



IAPC Newsletter

Spring 2007

Award for Philosophy for Children On Violence Prevention

On October 26, 2006 the program “Prévention de la violence et philosophie pour enfants” [Violence Prevention and Philosophy for Children] won the 2006 Prize of Excellence from the Marie-Vincent Foundation in Montreal, Quebec.

(www.marievincent.org/en).

This Prize, now in its 10th year, is given each year to an organization helping to prevent the abuse and mistreatment of children. “Violence Prevention and Philosophy for Children” is a program administered by the NGO La Traversée in Montréal (see

[www.latraversee-](http://www.latraversee-pvphie.com)

[pvphie.com](http://www.latraversee-pvphie.com)), and coordinated by Alexandre Herriger.

The program uses Philosophy for Children pedagogy with a special curriculum published by Les Presses de l’Université Laval in 2005, including two philosophical novels, *Nakeesha et Jesse* and *Hannah* and two teacher manuals, *Chair de notre monde* [*Flesh of our World*] and *Rompre le cercle vicieux* [*Breaking the Vicious Circle*] written for the project by IAPC co-founder Dr. Ann Margaret Sharp.

“Violence Prevention and Philosophy for Children” is conducted with children in Kindergarten through sixth grade. The program’s objectives are to develop children’s judgment and ability to think about various forms of violence, to encourage critical and creative thinking in or-

der to find peaceful solutions, to infuse a sense of citizenship in children at an early age, and to enable young people to construct stronger identities by making them less vulnerable to violence. Her-

riger reports that “since the program’s implementation in 2005 and adoption by ten South Shore schools, there have been a number of beneficial effects, including an increase in children’s self esteem, a drop in violent behaviour and integration of values such as respect, dialogue, listening and tolerance.”



The Marie-Vincent Foundation’s Prize of Excellence includes an award of \$7,500 and a work of art by enamel painter Bernard Séguin-Poirier. These were presented to *La Traversée* Director Catherine Audrain in a ceremony at the *Palais des Congrès de Montréal*.

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CELAFIN holds 10th Annual International Workshop

by Eugenio Echeverría

“Intercultural Understanding and Philosophical Inquiry” was the theme of the 10th International Conference / Workshop conducted by the Latin American Center of Philosophy for Children (CELAFIN) and the IAPC January 3-11, 2007, held this year in Na Bolom, a cultural center in San Cristóbal de las Casas (Chiapas, México), dedicated to the study of the Lacandón Maya (the indigenous peoples of the Lacandon Rainforest in Chiapas, México) for more than 50 years and offering accommodations for people interested in research and exploration of indigenous cultures. Conference participants came from different parts of México and the world.

The topic of intercultural understanding is especially relevant in our present time with a number of religious conflicts and problems due to migration and the forces of globalization, happening in many parts of the world. Ann Sharp’s paper about “Going Visiting,” illustrated the need we have to look at things from others’ perspectives and to really try to understand where they are coming from.

Her philosophical story about children’s rights gave us also the opportunity to think about something like arranged marriages in the Western world.



Doris Hagerman talked about the asymmetric relationships between the Indian cultures of Latin América such as the Lacandón, and the mainstream population. Eugenio Echeverría analyzed the efforts of the Intercultural University towards equality of opportunity for higher education in an Indian context. Deborah Colvin told us about the use of films to promote communities of philosophical inquiry in schools around the topic of intercultural understanding.

The many discussions we had as a community of inquiry shed light on the topic of education for intercultural understanding and motivated our thinking about actions we can take to address this issue. Next year’s conference / workshop will center around the concept of critical thinking, the community of philosophical inquiry, and the challenges of our present world.

NAACI CONFERENCE

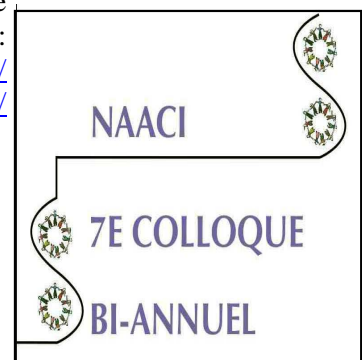
This past summer, June 27-29, the North American Association for Community of Inquiry conducted its 7th bi-annual conference at Laval University in Sainte-Foy, Québec, Canada. The theme of the conference was “Democracy and Ethics in Philosophical Dialogue.” The conference was organized by Michel Sasseville, faculty of philosophy at Laval and director of the Association Québécoise de Philosophie pour les Enfants (AQPE; www.fp.ulaval.ca/philoenfant) Sasseville explained the conference theme as follows: “The [NAACI] colloquium focuses on the approach created by Matthew Lipman and his colleagues from Montclair State University (NJ): Philosophy for Children (P4C). P4C is based on philosophical dialog within a community of inquiry. This year, NAACI colloquium explored two major aspects of a community of philosophical inquiry: democracy and ethics.

The first is an important goal of all discussions in a community of inquiry. The second is linked to the relationships between persons who are creating such a community.”

Conference participants included professors, administrators, educators and graduate students from Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France and the US. The IAPC was represented at the conference by recent P4C masters graduate Stephanie Burdick, P4C doctoral student Patricia Lowry, and IAPC co-founder Ann Margaret Sharp, who gave the concluding address.

Photos, abstracts and some complete papers from the conference are available at the conference website:

www.fp.ulaval.ca/philoenfant/colloque2006/index.htm



Logic for Children in the Heartland

by Jinmei Yuan, Andrew Trapp and Jason Bodewitz

The Philosophy Department at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, recently started a new Philosophy for Children program, “Logic for Children,” at St. Joan of Arc Elementary School. The program is funded by Creighton alum Adam Kirchofer, who discussed his belief in children’s logical capacities with Creighton’s philosophy department three years ago. One member of that department was Dr. Jinmei Yuan, who had worked in the University of Hawaii’s “Philosophy in the Schools” project directed by Dr. Thomas Jackson, who studied Philosophy for Children at the IAPC in the 1980s. Yuan met with Kirchofer and introduced him to P4C theory and methods, after which Kirchofer agreed to fund “Logic for Children.”



In September 2006, with the help of Dr. Lynn Olson from Creighton’s Education Department, Yuan and two teaching assistants—Jason Bodewitz and Andrew Trapp—met with St. Joan of Arc principal Chris Vos. In October, Jackson traveled from Hawaii to lead the first Philosophy for Children workshop at the school. Workshop participants shared many ideas and reached a common judgment: “To enable children to think critically for themselves, we have to teach them to become responsible thinkers.” At the conclusion of the workshop, St. Joan of Arc faculty decided that P4C was something they wanted to be part of, and so a new P4C family was formed in the Heartland of America.



Three teachers began incorporating the program in their curriculum in the spring of 2007. That semester the school also began Creighton’s “Logic for Children,” program, designed to introduce elementary school chil-

dren to important philosophical principles in a fun, engaging, and intellectually-safe environment, in order to increase their creative thinking abilities, logical skills, and their sense of wonder.



The program utilizes P4C methods—e.g. arranging children in a circle, building an “intellectually-safe” community and getting children actively involved in discussions—as well as methods developed by Jackson (see Jackson’s article, “Philosophy for Children Hawaiian Style” in *Thinking* 17(1 & 2), pp 4-8). The content focuses on basic argumentation, including lessons on definition, ambiguity, conjunction, disjunction, negation and “if...then.” The “Logic for Children” team created a webpage for teachers, children and parents: www2.creighton.edu/ccas/philosophyforchildren.



Bodewitz and Trapp, who visit first-, second-, and fifth-grade classrooms once a week to conduct the program, are received warmly by the teachers and excitedly by the children, and have been impressed with the content and logic of the children’s thinking. When asked what kinds of things they wonder about, one child responded, “I wonder what infinity is,” and another stated, “I wonder why we can’t have world peace.” The two visited Hawaii in March to observe P4C in Hawaiian classrooms, and will assist in training new teaching assistants from Creighton University who will continue “Logic for Children” after they graduate.

Philosophy for Children in Singapore

by Lim Tock Keng and Ho Wah Kam

Philosophy for Children (P4C) began in Singapore in 1992 in one primary and one secondary school, using IAPC curriculum titles *Pixie* and *Harry*. It was initiated by Dr. Lim Tock Keng at the National Institute of Education (NIE). The first year proved to be difficult as teachers and students were not used to the community of inquiry approach. Things started to improve the next year, when two additional schools that began the program (including Singapore's top girls' school) provided funding to invite consultants such as Ann Sharp and Thomas Jackson. In 1994, another two primary schools joined the program. The program curriculum expanded to include *Thinking Stories* and Asian poems and stories. The Singapore program is unique in that a carefully controlled, broadly conceived evaluation study was set up when the program was initiated. Formative evaluation—including classroom observations, recordings and transcripts of lessons, as well as feedback from teachers and students—was conducted annually to improve the program. Feedback on the community of inquiry approach from both teachers and students was very positive. A quasi-experimental summative evaluation study was also conducted annually, but was less successful due to the inadequacy of instruments to measure the community of inquiry approach.

In 1994, the program received funding from NIE to develop a package of reliable and valid instruments and performance assessment tasks for evaluating the program, to ascertain the effectiveness of the community of inquiry approach, and to introduce Asian philosophy and core values into the program. From 1994 to 1998 the experiences and results of the annual formative and summative evaluation exercises were used to develop a package of three primary-level and three secondary-level instruments, video-based tests, community of inquiry exercises and multiple choice tests (measuring the same traits as the NJTRS). These tests can be adapted for countries that would like to use them (contact Dr. Lim at limtk@pacific.net.sg). The Asian materials used included stories by Singapore writers, the Asiapac comic series, including titles such as *The Sayings of Confucius* and other Asian philosophers, and Asian-American poems and stories.

These rich experiences of the program (1992-98) were presented in many international conferences and published in numerous journals and book chapters. Teachers, principals and students involved in the program participated in annual local conferences and a number of teachers were sponsored by their schools to present at

ICPIC and other conferences abroad. The top girls' school still includes philosophy in their curriculum. Dr. Lim, currently with PsychMetrics International, continues to research, present and publish in P4C.

Since the late 1990s there have been several new educational initiatives in Singapore, including the recent "Teach Less, Learn More." The impact of this initiative prompted the professional wing of the Singapore Teachers' Union to invigorate P4C in 2003 by bringing consultants from the Federation of Australasian Philosophy for Schools Associations (FAPSA), based at Melbourne University, to prepare a new cadre of primary, secondary and junior college teachers in the community of inquiry approach.

The highlight of this initiative was the launch, in April 2006, of the first international P4C conference in Singapore, "Philosophy in Schools: Developing a Community of Inquiry," which was officially opened by the Singapore Minister for Education and attracted about 350 participants from Singapore, Australia and Malaysia. The Conference was designed to introduce school principals and teachers to the significance of *philosophical inquiry* in the classroom, and for schools which had used P4C to share their experiences. Keynote addresses on "Philosophy" in P4C," "Philosophy and the School Curriculum," "Philosophy in a Crowded Curriculum," and "Teaching Philosophy in Australian Schools," were followed by nine seminars organized into three strands: "Implementation and Training," "Philosophical Attitudes," and "Asian Traditions in Philosophical Thought."

Conference papers focused on how even young schoolchildren can be encouraged to think more deeply about matters of significance that concerned them. Conference presenters emphasized that *thinking* is not another subject in the crowded school curriculum but is the core of everything we do in our classrooms. Given the multicultural make-up of Singapore (with three main ethnic groups - Chinese, Malay and Indian), there were presentations from local scholars on Confucianism, contemporary Islamic thought and Indian philosophy, which added to the philosophical richness of the Conference. The practicality of using the community of inquiry approach in the classroom was illustrated in presentations made by schoolteachers from Singapore and Malaysia. (cont...)

Philosophy for Children in Singapore, cont...

The success of this Conference gave rise to two major events: (1) the launching in January 2007 of a Level One Training Program for P4C teachers, leading to the Level One Certificate validated by FAPSA, and (2) the forming of a P4C teachers' network known as COIN (Community of Inquiry Network), which has produced newsletters regularly to keep members and others informed of developments in P4C in Singapore and elsewhere. It is hoped that this network will in turn lead to the formation of a Philosophy in Schools Association in Singapore.

Lim Tock Keng is a psychometrics consultant and evaluator for her own company, PsychMetrics International. Ho Wah Kam is an Academic Consultant to the Singapore Teacher's Union and Director of the Singapore Centre for Philosophy for Children

Philosophy for Children Colloquium Series

By Maughn Gregory

Now in its third year, the IAPC's Philosophy for Children Colloquium Series features invited presentations from notable academics on issues related to education, philosophy and Philosophy for Children. Four outstanding Colloquia have been held so far this year.

In September Dr. Gilbert Burgh, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland, Australia, presented the colloquium "Children don't need to prepare for democracy, they need to practice it!" Burgh distinguished deliberative democracy (in which citizens shape their collective lives in public forums of deliberation) from liberal (rights-based) and communitarian (identity-based) models of democracy, and argued that some form of community of inquiry is necessary for this educational model, but is not sufficient without a component of decision-making that involves action and criteria for adequate results.

In November Dr. David Lee Keiser, Professor of Curriculum and Teaching at Montclair State University, presented the colloquium "Mindful Teaching." Keiser spoke of the need for stillness and contemplation in the fragmented and deadline-driven school day, and of the need to balance intellectual analysis with introspection. He argued that education for democracy should prepare students to practice reflective insight as well as critical thinking, and he introduced the audience to several contemplative practices, including creative production, stillness, ritual, focused movement, activism, and dialogue. A highlight of Keiser's colloquium was his leading the audience in an exercise of contemplative stillness.

In December Dr. Maria Elena Madrid, Professor of Philosophy at the National Pedagogical University and at National University, Mexico City, presented the colloquium "Multiculturalism, Extreme Poverty and Philosophy for Children." Madrid reported on her work with the Zapotec community, which speaks a language thousands of years old, honors a "third sex," preserves its literature through oral transmission, has resisted cultural assimilation, and lives in extreme poverty. She argued that passivity and isolation in the face of globalization are a threat to indigenous cultures, and described her work using Zapotec stories with philosophical themes to teach children in this community about dialogue as a method of active, non-violent conflict resolution.

In March Dr. Jack Russel Weinstein, Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Dakota, presented the Colloquium, "Adam Smith's Philosophy of Education." Weinstein argued that Smith's philosophy of education was one important bridge between his work on economics and moral psychology. Smith understood education as a primary means by which people better their own condition, as the necessary precondition for moral adjudication, as an important catalyst for social unity, and as a pre-condition for the proper operation of economic markets—purposes which overlap, and reveal the systematic nature of Smith's corpus.

See the IAPC News and Events Calendar (www.montclair.edu/iapc) for further presentations in the Philosophy for Children Colloquium Series.

Putting the “Social” in Social Studies

by Joseph Frame

As a teacher of sixth grade Ancient Civilizations I am challenged by the need to make my subject interesting for students. When competing with such “interesting” things as Play Station Potable, Xbox, Nintendo Wifi, Madden NFL '07, cell phones with text messaging capabilities, the iPod and personal DVD players, how can Great Pyramids, Great Walls, and Fertile Crescents hold students' interest? What can possibly compete with these “exciting” pursuits? Other people!

I have found that students are very interested in *other students*. As frequently as possible, I design my lesson plans to include a good amount of community work, prevalently referred to as “cooperative learning.” The outcome is that students learn from one another as much as, if not more than, they learn from me. While I may not be able to run a *community of inquiry* (CI) every day, I can promote a general CI approach; and the results are dramatically rewarding, both for me and for my students.

How does one create a *community of inquiry* among students who have been inculcated with the “teach to the test,” competitive mentality so endemic in our schools? By starting simple and following the community where it (almost organically) goes. Children love to talk with each other. They love to gossip but they also like to exchange ideas, and they *do* challenge each other, perhaps more vigorously—and certainly less disingenuously—than we adults. Above all, children love to imagine. “What if we ...” starts many an interesting trip into the world of imagination.

By supporting these natural tendencies a *community of inquiry* can very easily be established. The challenge, in our history course, is the focus of the inquiry: does the community discuss the most recent popular TV program (currently *American Idol*), or the benefits of the democratic process started during the Greek city-state period? I must walk a thin line between “assigning” topics to discuss and allowing the community to discover that topic naturally—a process of “natural selection” common in Philosophy for Children

P4C techniques work wonderfully for me as I attempt to engender interest in Ancient Civilizations. By putting some of the more esoteric historical and philosophical concepts into the context of modern pre-teenage life I have given rise to discussions, debates, and collaborative artistic projects. Usually, these “happenings” need to be gently nudged in one direction or another, but the amount of learning that occurs is quite remarkable – and remarkably painless.

Philosophy may not be the course I teach, but P4C methods have proved to be invaluable in my classroom, for helping children learn about those dusty days of yore, and sometimes even enjoying themselves as they do so (please don't tell them the secret!).

Joe Frame is a retired electrical engineer, a graduate of MSU's P4C masters program, a performer of classical and jazz guitar, and a social studies teacher in north New Jersey.

Philosophical Spirituality: A New Doctoral Dissertation from MSU

The latest doctoral dissertation relevant to Philosophy for Children is *Philosophical Spirituality: A New Paradigm in Dialogical Teacher Education*, by Maya Levanon, who successfully defended her work on December 8, 2006, for the Ed.D. in Pedagogy, Specialization in Philosophy for Children at Montclair State University. Levanon's dissertation committee included Drs. Jaime Grinberg (chair), Jeremy Price, Mark Weinstein, and Philip Wexler, of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who served as an external specialist adviser.

As stated in the introduction, “the objective of this dissertation is to create a new paradigm in the

way we relate with meaningful knowledge I call this new paradigm “philosophical-spirituality,” a synthesis of the rational/objective with the magical/ subjective aspects of human conduct. Though the object of knowledge may be independent of us, it becomes meaningful only when we have ownership of it, through an active exploration and creation of reality while fully participating in it.” The first four chapters of the dissertation construct this paradigm theoretically, while the final chapter is a self-ethnography, based on a mini-course on philosophical spirituality that Levanon gave to teachers in and around Montclair. (continued...)

A New Doctoral Dissertation from MSU. cont

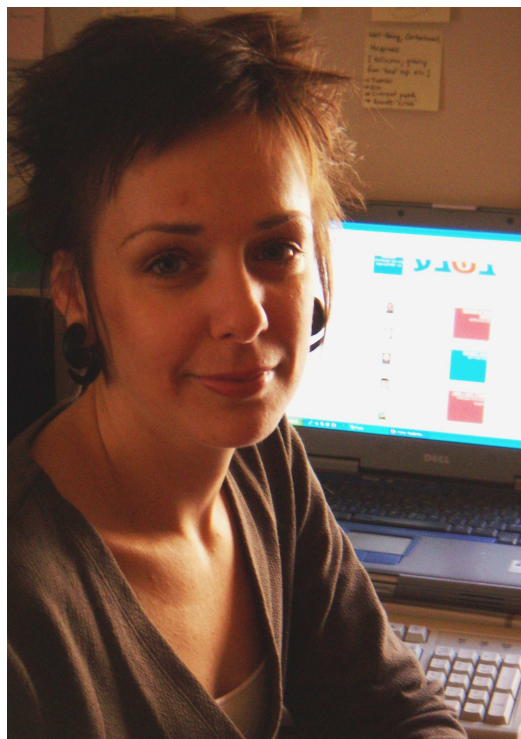
Levanon remarked, “from my work with educators I learned that we all need a safe space in which to raise and discuss our ethical, existential and spiritual concerns, and that creating venues to facilitate a higher understanding of these concerns is a matter of social emergency.”

Levanon, who graduates in May, is an adjunct professor at Montclair State University. At the same time that she explores academic positions and opportunities for post-doc scholarship, she is developing a consultation business to offer workshops in philosophical-spiritual dialogue to schools, companies and individuals. The workshops will implement community-of-inquiry dialogue with artistic and musical activities, games, and even cooking. Levanon observes, “I believe that when it comes to discovering your Self, the sky’s the limit. I would like see a growing philosophical-spiritual activity surrounding Hebrew and Jewish narratives: religious, philosophical, contemporary, in painting, music and ritual.” The business will provide non-profit workshops for institutions like women’s shelters and community centers where there is need for interpersonal work that enables individual and collective liberation and transformation.

The following is an excerpt from Maya Levanon’s dissertation *Philosophical Spirituality: A New Paradigm in Dialogical Teacher Education* (2006).

I identify the relationships philosophers have with wisdom as similar to marriage, if we understand marriage as a spiritual bond (Campbell, 1991, 1993). In the Torah, the expression describing intimate relationships is *yadah*, meaning “to know.” This knowledge is something that can be revealed only within the secrecy of marriage. Through this bond, the two become a single entity, bringing completeness to each other. Intimacy in this context is not merely a desire: it is reserved for the purpose of unification. The Torah describes a marriage as *basar echad*, one flesh. This bond is spiritual because it teaches us to see and care for someone beyond ourselves. In Judaism, it is one of the holiest acts. Song of Songs is a love song called in the Talmud Holy of Holies because it is the ultimate expression of our desire for the ultimate unity: to connect with G-d. It is a commitment for life that carries certain responsibilities that overcome the ups and downs, because there is an understanding that one cannot fully exist without the other.

It is a sentiment of loyalty rather than a mere obedience derived of fear; the same sentiment that Aristotle refers to in his discussion about friendship (Nussbaum, 1994). When we understand these relationships are forever, we develop sentiments of loyalty and responsibility, despite the inevitable down moments, and this is exactly what the philosopher feels toward wisdom. This is unconditional love. Hallaj, a Sufi mystic, compared his love for G-d as the love a moth has for light: a fatal attraction where the moth cannot live without the light, while knowing that the flame of this light will destroy it. The same goes for the love that the philosopher has toward wisdom; she philosophizes because she cannot help it, knowing that she is probably doomed to be destroyed by the Promethean flame. Nevertheless, the philosopher loves wisdom not only when it rewards her intellectual efforts, but also when it becomes a cause for her frustration and loneliness, perhaps then even more, because then the philosopher has the chance to examine her determination to be a philosopher rather than a sophist. The philosopher not only loves to be in the *Aporia*, more importantly, she trusts it.



Maya Levanon

Austrian Center of Philosophy with Children

By Daniela Camhy

The International Conference “Dialogue – Culture –Philosophy: Philosophizing with Children and Adolescents in Transcultural Environments” was organized by the Austrian Center of Philosophy with Children (ACPC) in Graz/Austria from October 19–22, 2006, under the auspices of the Austrian Commission of UNESCO. Global thinking, flexibility and reconsidering traditional values are very important in view of the fast social and economic changes. The international congress was intended as an intercultural and interdisciplinary forum. Academic discussions and exchange of personal experiences were the main aim. Furthermore, new results of research were presented, presentations and workshops were offered and working groups for specific topics were formed. The congress also provided a current overview of the state of research.

Professor Zimmermann, who carried forward the greetings from the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, pointed out in his introducing words: “Philosophy is understood as an activity which deals with universal problems of the human lives. Philosophy assists to develop intellectual instruments for the analysis and the comprehension of central keywords like justice, dignity and liberty. It qualifies people to think and judge independently, to ask questions and to reflect on values and principles.”

Ann Margaret Sharp Associate Director of the “Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC)” at the Montclair State University (New Jersey/ USA) opened the conference as “keynote speaker” and spoke about “Caring Thinking.”

Michael Murray, university professor at the Trinity College in Dublin, spoke about the importance of dialogue during the process of curriculum composition and gave examples from Ireland.

Laurance Splitter from Australia, who teaches at the City University New York, spoke about identity and put the question “Do the groups, to which I belong to, make me to that what I am?” in the centre of his reflections.

Lena Green from the University of Capetown in South Africa spoke about the comprehension of democracy and the development of the community of inquiry in South African schools..

Catherine McCall from Glasgow, focused on philosophical thinking in the context of life-long-learning and talked about the decision of the Scottish parliament to accept the costs for 3000 children to participate in the courses of Philosophy, from fall 2006 on.

Daniela G. Camhy spoke about “Developing Dialogue through Philosophical Inquiry” and introduced the European project Menon, a project of 11 European partners which aims to encourage teachers' professional growth by developing their dialogical sensitivity and skills through philosophical enquiry.

There were many other very interesting speakers; Participants came from 23 countries,

Experts had the opportunity to network on an international scientific level and to lay the foundation for future projects and international research collaboration.

The Workshop “Introduction to Philosophy with Children and Youth” was held in Graz/Austria between the 14th and 17th of October 2006 and was conducted by Ann M. Sharp and Laurance Splitter. The participants had the opportunity to learn about the theoretical background and to practice the philosophical dialogue together. The participants could choose between a variety of philosophical texts and the philosophers helped the participants to prepare the philosophical dialogue.



Ann Sharp and Laurance Splitter