

Is Matthew Lipman's Communities of Philosophical Inquiry a Better Pedagogical Modal for Teaching Virtue Ethics?

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to propose an alternative pedagogical modal for teaching Aristotle's Virtue Ethics than the one used at the discussed institution. Communities of Philosophical Inquiry (COPI), a pedagogical modal developed by Matthew Lipman, contains elements often associated with learner-led teaching. The COPI lesson is thought to build on a value of community as defined by Lipman, which should aid learners with expressing their opinions and strengthen inclusivity. By increasing learners' autonomy, a discussion between learner to learner is thought to be more likely to take place, and when discussion takes place learning is thought to be more likely to occur. De Bono's Hats are used to scaffold the question-making task included in the COPI lesson. To measure if learning took place or not, it is suggested that a colleague observes the lesson as it is conducted and fills in a tally chart, based on The Classroom Practices Record. The tally chart categorizes critical thinking with De Bono's Hats, calculating the variety and frequency of questions used. This creates a means to compare the COPI lesson with the institution's lesson plan to see which is more likely to facilitate learning. Gibbs' Reflective Modal is employed for evaluation and analysis, providing a means of improving upon the findings.

1. Introduction

I planned and conducted a lesson on Virtue Ethics at my institution to try and improve an aspect of my teaching practice. I chose to facilitate discussion, as I have three years of teaching experience and feel that I am unconsciously competent in other areas. I am not consistently successful at facilitating discussions. Additionally, I wanted to improve the group discussions had in Religion and Philosophy (RP). To do this, I constructed my lesson based on pedagogy developed by Mathew Lipman (1980), called 'Communities of Philosophical Inquiry' (COPI). As COPI is set out to be largely learner-led, I hoped it should engage learners in active behaviour that could be conducive to active learning, rather than passive learning. I explain these terms in the section entitled 'Setting the scene'. I assess learning through observation, using my own, and having asked a colleague to fill out a tally chart while observing the class. These observations were used to create an improved lesson plan using Gibbs' Reflective Model.

As Lipman (1980) writes 'when people engage in dialogue with one another, they are compelled to reflect, to concentrate, to consider alternatives, to listen closely, to give careful attention to definitions and meanings, to recognise previously unthought-of options, and in general to perform a lot of mental activities that they might not have engaged in had the conversation never occurred'. It seems likely that not all conversations contain the elements that Lipman describes, and even if they do, determining if learning took place from such a conversation would be very challenging to measure, if possible. That said, I agree that most conversations probably incorporate these features and that engaging in such discourse can be conducive to learning. I have chosen facilitating discussion to be the area of my teaching practice that I wish to improve upon.

COPI is based on theories of community and inquiry by Pierce, Dewy, and Lipman (1900, 1910, 1980). The value of 'community' will help build an inclusive learning environment in which learners can voice their beliefs and opinions. The collective inquiry should

help engage my learners in critical thinking skills. I have also used De Bono's Hats (1999) to help scaffold (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976) cognitive modes within critical thinking. I explain both terms in the section entitled Theoretical Approach.

Assessment for learning is possible through observation, explained in the section entitled 'Setting the scene', though assessment of learning is much more challenging. I base the tally chart, which categorises critical thinking with De Bono's Hats, on the 'Classroom Practices Record' form, both explained in the section Theoretical Approach and Critical Review. I hope to measure engagement with active behaviour through dialogue, that could be conducive to active learning. I used Gibbs' (1998) Reflective Model for evaluation and analysis. I picked this model due to its use of a cycle, meaning that the produced action plan at the end can be worked on in the same way to produce another improved lesson plan. This system seems to encourage ongoing improvement. Moreover, I chose the model over others because I wanted to reflect-on-action, rather than Schon's (1983) reflect-in-action, to develop an improved lesson plan. These terms are explained in the section entitled Critical Review.

This article seeks to propose an alternative pedagogical modal for teaching Aristotle's Virtue Ethics than the one used at the institution discussed. Communities of Philosophical Inquiry (COPI), a pedagogical modal developed by Matthew Lipman, contains elements often associated with learner-led teaching. The COPI lesson is thought to build on a value of 'community' which will aid learners with expressing their opinions and aid inclusivity. By increasing learners' autonomy, a discussion between learner to learner is thought to be more likely to take place, and when discussion takes place learning is thought to be more likely to occur. De Bono's Hats are used to scaffold the question-making task included in the COPI lesson. To measure whether learning took place or not, it is suggested that a colleague observes the lesson as it is conducted and fills in a tally chart, based on The Classroom Practices Record. The tally chart categorises critical thinking with De Bono's Hats, calculating the variety and frequency of questions used. This creates a means to compare the COPI lesson and the institution's lesson plan to see which is more likely to facilitate learning. Gibbs' reflective modal is employed for evaluation and analysis, providing a means of improving upon the findings.

2. Setting the scene

2.1 Context of teaching

My teaching placement was a Catholic Sixth Form College in London, which offered both academic and vocational subjects. Though called Religion and Philosophy at the college, the National Open College Network (NOCN) award is in General Religious Education. GRE levels one and two consist of eight modules. To provide evidence to NOCN, the college has created a booklet, which, once completed, covers all the marking criteria. The booklets are not long, level one at ten pages and level two at thirteen. That said, based on my observations in-class and of work completed, each learner in my class seems more than capable of completing the assessment booklet. As the learners do not need extra support with completing the booklets, it is the discussion lessons, that do not use the booklets, that learners need additional support in.

In some lessons, learning is assessed in other ways that are discussed under the subsequent subheading. RP is made obligatory for every learner at the college to attend. The learners are of mixed ability and have chosen to study a variety of disciplines. Learners sometimes verbally expressed in my classes that they did not wish to attend, as they have not chosen RP. These learners often do not contribute to class discussion. Members of staff frequently comment that it is difficult to facilitate discussion in RP at all. By trying to develop my professional practice through implementing COPI, I can address the needs of my learners, attempting to improve engagement in the discussion and, hopefully, the subject.

NOCN (2019) states that a purpose of the GRE program is that 'The qualifications will also allow them to develop and articulate their points of view about religion and be able to apply these to every day events'. Moon (2008), in her book *Critical Thinking An Exploration of Theory and Practice*, though making clear that critical thinking encompasses a wide selection of cognitive processes, defines critical thinking as 'the examination of an idea thoroughly and in-depth rather than taking it at its face value'. To improve learners at developing and applying viewpoints I wish to stimulate their critical thinking skills through active behaviour, which I hope to lead to active learning, explained under the subsequent subheading. Critical thinking encompasses a multiplicity of cognitive functions, necessary for teaching the content on philosophy in the RP syllabus. Developing and then applying a viewpoint is intrinsically under the remit of critical thinking.

RP is used to teach learners topics made obligatory by the Catholic Education Service (CES). A concern of mine is that by combining teachings that the CES wants a Catholic school to teach with the GRE curriculum, the search for individual truth paramount to critical thinking could be undermined. Whilst individual expression is fostered through inclusive practice in the RP lessons I have observed, I have also observed teachings or inferences made that Catholic teachings are superior to other religious teachings. This may undermine the development of individual critical thinking skills. Through COPI, Catholic teaching can be explored as a community rather than be prescribed as true, making secular facilitators and learners who do not feel this way perhaps more comfortable with the content. I explain COPI in the section entitled Theoretical Approach.

2.2 Context of chosen lesson taught

I picked the Virtue Ethics lesson taught at level two for this assignment as it is not marked through the completion of the booklet. I have observed every RP facilitator at the college teach RP. Though I have not seen every lesson, each facilitator struggles to facilitate discussion. As mentioned, learners do not need support with completing the booklets, most study a level three course, other than three learners who do Business BTEC level two. I think my learners need support to have better group discussions. I wish to use the COPI model to see if I can increase discussion and to see if I can take anything from the COPI model to improve my practice. My class profile was highly diverse. Eleven were female, three were male. Their ethnicities consisted of five black Caribbean learners, six black African learners, two Caucasian English learners, and one Caucasian Spanish learner. Between them, five different faiths were followed. I thought that because of this, the learners needed an inclusive environment, to protect them from potential prejudice but also so that they feel able to contribute. I employed COPI to do this, explained in the section entitled Theoretical Approach. The class profile can be seen in the Appendix.

Wallace (2015) writes on active learning 'Learning which encourages the pupil or student to engage actively with what is being learned through activities such as group discussion, role play, or experimentation, rather than passively receiving and memorizing knowledge or instruction from the teacher in order to be able to repeat it accurately'. The latter definition is also known as passive learning. However, though I can measure active behaviour through engagement in discussion, active behaviour does not guarantee that learning took place. There are commonly more planned activities that are expected to elicit passive behaviour in a normal RP lesson than my COPI one. The facilitator often will sit at the front of the class and teach the content of the lesson, in a manner typical for passive learning. Dialogue is often generated between facilitator and learner, if at all. By employing the COPI model, I hope to increase the amount of engagement through active behaviour in the discussion, to induce active learning, so that the learner's ability to critically think is improved. This should encourage the development of their points of view and beliefs.

Though NOCN (2019) can grant the qualification once they have received the completed booklets, they also state assessment should take place through 'Tutor observation, Class discussion, One to one, Group tutorial discussion'. As the level two lesson on Virtue Ethics is not a booklet lesson, it is through class discussion and tutor observation that my lesson will assess learner lead discussion, and its relevance to critical thinking. I use assessment as learning as Clarke (2008) writes 'Assessment as learning includes any assessment practice which extends what to improve into how to improve'. As the tasks are all aimed at increasing the ability of learners, the assessment is 'as' learning.

NOCN (2019) states the requirements of marking criterion 6.1 'Explain their individual position with regard to two key issues within religious debate'. To evidence that learning has taken place towards meeting this assessment criterion and others, I asked a colleague to observe and fill out a tally sheet, seen in the Appendix. The tally sheet determines what type of critical faculty the learner verbally expressed. However, the data can only show if a student verbally engaged in critical discussion, not if learning took place. I used Gibbs' reflective model to produce an improved lesson plan based on my experience, explained in the following section.

3. Description of key elements

3.1 Gibbs' Reflective Model

Gibbs (1998) based his experimental learning cycle on Kolb's (1984) experimental learning theory, who writes 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience'. The experiential learning cycle aims to process reflections on situations to innovate and improve their results. This is referred to as reflection-on-action, reflecting on an event after it happened. Gibbs' sets out a framework by which reflective experience can be analysed and improved upon.

The categories that Gibbs' suggests are Description, Feeling, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, and Action Plan. Gibbs' Reflective Model provides a means to interpret my lesson and to develop and improve it. I write on Gibbs' categories in the section entitled 'Critical review and reflection on changes to future practice' to offer improvements to my lesson. As I am using my observations for reflection, there is a possibility that I could make incorrect assumptions. I have not collected any data for content analysis, so all data used is based on my perception of the lesson. That said, as it is a cycle, the action plan can be put into place and the results put through the same process. I hope that repetition may make up for the lack of data.

3.2 Communities of Philosophical inquiry

Ndofirepi and Musengi (2019) cite Lipman (1991) writing that the key elements of a successful COPI are:

- 1) the communal reading of a text
- 2) the construction of an agenda, i.e. the identification of questions which the reading of the text has raised and the cooperative decision about where to begin the discussion;
- 3) solidification, which includes the articulation of positions and counter positions, the definition of terms under discussion, and the search for criteria by which to make sound judgements about the subject;
- 4) exercises and discussion plans, based on the ideas in the text
- 5) further responses, which may be in the form of creative writing, dramatization, art, or some other modality'.

My COPI lesson on Virtue Ethics consisted of five tasks, four of which correspond to Lipman's key elements while the last activity acts as a summary of the lesson objectives. There were three lesson objectives which are mentioned under the below subheadings.

3.3 Further Responses

I used Lipman's Further Responses stage first. My reasoning for this is that Dewey (1916) describes creative inquiry as to the rearranging of information we already possess. Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980) write 'To be engaged in art-to be the fabricator of a work of art-is to be engaged in the organizing of parts into wholes'. I hoped to elicit prior knowledge through the creative medium of illustration, also creating a stimulus for initiating discussion. The created visual representation of learners' prior knowledge is referred to at the end of the lesson, enabling a metacognitive activity in which the learners think about their previous thinking. The learners will be able to see if their positions have adapted or changed.

3.4 The communal reading of a text/Constructing an agenda

Activity two focuses on elements one and two, the reading of a text collectively and the construction of an agenda. Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980) write 'There is a sense of forwarding movement having taken place. Something has been accomplished; a group product has been achieved'. The creation of an agenda, through setting order of which questions, should be asked when, is aimed to present a feeling of progress, as the learners are sorting through a limited number. This should increase engagement, while the learners writing their own questions is an active behaviour, which may be conducive to active learning.

3.5 Exercises and discussion plans

Activity three focuses on element four, exercises, and discussion plans. Rather than basing it on the reading, I based it on the second lesson objective 'to discover Aristotle's Golden Mean of some important virtues', as the content of the discussion exercise was the Golden Mean. This activity started with me leaving the circle to take a central stance next to the PowerPoint to explain Aristotle's Golden Mean.

The exercise was to number every other learner in the circle 'one', then to get that learner to stand up and move clockwise. Each learner is then seated next to a different learner. The learners were then asked to reflect on their illustrations from task one, concerning the Golden Mean. This was done to include lesson objective one, 'to reflect on one's moral character'.

3.6 Solidification

Activity four focuses on element three, which is to get learners thinking about counter positions to arguments and to get learners to use modes in which to search for criteria to make sound judgements. The mode that I wanted the learners to use was 'comparison', a crucial form of critical thinking used frequently in writing essays. This task also aligns with learning objective three, 'to assess whether religion can help a person become more virtuous'. Three of the four pictures have religious people undertaking virtuous acts, whilst the last picture was of a group of Muslims in a Chinese concentration camp.

3.7 Materials

The materials I used for this lesson were four A3 pictures which I printed in colour and laminated, each displaying religious denominations participating in activities. I also used a PowerPoint presentation, thirteen whiteboards with pens, and an edited news article.

3.8 Assessment

NOCN (2019) advise assessment for learning can be undertaken through observation, however, I have not found specific advice on how to conduct such an observation. How to determine with certainty that learning took place, solely through observation, seems impossible. I think this approach works well for assessment as learning, but an assessment for learning is much harder. To do this, I have developed an observation tally chart to count the differing critical faculties used, to be observed if learners were engaged in active behaviour. This can be seen in the Appendix. I based this tally chart on the Classroom Practices Record form, explained in the section entitled Justification of approach.

4. Theoretical approach

4.1 Community

A community of inquiry draws from Lipman's definition of a community, which is a shared sense of the values of respect, trust, and solidarity. I implemented this theory to support learners as a group through class discussion, to develop my practice at facilitating discussion, and to try and increase active behaviour that may lead to active learning. Musengi and Ndofirepi (2019) cite Lipman (1991) on 'community', writing 'value measured by the members' ability to exhibit qualities of community life in line with expectations, including tolerance, reciprocity, and trust. These attributes must be displayed voluntarily'. The values that are produced by a community are values that should aid in facilitating group inquiry, and group inquiry should engage learners in

active behaviour, which may be conducive to active learning. Lipman's value of community is thought to be built within its members over time, having longer to practise acting on the values and having longer to get to know and each other. Therefore, I believe the COPI model should replace the current model used by my placement, to be employed for the whole two years.

Kizel (2019) recommends using the COPI model for inclusive purposes and suggests a three-stage Enabling Identity Model to overcome what he names dynamics of power. I use the first of these stages. Dynamics of power include but are not limited to class, race, gender, sexuality, and religion. My class consisted of a variety of ethnicities and faiths. The risk is that when one dynamic of power outnumbers others, the larger may dominate the discourse. Kizel (2019) referred to this as micro-hegemony. Kizel suggests that to implement the first stage 'Each of the members of this community is a circle. Each circle/person has the right to ask questions regarding the things that interest him or her so that we can discuss them in various ways, primarily via questions'. As a visual representation of autonomy could possess a symbolic resonance, each one of my learners had a whiteboard to use for themselves instead.

4.2 Inquiry

Peirce (1910) cited in Ndofirepi and Musengi (2019), writes that communities are necessary for producing conflict with our conceptions of the world, and so are necessary for a change in thinking. Peirce (1910) writes that it is only through expressing our thinking to others that individuals change their ways of thinking and acting. Dewey (1916) cited in Kennedy (2012) supports this, claiming inquiry is inherently social interaction, and that inquiry should be within a community if it is to expose learners to new ways of thinking. In this way, theory on Inquiry can be used to support the learning of the class, by encouraging learners to progress each other's skills by engaging critically with each other in group discussion.

All that said, 'inquiry' remains a broad term that can refer to a multiplicity of cognitive faculties. However, the frames drawn by Peirce, Dewey, and Lipman make the term approachable and potentially pliable to a facilitator of COPI lessons. I have applied these theories as the learners seem to need to engage in discussion more, though I have not adopted the theory to suit the needs of individual learners. Rather, I have followed the theory, in the hope that if successful, individual learners will have the autonomy to support each other and themselves. These theories, if successfully applied, enable learners to have the potential to support each other's learning through group discussion. I hope to elicit this active behaviour, hoping that it could lead to active learning, ultimately aimed at improving critical thinking in learners.

4.3 De Bono's Hats and Scaffolding

Edward De Bono (1933) developed what he entitled Parallel Thinking. Rather than looking at a problem from separate positions, Parallel Thinking aims at getting learners or members of a meeting to think of a problem with the same critical faculty. De Bono categorised six critical modes into six hats, one 'hat' to be used at any time by a group. Payette and Barnes (2017) write 'We believe there is also value in adapting the Six Thinking Hats in ways that transcend de Bono's original usage'. I try to use the hats differently from the original usage as a means of scaffolding. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) write 'Scaffolding consists essentially of the adult "controlling" those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete those elements that are within his range of competence'. When displaying examples of sample questions for the learners to base their questions on, I based the structure on De Bono's Hats to encourage learners to use varying cognitive modes. This can be seen in the Appendix.

4.4 Justification of approach

Encouraging engagement in a critical discussion concerns my subject specialism, which is Religion and Philosophy, as not only are critical skills needed in its study, but also to 'do' philosophy, by which I mean to engage in critical thought. As there have been difficulties with facilitating discussion within RP lessons, I chose to implement the COPI pedagogy to see if this would improve. Whilst I do depend on the learners to stay focused on the suggested activities and for their co-operation, the theories on 'inquiry' and 'community' from the previous section offer a different approach to encourage learner-led discussion, active behaviour that could lead to active learning.

While I could have used other pedagogical models or techniques to elicit discussion, COPI seemed the most appropriate as it was originally developed to engage children in philosophical discussion, making it relevant to my subject area. It has grown to be used internationally with all age groups. I implemented COPI to try to improve how successfully learners developed their own opinions and beliefs, as the facilitator aims not at prescribing truth but rather the search for individual truth. I hope that this encouragement of self-directed active behaviour will stimulate active learning. While the lesson is not completely learner-led, Lipman (1980) advised not to fully equalise the learner and facilitator dynamic, because the discussion should follow a set of rules. COPI is an attempt to create a space where learners are encouraged to find their point of view, uninfluenced by the facilitator.

Though observation seems a suitable choice for assessment-as-learning, it is not enough for recording accurate data to use for assessment-of-learning. To increase the likelihood of determining if learning took place, I have based the observation form on the Classroom Practices Record. Though this record has six sections, the record was developed to determine if students seen as 'gifted' at certain institutions received better treatment than others. As my purpose is to record discussion, I based my form on the 'verbal records' section, Farah (2018) writing that it consists of 'Observer records information on all verbal interactions that occur between the teacher and target students. Codes are used to record who is involved in the verbal interaction (i.e., teaching adult, Target Student #1)'. I have followed this form, though reduced all verbal interactions to just verbal interactions that are under De Bono's categories.

I have used this model as it is simple, easy to apply, and has been used by educational professionals. Having a colleague record critical questions verbalised will help in assessing which learners were engaged in active behaviour, though it will not determine if learning took place. I have not included a summative assessment, which could provide me with data to analyse to try and determine if learning had taken place. That said, there is no guarantee that this data would determine if learning had taken place either. I expected the questionnaire to record some representative data of active behaviour, which could have led to active learning.

Gibbs' Reflective Model enables a means to improve the lesson plan through reflection-on-action, reflecting on an event after it has taken place. Though I chose this to help develop an improved lesson plan, I did miss out on the opportunities that reflection-in-practice could have offered. Schon (1983) writes on a skilled practitioner 'He develops a repertoire of expectations, images, and techniques. He learns what to look out for and how to respond to what he finds'. Schon suggests reflection-in-action starts with the correct application of tacit knowledge to complete a task successfully, which he calls knowing-in-action. He argues that skilled professionals acquire tacit knowledge, knowledge which is hard to articulate but often comes with mastery of a skill. He believed if this information were articulated it could be valuable.

Though Schön suggested practitioners should use both reflection-in-practice and reflection-on-practice, Schon wrote that a practitioner of a high level of skill could reflect-in-action, thinking critically about the actions they are doing while they are doing them. One of the benefits of this is to be able to do on-the-spot experiments, responding to a reflection mid-task to change the outcome. This kind of reflection seems more flexible and could perhaps improve the outcome of the planned lesson, such as by changing an activity that did not seem to be working. However, I do not think this would be as useful as reflection-on-action for developing an improved lesson, as I need to complete the activities to determine how successful they are. Furthermore, I am not a master at teaching. I have not yet completed a PGCE and have only three years' experience. It seems reflection-in-action is more successfully performed by a master at their occupation, which I am not.

5. Critical Review and reflection on changes to future practice

5.1 Further Responses

Description

At the start of the lesson, learners were reluctant to engage with the starter activity, though after approximately five minutes the learners began to draw. After drawing there was a small group discussion before they moved to the next task.

Feeling

I felt that the learners, to begin with, did not trust my approach. They questioned why I had asked them to draw 'traits' and I was worried that they would not engage in the lesson at all, as they did not seem to enjoy the activity.

Evaluation

On evaluation, although the learners not initially engaging with the task was negative, it was positive that their illustrations were used later to successfully elicit discussion.

Analysis

On analysis, I think learners did not engage initially with the task because the learners did not know how to draw a trait, as once the learners started drawing after their initial complaints, the learners seemed to engage with the task. They also appeared to be disengaged with the starter activity, partly as they seemed not to know why they were doing it. Some learners additionally expressed that they did not understand what a trait was. I should have explained the vocabulary at the beginning of class.

Conclusion

In the future, I would scaffold the task by having examples of potential illustrations they could copy or adapt. I would also include a definition of a trait on the PPT. This can be seen in the revised plan in the appendix.

5.2 The communal reading of a text/Constructing an agenda

Description

The learners seemed reluctant to engage in the reading at first, but by the time we had finished the reading, the learners had many questions they wanted to ask. I reminded them that we were now question-making, so they needed to write the questions on their boards to be answered by the group. Once we had finished writing questions, we set an order for which questions we should ask when. I stated that the whiteboard with their questions represented their right to speak. The learners followed these rules.

Feeling

This task felt exciting once it had commenced, as the learners took the lead of the lesson and seemed to enjoy themselves. The class discussion was lively.

Evaluation

On evaluation, the task itself had a positive outcome, as the learners were interested and engaged. That said, a negative outcome is that not all learners structured questions based on these samples. The PowerPoint displayed six example questions following De Bono's Six Hats method, but I did not explicitly mention their significance.

Analysis

On analysis, two learners had written the same question, so we started with that question. Once the community had decided we had sufficiently answered the question at hand, we turned that whiteboard over and moved to the next question. Once we had answered all the questions, we voted on how the man should be prosecuted. This part of the lesson was very successful and attained a high level of engagement, seemingly due to that there were a clear purpose and order to the discussion. During this activity, I barely had to talk other than setting the speaking order. However, learners would begin to speak over each other during the discussion. This seemed to display that I should have set clearer guidelines.

Conclusion.

Next time I would explain the link between the sample questions and critical thinking more explicitly, as well as the rules of the discussion. I will take this activity into my future practice.

5.3 Exercises and discussion plan*Description*

When I introduced Aristotle's Golden Mean, discussion on how courage is a virtue, but a lack or too much of this virtue can lead to it becoming a vice, did not happen smoothly. I had taken a more authoritarian role to prescribe this content to my learners which, though it worked, seemed disjointed. After this, the learners used the pictures they had drawn previously to discuss the Golden Mean.

Feeling

I felt that the learners did not like losing control of the direction of the lesson. I felt that they would have liked to continue with the previous activity. The learners seemed to enjoy discussing their pictures.

Evaluation

On evaluation, a positive outcome was that after teaching the content of the Golden Mean, I then asked them to apply it to the traits they drew on their boards at the beginning of the lesson. The learners seemed to find generating discussion from their own drawing engaging. Numbering half the learners and re-pairing them also seemed to increase engagement. A negative point is that learners seemed disengaged while being taught content.

Analysis

Learners appeared to find leading the discussion more engaging than the facilitator asking questions. They also seemed to enjoy discussing their pictures. The learners in this class seem to find having control of the lesson and discussing class content about themselves engaging. The transition from active behaviour to passive behaviour seemed to reduce engagement in my learners.

Conclusion

In the future, I would adapt this activity to try and give greater control to my learners by changing the drawing task at the beginning. Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980) do write that the facilitator must remain as a figure of authority, but in the context of this lesson, the learners seem more engaged when leading the discussion. To give learners more control, after mixing the groups I would give learners the content of the slides. Different groups would have different content, so learners would need to discuss with each other to learn the content. This should allow for learner lead discussion to continue uninterrupted.

5.4 Solidification

Description

After setting an order for who would ask which question, the community commenced inquiry, attempting to figure out what was going on in the pictures through postulating the purpose of separate items within the visuals, and by postulating potential linking themes. I asked them to make questions, but to focus on comparisons and differences, aimed at engaging different cognitive functions related to critical thinking. Not all learners seemed able to engage with this task.

Feeling

I felt that the A3 pictures for comparisons seemed to work well, as the learners discussed them with each other before being instructed to do so. The activity felt like a success and I did not feel that I had to control the learners to discuss with each other.

Evaluation

On evaluation, a positive seemed to be laminating the pictures and printing them in A3, as they were visually stimulating as a result and the learners appeared engaged. That said, a negative was that not all learners found it easy to join in with the discussion. I think the choice of the picture needed to be more accessible to the learners.

Analysis

On analysis, the college has a policy that learners can leave after 45 minutes if all the work is completed. This was the first lesson none of the learners asked me if they could go early, which I think is a sign of increased engagement.

Conclusion

On the accessibility of the task, I think pictures of religious groups based in London should make the task more accessible to the learners, as the learners can use their familiarity with London as a base for discussion.

5.5 Assessment

Description

My colleague observing the lesson struggled to fill out the tally sheet as the conversation was too fast-paced while deciphering which kind of question a learner had used took too long before the next verbalisation had been enunciated.

Feeling

Through my observation, I felt the learners engaged in more discussion than other RP lessons I had taught. However, I did not feel confident in my ability to assess learning and felt I had spent too much time thinking about the theory of the lesson, rather than assessing learning that took place.

Evaluation

On evaluation, a positive outcome is that we were able to record some dialogue, which provided some insight into lesson engagement. However, a negative was that the data was incomplete and thus is not a fair representation of the lesson.

Analysis

On analysis, the discussion was too fast to be recorded in-the-moment. Finding a way to measure discussion after the lesson has taken place by collecting data could solve this. Though a summative assessment could be used, I think meaning towards understanding if learning took place could be more effectively extrapolated from data than an assessment. I spent a lot of time thinking about the theory behind what I was doing, but not enough time on how I would measure learning. Though I have found ways to improve my practice through observation, which is that I will use activity two again in the future to facilitate discussion and that pace and an agenda seem to improve discussion, additional ways to measure progress within critical thinking in my learners should be found.

Conclusion

To measure if learning is taking place in my learners, next time I will audio record the lesson. As the recording can be paused, I will be able to catalogue each verbalisation, giving a better representation of lesson engagement. I think this could be more accurate than a summative assessment, as learners should need several lessons before they improve. By audio recording, I may be able to measure if learning had taken place. Through content analysis of the recording, I may record linguistic features that could indicate if learning should have taken place. Though there are ethical concerns, those could be dealt with through correct adherence to established ethical guidelines, such as the British Ethical Research Association's guidelines.

5.5 Action Plan

The initial activity was positive in that it produced illustrations used to stimulate discussion later in the lesson, though learners found it hard to draw a trait, some finding the task itself challenging while others did not know what the term meant. In the revised lesson plan, scaffolding via displaying illustrations of traits has been incorporated, as well as an explanation of the term. The second task appeared to be particularly successful at facilitating discussion. However, not all questions made were based on the hats. In the revised lesson plan, the link between the hats and critical thinking has been explained to the learners.

The exercises and discussion activity seemed successful at facilitating discussion from the previously drawn traits, and learners appeared stimulated in discussion after having been numbered and put into new groups. Nevertheless, learners did not seem to like being taught content after having had led the discussion. Making the task more student-centred by giving the learners the content should improve this. The A3 pictures used in solidification appeared to be particularly successful, seeming to elicit critical discussion, yet not all learners were able to engage in the discussion. Choosing pictures of London-based religious denominations should improve this.

Though the lesson seemed broadly successful, I found it difficult to fulfil the requirements of a COPI lesson and to cover the learning objectives. More work needs to be done to integrate both and to assess learning. Audio recording the lesson could produce data that could then undergo different types of content analysis, having the potential to provide a more accurate insight into if learning took place. In the future, I should spend less time attempting to integrate theory and more time trying to assess learning, of both the class and the individuals it consists of.

6. Conclusion

By conducting this COPI lesson on Virtue Ethics, I have found that 'The communal reading of a text/Constructing an agenda' element of Lipman's COPI model seems to be successful at facilitating discussion, and is a technique I will incorporate into my future professional practice. The tally chart was unsuccessful at assessing learning and could not completely catalogue learner engagement. In the future, an experimental design may provide opportunities for better data collection and analysis. Gibbs' reflective cycle helped me to produce a new and improved lesson plan on Virtue Ethics, though more cycles than one will be needed to perfect the lesson.

From using the COPI pedagogical model I have found that getting learners to read a text as a group, make their questions, and set an order of which question to ask seems to be a successful technique, both for initiating and maintaining discussion. By setting an order to which question will be asked when, a sense of progression seems to be felt by the learners, which seems to increase engagement. Furthermore, once the order is set, the facilitator should not need to speak, as learners should know how to progress with the task without further instruction. The active behaviour displayed by learners engaging in dialogue could have been conducive to active learning, potentially furthering their critical thinking skills.

Though engagement in the critical discussion did seem higher than the standard lesson plan of the institution, assessment of learning was not possible to determine through observation. This is due to the poor design of the tally sheet; the pace of the lesson was too fast for an observer to accurately record engagement. Even if it had not, it would not have proved that learning had taken place. In the future, experimentation may help to determine if learning took place, as there are many means of data collection. The content of this data should be put under content analysis to extrapolate meaning. Furthermore, I should spend less time attempting to integrate theory and more time trying to address and assess the individual needs of learners, as well as the class as a collective.

Regarding improving the lesson plan, the application of Gibbs' Reflective Model has provided the following revisions. Within activity one, a PPT slide will be added to explain what a trait is, and to provide examples of illustrations of traits. Within activity two, the relevance of scaffolded questions on De Bono's Hats to critical thinking will be explained. Within activity three, students will be given the lesson content to read and discuss to make the activity more learner-led. For activity four, the pictures will be changed to religious denominations from London. A revised lesson plan can be seen in the Appendix.

Gibbs' recommends that his reflective cycle is undertaken more than once. By putting the revised lesson plan through the same process and subsequently repeating it, the lesson could reach a point where it is better at facilitating discussion than the model currently implemented at my institution.

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Appendix

6.2 Religion and Philosophy	Unit: Virtue ethics	Week	Subject tutor
Number of learners		Date 03/03/2020	Time 11:20-12:20
Topic of lesson Virtue ethics		Resources PowerPoint Case Study A3 Pictures Whiteboards	
Learning outcomes: Students will be able to ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on one's moral character • • To discover the 'golden mean' of some important virtues (moral values) • • To assess whether Religion can help a person become more virtuous 			
Additional information (e.g. about individual students): This lesson follows COPI Pedagogy. Try and allow students to lead the lesson wherever possible. The students are working together to investigate the lesson objectives. Make sure to establish rules of discussion. This must include how to order who speaks, which can be done by giving each student an item to raise or by getting them to raise their hands. For a lower-level group you may need to set how you expect them to answer, for instance 'I agree/disagree with ___ because'. The constitutes are as follows: 1) the communal reading of a text 2) the construction of an agenda, i.e. the identification of questions which the reading of the text has raised and the the cooperative decision about where to begin the discussion; 3) solidification, which includes the articulation of positions and counter positions, the definition of terms under discussion, and the search for criteria by which to make sound judgements about the subject; 4) exercises and discussion plans, based on the ideas in the text 5) further responses, which may be in the form of creative writing, dramatization, art, or some other modality'		Assessment for learning (how the learning outcome will be assessed): Observations of group discussion Observation by a colleague with Tally Sheet	
Starter: aims, recap/revise previous learning. Provide the big picture – why is this lesson important and relevant		Drawing pictures to engage prior knowledge and creative inquiry	

<p>Apply: Students are given tasks that require them to apply the knowledge, theories, skills, that have been presented. This involves problem-solving, making decisions, creating things such as posters and mind maps. Differentiation, key skills, and equal opportunities are embedded.</p>	<p>Task 1: As students enter get them to draw a picture that represents their worst and best trait. Feedback and elicit discussion. Draw attention to that there are advantages and disadvantages to modes of being. Read lesson objectives. 7 mins PPT 1-3. COPI Point 5 Further responses</p> <p>Task 2: Ask for volunteers to read segments of the text. After the text has been read ask students to write what questions we would need to ask to decide if the man is guilty or not. Ask students to decide which questions we will ask. Elicit discussion. 20 mins PPT 4-7 COPI Points 1 & 2 The communal reading of a text and the constitution of an agenda.</p> <p>Task 3: Number half the student's ones, get them to stand up, and move to a new place. Get students to discuss the golden mean, and what the vice of excess and deficiency would be for the target virtues. 6 mins PPT 7-8 Point 4 Exercises and discussion plans.</p> <p>Task 4: Get students to look at A3 pictures of religious practitioners. Ask them to answer questions with the person next to them. Elicit discussion and ask if religions can help people become more virtuous. 18 mins PPT 9-10 Point 3 Solidification</p> <p>Task 5: Read out the summary and play video (8 mins) that covers virtue ethics and key concepts. 9 mins PPT 11</p>
<p>Review: What was learned is summarized and clarified. Objectives are reviewed. This can be done through Q & A (ask, don't tell), quick quiz, test, peer questioning, mind maps, key points reiterated.</p>	<p>End video covers learning objectives and solidifies the content investigated communally.</p>

6.2 Religion and Philosophy	Unit: Virtue ethics (Revised)	Week	Subject tutor
Number of learners		Date 03/03/2020	Time 11:20-12:20
Topic of lesson Virtue ethics		Resources PowerPoint Case Study A3 Pictures White boards	
Learning outcomes: Students will be able to ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reflect on one's moral character • • To discover the 'golden mean' of some important virtues (moral values) • • To assess whether Religion can help a person become more virtuous 			
Additional information (e.g. about individual students): This lesson follows COPI Pedagogy. Try and allow students to lead the lesson wherever possible. The students are working together to investigate the lesson objectives. Make sure to establish rules of discussion. This must include how to order who speaks, which can be done by giving each student an item to raise or by getting them to raise their hands. For a lower-level group you may need to set how you expect them to answer, for instance 'I agree/disagree with ___ because'. The constitutes are as follows: 1) the communal reading of a text 2) the construction of an agenda, i.e. the identification of questions which the reading of the text has raised and the the cooperative decision about where to begin the discussion; 3) solidification, which includes the articulation of positions and counter positions, the definition of terms under discussion, and the search for criteria by which to make sound judgements about the subject; 4) exercises and discussion plans, based on the ideas in the text 5) further responses, which may be in the form of creative writing, dramatization, art, or some other modality'		Assessment for learning (how the learning outcome will be assessed): Observations of group discussion Audio recording of lesson for later content analysis	
Starter: aims, recap/revise previous learning. Provide the big picture – why is this lesson important and relevant		Drawing pictures to engage prior knowledge and creative inquiry	
Apply: Students are given tasks that require them to apply the knowledge, theories, skills, that have been		Task 1: As students enter get them to draw a picture that represents their worst and best trait. Displayed on PPT are example drawings of traits and a definition of the word 'trait'. Feedback and elicit discussion. Draw attention to that there are advantages and	

<p>presented. This involves problem-solving, making decisions, creating things such as posters and mind maps. Differentiation, key skills, and equal opportunities are embedded.</p>	<p>disadvantages to modes of being. Read lesson objectives. 7 mins PPT 1-3. COPI Point 5 Further responses</p> <p>Task 2: Ask for volunteers to read segments of the text. After the text has been read ask students to write what questions we would need to ask to decide if the man is guilty or not. Explain the relevance of the example questions to critical thought. Ask students to decide which questions we will ask. Elicit discussion. 20 mins PPT 4-7 COPI Points 1 & 2 The communal reading of a text and the constitution of an agenda.</p> <p>Task 3: Number half the students' ones, get them to stand up, and move to a new place. Give students the material on the golden mean and vice of excess and deficiency. Let students read and discuss amongst themselves. Ask students to consider their drawings made in Task 1 in light of this information. 6 mins PPT 7-8 Point 4 Exercises and discussion plans.</p> <p>Task 4: Get students to look at A3 pictures of religious practitioners in London. Ask them to answer questions with the person next to them. Elicit discussion and ask if religions can help people become more virtuous. 18 mins PPT 9-10 Point 3 Solidification</p> <p>Task 5: Read out the summary and play video (8 mins) that covers virtue ethics and key concepts. 9 mins PPT 11</p>
<p>Review: What was learned is summarized and clarified. Objectives are reviewed. This can be done through Q & A (ask, don't tell), quick quiz, test, peer questioning, mind maps, key points reiterated.</p>	<p>End video covers learning objectives and solidifies the content investigated communally.</p>

21/04/2020


What does this say about their moral character?



7

To much of a good thing?

VICE DEFICIENCY ← VIRTUE → VICE EXCESS



What is the correct amount of friendliness?

8

Now With a new person 

What would be the vice of excess and deficiency of:

Vice (deficiency)	Virtue	Vice (excess)
	Courage	
	Empathy	
	Witty	
	Clever	

Challenge Q: How do these relate to the traits you used to describe yourself?

9

What is going on in the pictures?



What do they have in common?

What makes them different?

What do we need to know?

Are there questions we need to ask?

10

Do religions help people become more virtuous?



11

Summary

- Reflected on one's moral character
- Discovered the 'golden mean' of some important virtues (moral values)
- Assessed whether Religion can help a person become more virtuous

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hst0Wj>



12

	Information	Creative	Emotion	Positivity	Negativity	Meta
Questions	White	Green	Red	Yellow	Black	Blue
Students						
S 1						
S 2						
S 3						
S 4						
S 5						
S 6						
S 7						
S 8						
S 9						
S 10						
S 11						
S 12						
S 13						
S 14						
S 15						
S 16						
S 17						
S 18						

Class Profile				
Class	Subject	Ethnicity	Religion	Gender
Student 1	Art	African	Protestant	M
Student 2	Chemistry	African	Baptist	F
Student 3	Art	British	Catholic	F
Student 4	Maths	Caribbean	Catholic	F
Student 5	Biology	African	Catholic	F
Student 6	Business	Caribbean	Catholic	F
Student 7	Business	Caribbean	Catholic	F
Student 8	Business	Caribbean	Catholic	M
Student 9	Psychology	African	Islam	F
Student 10	Chemistry	African	Baptist	F
Student 11	Media Studies	Caribbean	Baptist	F
Student 12	Media Studies	African	Islam	F
Student 13	Politics	Spanish	Islam	F
Student 14	Media Studies	Spanish	Hindu	M