

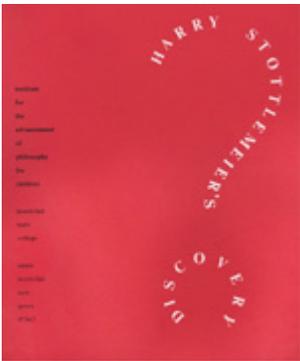
Philosophy for Children Alberta

Junior High School Learning Outcomes

GRADES 7 8 9

Overview

Grades 7, 8, and 9 develop skills introduced in earlier grades while preparing students for the more rigorous study that awaits them in high school. The Alberta Education curriculum requires students to develop specific critical thinking skills within each subject area and competence in generalizing beyond the specifics of the classroom. Students are also expected to share ideas constructively and collaborate to solve problems. Critical thinking development and the formation of a community of inquiry are the core benefits of incorporating the Philosophy for Children program into your classroom.



HARRY STOTTEMEIER'S DISCOVERY starts with Harry finding himself giving the wrong answer in science class and beginning to wonder where he has gone wrong. This reflection soon involves his classmates, who begin to think together about the nature of thinking, inquiry and knowledge. With the help of their teacher, Harry and his classmates discover rules of formal and informal logic, relational logic and hypothetical thinking—not as ends in themselves, but as tools in helping them understand themselves and their world. Some of the ideas they begin to explore this way include education, mind, rights, religion, art, cause and effect, causes and reasons, and fallibilism. Set within a group of junior high school classmates and their families, this novel offers several models of reasonable dialogue, among young people and adults. Adults with a background in philosophy will easily recognize the perennial philosophical issues raised in the story. However, no formal philosophical background is necessary for young people or adults to enjoy this thought-provoking novel.

Grade Range: 5-8; **Target Grades: 6-7**



LISA is the story of a school year in the life of a young girl and her classmates, a year studded with physical, aesthetic and ethical awakenings. Various events in these young people's lives prompt them to puzzle over such issues as animal rights, sexism, racism, justice, divorce and death. All of them struggle with issues of identity and thinking for oneself - philosophical issues of perennial concern to adolescents. As they begin to recognize the ethical dimensions of their experience, Lisa and her friends puzzle over such philosophical concepts as the right, the fair, the good, perfection, and naturalism. In so doing, they become aware of their interdependence with one another and with nature, and begin to appreciate the complexity of ethical concerns and the multiple capacities involved in making sound ethical judgments.

Grade Range: 7-10; **Target Grades: 7-8**



SUKI is the story of a coming together of two worldviews: one that focuses on the poetry of things and one that focuses on the logic of things. Suki, a young adolescent, loves poetry and its world of metaphor. Her friend Harry hates literature class and the idea of writing poetry frightens him. Their worldviews begin to converge as the two come to see logic and poetry as two ways of finding meaning in life experience, though not before they have confronted a number of problems of language, knowledge and aesthetics. As Suki, Harry and their classmates work through the obstacles they encounter in creative writing, they construct new understandings of concepts like friendship, freedom, integrity, adventure, experience, originality, harmony, form, balance, personhood and meaning. And as they begin to express their insights in creative productions, the students come to realize that these concepts are equally relevant to their most important creative project: living well.

Grade Range: 8-11; **Target Grades: 9-10**

Alberta Learning Outcomes

Sample P4C Curriculum Connections

Subject Areas

English Language Arts

Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- Program discussion topics and exercises build on reflections about the value of thought and experience by the characters in *Harry*.

Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication

- A major theme in *Suki* is writing as a form of artistic self-expression, prompting the question, “What makes a piece of writing good?”

Respect, support and collaborate with others

- *Lisa* exposes students to different styles of thinking which they must assess as a group in a constructive fashion.

Science & Mathematics

Analyzing & Interpreting

- Practicing effective reasoning is important to all philosophy sessions.
- Major theme throughout *Harry* is the structure of logical statements.

Communication & Teamwork

- The community of inquiry models an ideal investigative community.
- *Lisa* places special emphasis on the value of collaborative reasoning.

Statistics & Probability

- Logical concepts and their use in argumentation extends to probabilistic reasoning in discussions and exercises in *Harry*.

Social Studies

Values & Attitudes

- *Harry* takes up the question “What is culture?” and its significance.
- Our relationships to animals, authority, and our own selves are recurring themes in *Lisa*.

Knowledge & Understanding

- World views, national differences, cultural knowledge and critical assessments of their justifications are discussed in *Harry*, *Lisa*, and *Suki*.
- A major theme in *Suki* is reconciling aesthetic reasoning with logical reasoning.

Information & Communication Technology

Communicating, Inquiring, and Problem Solving

- Each novel presents the students with a opportunity to practice and evaluate a variety of methods for investigating difficult questions.

Processes for Productivity

- A system for organizing discussion and investigation is modelled and practiced in every Philosophy Session through the community of inquiry.

Health & Life Skills

Relationship Choices

- Effective and ineffective relationships with adults are presented in *Harry*.
- *Lisa* contrasts both reciprocal and non-reciprocal relationships.

Life Learning Choices

- The novels present realistic life choices, creating a natural opportunity for discussions related to effective and practical decision making.

Ethics

Values of Different Cultural Groups

- *Suki* explicitly presents geographic and intergenerational divides amongst the characters to prompt related discussions.

Decision Making Skills

- Personal moral choices, challenges in making them, and their consequences are explored in detail throughout *Lisa*.

Responsibility to Community

- Discussions in *Harry* about our responsibility to community, the state, and peer groups models and prompts similar discussions by students.

