played on Zoom or Gather.town. It is important that the participants have their camera switched on. The game works in this way:

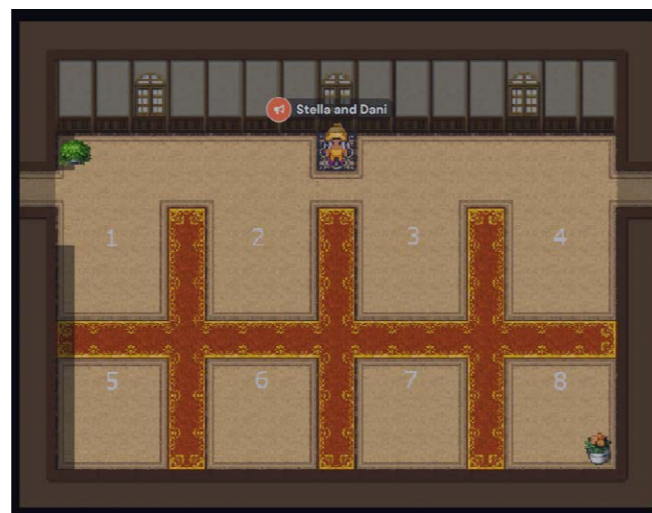
- Each participant chooses another participant to play against (participants only need to know who they are playing against - not who is playing against them).
- The workshop leader counts to three and at the same time everybody shows scissors, rock or paper.
- Whoever loses turns off their camera.
- The winner is the last person who still has their camera switched on.



Run through a complete P4C enquiry | Gather.town

1. **Preparation:** The group meets in a room with a circle of chairs or similar. There should be a "spotlight" so that the workshop leader can explain the process to everyone. The workshop leader also refers to the 4-C premises (see 2.6), which are available as a document in the room and can be viewed by the participants.
2. **Presentation of the stimulus:** The stimulus (e.g. a picture, a video or a soundtrack) was previously placed in the room by the workshop leader. Now the participants are asked to look at it.

3. **Time for individual reflection:** The participants are given time to reflect on what they have seen.
4. **Time for reflection in groups:** The participants are divided into small groups and asked to meet in "private spaces". The room may have to be changed for this. The participants are then given time to discuss what they have seen in their group.
5. **Formulation of a philosophical question in groups:** Groups create open, discussable questions to put forward to the class.
6. **Presentation of the questions:** All participants step out of their private spaces. Then one group after the other presents their question. To do so, the person presenting steps into the "spotlight". Questions are honoured, analysed and compared. Ambiguities or vaguenesses are cleared up, links often suggested, but also significant differences noted. When a question has been finalised with the help of the group, it is posted in the chat.
7. **Selection of a question:** To agree on a question, the participants go into a prepared room with as many numbers on the floor as there are questions to choose from. The participants are now asked to stand by the number of their favourite question. The number that gets the most votes is going to be the one discussed.



Gather.town

8. **"First Words" - start of the discussion about the question:** Getting the enquiry/dialogue started. One way is to invite the group whose question is voted for explain their thoughts on it. 'Think-pair-share' can be a good starter, too, or asking for a proposal/ response to the question.
9. **"Building" - discussion unfolds:** Once the question / dialogue opens up, the metaphor of 'building' is key: building on each other's ideas, and towards better understanding of the concepts / issue(s) arising. The word is passed on by participants raising their virtual hand, posting an emoji or throwing confetti. The workshop facilitator can consider setting a rule for participation (e.g. everyone must say something at least once and may say it no more than three times).
10. **"Last thoughts":** A chance for the participants to say their final words on what has been discussed. Often those who haven't contributed during the session do so here and show they have been engaged. Different key aspects may be suggested.

Reflection and Farewell | Gather.town

We suggest ending the workshop with a closing / debriefing phase, see end of chapter 3. This can include asking the participants for their experiences and feelings after the workshop is over. The facilitator can also take a look at the expectation bingo from day one to see how far expectations have been met.

4.4 WORKSHOP EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

In order to evaluate the quality of the pilot workshop and, above all, to make improvements, we asked the participants for feedback via an online survey. These were our findings:

- Overall, the participants were very satisfied with the workshop.
- Just over half see advantages in face-to-face

workshops as well as online workshops. Just under half state that it is more strenuous to take part in an online workshop.

- All participants had the impression that there was a pleasant and trusting relationship between the participants. This shows that it was worth investing time in games, getting to know each other and adopting common rules.
- The majority of participants believe that the P4C method can be taught online.
- Having a look at the used digital tools, Mural received the most approval, followed by Zoom. Feedback on Gather.town was mixed.

With Mural and Gather.town, we were particularly interested in getting detailed feedback from the participants. In our view, these platforms are particularly suitable for implementing the games and exercises of a P4C workshop.

	PRO	CONTRA
MURAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple, versatile, interactive and efficient tool • feels like actually being in the same room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • registration needed • it takes time to get used to the functions - more instructions needed
GATHER.TOWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fun and realistic to walk between different rooms • playful elements e.g. graphics, kartgame etc. can make meetings and events more exciting • impressing amount of possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical hurdles as biggest disadvantage (sound + connection problems, delayed movements) • limitation of 10 persons in the free version • high demands on technical equipment + digital skills • big differences in equipment + skills can make team work difficult

However, all participants would at least use one of the presented digital tools for their own work.

Learnings

The pilot workshop was intended to show that and how a “Philosophy for Children” workshop can be transferred to the digital space. Our experiences and the feedback from the participants clearly show that there is great potential here. However, in order to better implement further workshops of this kind, we would consider these points in future:

TECHNICAL PART

- Make sure that everybody can login to all platforms before the workshop to avoid draining waiting time.
- The biggest hurdle on Gather.town is that you can only hear people right next to you. That is why the facilitator should always be on “spotlight”.
- Private rooms should have an extra seat for the facilitators, so he or she can enter the conversation to help.
- The role of the facilitator is bigger and more demanding. He or she should be more active than online. That’s why there should be at least two people. Ideally, there is an additional person that takes care of technical issues.
- Technical problems will most likely occur. Prepare yourself for this - e.g. by building in a time buffer.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Tools could have been shown even more (slowly): Give step-by-step instructions with easy-to-follow activities to get to know the platform. Ask even small things (“can you hear me”) and expect less from participants.
- Take the time to tell people what’s coming next and why we’re doing it.
- Make it playful! It’s worth it to invest time in gaming.
- Working with online tools and especially with Gather.town is demanding. Depending on the group, less activities or less different platforms might be a good choice.
- The facilitators must combine solid know-how about the P4C method as well as about delivering online workshops to give participants the best experience.
- In digital space, it’s harder to feel the atmosphere among the participants. Ask for feedback in the chat or with emotion on a regular basis to keep in touch with the mood of the group. Also, regularly ask if participants need a break.
- The more familiar participants are with the tool the more they are able to focus on P4C. Also, you need more time if you want people to learn online methods and P4C



5

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ACCOMPANYING USE OF PR

The target group for the P4C workshop is young people. They are online for large parts of the day - especially on social media platforms. In order to get them to participate in a P4C workshop or to communicate important messages from the workshops, it is worth accompanying the workshops with online communication. This includes articles on the website of the organization offering the workshop, but above all, of course, social media communication.

In order to use communication around the P4C workshop sensibly, these key questions should be answered:

- Who exactly is my target group (age, gender, education level, etc.)?
- Where can I find this target group online?
- What channels do I have available?
- How can I sensibly accompany my workshop with communication from conception to final report?

The most important thing is the target group and where they spend their time online. For example, young people will mainly be on Instagram or TikTok. Youth work professionals, on the other hand, still use Facebook a lot. Many people who work professionally with young people are also on the professional network LinkedIn. Those who want to reach the media and politicians have good opportunities on X (formerly Twitter). It is important to consider country-specific characteristics here, as the platforms are used differently in different countries.

This analysis is then compared with the available channels. For example, if an organization does not have an Instagram account but wants to reach its target group here, it can ask friendly organizations with an Instagram account whether they would distribute a post.

Then it's time to plan the content. Different post formats are suitable for drawing attention to the "Philosophy for Children" method itself and to workshop offers:

- Explanatory posts: "Did you know that..." to introduce the method itself.
- Posts that arouse curiosity: "What is actually a philosophical question"?

- "Antonia, 24: "There are often arguments in my youth group about pictures or statements from the internet. How can I moderate a polite discussion about this?"

Once the social media community is somewhat attuned to the topic, the workshops can be announced in concrete terms:

- "You work with young people and would like to try out the P4C method? Then book a free workshop with us. We'll come to your school."
- "On 12.03.2027 we are offering an online workshop on the P4C method. Here you will learn how to discuss critical issues in a group and how to have a polite conversation about controversial topics."

Of course, this works very well via social media. But websites, newsletters or events can also be used for this.

During the workshop, you can then post photos, screenshots and video sequences - with the consent of the participants or their parents, of course. If you have an active community on social media, you can even involve them in the workshop and let your community participate directly with questions such as "Which of these questions is philosophical?" or "What are your first thoughts on this stimulus?". The undelayed accompaniment with online communication gives a deeper insight into your work and makes other people curious about your workshops.

After the workshop, for example, you can post statements from participants, ideally with a photo or video. The results of an opinion poll among workshop participants is also a good way to prepare content for social media. For older target groups, you can also post a follow-up report on your website, write a press release or write a newsletter article with photos.

Communication is always an extra task - the authors are aware of that. But it is worth it to get more attention, participants and interest for your own offers.

6

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

Our pilot project has convinced us that P4C can be easily adapted to the online space, if we can find the right online tools. We hope we have succeeded. We encourage the readers to feel free to experiment by discovering and adapting new tools themselves.

We are convinced that P4C works best face to face, but a hybrid or a fully online version can also be used if circumstances require.

In our experience, the P4C method engages learners easily and provides a learning experience that benefits all participants. Learners can discuss issues that really interest them and the facilitator can monitor the development of their thinking in situ.

P4C workshops are well suited to being accompanied by PR - especially social media. They always include challenging topics, interesting discussions and are often aimed at a young, social media-savvy group. There are therefore many ways to draw attention to the workshops with PR work before, during and after the workshops and thus attract more participants to the offer.

Good luck with it, and enjoy the process!

