

Achievement Summary:

Philosophy for Children Alberta

What is Philosophy for Children Alberta?

Philosophy for Children Alberta (P4CA) was founded in Spring 2008 by Professor Rob Wilson and thirteen graduate students. P4CA is as is an affiliate centre of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children.

The mission of P4CA is threefold:

1. **Developing critical thinking skills** within students and caring communities within schools via various methods of philosophical inquiry.
2. **Promoting the Philosophy for Children Program** as an exemplary method of achieving #1.
3. **Developing and supporting extensions and alternatives** to the Philosophy for Children program as a means of sharing the benefits of philosophy whenever the traditional Philosophy for Children program is not be ideally suited to do so.

What Value Does Philosophy for Children Provide?

Improves Student Reasoning

Philosophy for children (P4C) improves critical, creative and rigorous thinking. Participants develop their higher order thinking skills and the attitudes and dispositions necessary for good thinking. They improve their communication skills and their abilities to work with others.

Specific skills and attitudes developed include:

Cognitive Skills	Formulating and testing criteria
Evaluating reasons and arguments	Being consistent
Exploring and analysing concepts	Sticking to the point
Drawing inferences	Self correction
Making distinctions	Co-operative Skills
Seeing connections	Listening to others
Identifying fallacies	Open mindedness
Testing generalisations	Treating alternative views respectfully
Formulating questions	Building on the ideas of others
Clarifying ideas	Confident self expression
Constructing arguments	and many more...

Helps Alberta Teachers Meet New Curriculum Requirements

In the latest version of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS), Alberta Education specifically calls out inquiry as a major skill that it expects all students to develop. Philosophy for Children presents inquiry as a multi-dimensional and cross-disciplinary skill and, given the lack of inquiry based curriculum options, is ideally placed to help teachers meet this expectation.

Long-term Recruitment into Faculty of Arts

Science and engineering programs receive more exposure and support than arts and humanities programs. This is reflected in the post-secondary learning options that students and parents believe to be valid. P4C's multi-disciplinary nature makes it an exciting and practical option for many classes, putting Faculty of Arts related disciplines back on parents and student radar screens.

By the Numbers

Since forming P4CA in May 2008 and beginning active promotion to schools in late November 2008 the following goals have been achieved:

- **1** two-day training workshop for graduate students
- **13** in-service trained graduate students
- **3** schools using the program
- **2** teacher conventions
- **1** new website with 131 unique visitors in the past month
- **1** introductory workshop held and one more on the calendar
- **11** schools represented at the first workshop
- **1** upcoming meeting with the Director of Programs for Edmonton Public Schools
- **1** Summer day-camp in June
- **63** texts and teacher manuals sold
- **4** curriculum matching summaries developed

Future goals for the program include:

- **10** schools offering the program by September 2009
- **25** schools offering the program by February 2010
- **4** week-long day-camps offered in Summer 2010
- **2** seminar presentations, one at each 2010 Edmonton Area Teacher Convention
- **1** dedicated for-credit course on Philosophy for Children in the 2010-2011 academic year
- **2** biweekly support groups for teachers using the program starting in January 2010
- **2** classes connecting P4C and Community Service Learning in 2009-2010