

Fostering **Critical Thinking** and

Effecting **Transfer of Thinking** in

English Language, Mathematics and Science in a Primary School

Do durians die? Koh Wai has been thinking about the durian in the basket and wonders whether it is alive. "No, it's not alive now," he decides, "but it was alive once." Upon reflection, however, Koh Wai isn't satisfied. "It was alive once, so..." he asks haltingly, "when did it die?"

Thinking Children?

We believe that children **are capable** of thinking about thinking. Thus this project follows Matthew Lipman in emphasizing the centrality in school education of learning to think. Children are interested of events and issues that are happening around them, just like the adults, children go through the process of thinking and trying to make sense of things they experienced.

A discussion of Koh Wai's question among the children would most certainly lead to a philosophical inquiry. Children would be brought to reflect upon on their learnt biological concepts and to explore the limits of their application. They would probably also begin to search for new distinctions and connections among ideas that will enlarge their understanding.

Aims of the Research

Using Philosophy for Children as our main thinking programme to foster critical thinking in the student, we aimed to:

1. Train primary teachers to be reflective teachers and imbue them with good questioning techniques to promote critical and analytical thinking in their pupils
2. Develop primary pupils into critical thinkers with good logical reasoning skills
3. Assess the transfer effects of P4C on English Language, Mathematics and Science.

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*Are
We
Alive?!*