

Philosophy for Children: A Possible Starting Point for Democratic Citizenship in Africa?

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ABSTRACT In this paper, the researchers suggest that the engagement of children in philosophical enquiry from an early age can help prepare them for democratic citizenship and help to create future leaders in Africa who are tolerant, respectful of others, committed to social justice and appreciative of the 'otherness' of the 'other'. Although the desire for freedom may be innate, knowledge of how democracy functions must be taught and learnt. The researchers argue that the skills and values of democracy are socially learnt rather than innate and thus need to be modelled in formal schools. To this end, they posit that any society that wishes to remain free needs to ensure that its citizens (including children) are well educated in the theory and practice of democracy. The paper offers a critical philosophical exploration of the Matthew Lipman-initiated Philosophy for Children programme and the influence it may have on the production of democratic citizens.