

Proposal for an APA Grant to support the Development of "What's the Big Idea?"  
Thomas E. Wartenberg, Project Director

### ABSTRACT

*What's the Big Idea?* is a website that will be based on approximately 90-minutes of film and a comprehensive curriculum introducing ethics to middle school children through feature film segments that are introduced and discussed by philosophers.

The website will be composed of five chapters: on bullying, lying, peer pressure, friendship, and environmental ethics. Each chapter will feature video clips from popular films, clips of philosophers introducing the issue, and support materials facilitating discussion in the classroom. The materials will guide a variety of activities before, during, and after the presentation of the film clips. We have nearly finished a rough version of Chapter 1 on "Bullying" and are requesting \$10,000 from The American Philosophical Association to produce the second and third 15-minute sections on the topics of "Lying" and "Friendship" and to develop the accompanying curriculum. The ethical issues of bullying, peer pressure, friendship, lying and environmental action were selected by middle school students in three different schools as the most relevant ethical issues in their lives.

## 1. Purpose of the Project

Although the teaching of philosophy in pre-college classrooms has been expanding lately, most programs for doing so have focused on either high school or elementary school classrooms. *What's the Big Idea?* will provide middle school teachers with all the materials necessary for having classroom discussions of five important ethical issues: bullying, lying, peer pressure, friendship, and environmental ethics.

The way in which we introduce these topics into middle school classrooms is a modification of the way in which Tom Wartenberg has introduced philosophy in elementary school. There, picture books have been used as prompts for philosophical discussions. Here, we will use clips from popular films such as *The Karate Kid* to do the same. These films are ones that many of the students have already seen and enjoyed. Our goal is to get them to reflect on ethical issues raised in the films. These films are all very engaging, but students are only used to giving them "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" responses. We will build on their engagement to get them to reflect on ethical issues raised in the films.

One problem with our educational system, especially in this era of high stakes testing, is that children generally are not encouraged to think critically and creatively in their everyday life, especially around issues of ethics. Some teachers think middle school is too early and it would take too much time to teach these skills, while others think it might backfire and encourage continual argument rather than productive discussion. With *What's the Big Idea?* middle school teachers will have a relevant tool to introduce students to thinking about and discussing ethical issues carefully and critically with each other.

The interactive web site will enable the streaming of film clips, downloading of all curriculum and materials, Twitter feeds and user-generated feedback and commentary. The teachers can be flexible in developing lesson plans that fit the schools' schedules and student interest. The film clips will always illustrate a point being made or act as a catalyst for discussion. Because the program will be delivered through a free web site, which serves as a hub for information, curriculum download and community building, middle school students everywhere can benefit.

Although our present plans are to develop five units on ethical issues, we are hoping to expand the site to include other areas in philosophy, such as metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics. There are many popular films that raise philosophical issues in these areas, so we hope that the success of the initial phase of the project will justify expanding it to include a wide range of philosophical issues.

## 2. Groundwork for the Project

Building on the success of Tom Wartenberg's program for elementary school students, Teaching Children Philosophy, which uses picture books to initiate a philosophical discussion, we extended and expanded that work to using films. Professor Wartenberg's website, [www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org](http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org), gets approximately 9,000 hits a week and has inspired numerous teachers, professors, and even college students to develop their own courses based on his material.

We have developed the first chapter on "Bullying," which is the template for the remaining four sections. Our steering committee members have worked very hard to develop this first chapter and to plan the comprehensive web site with downloadable curriculum materials for the teachers. (Please view attachments at the end of the proposal.) We are working with three local schools: the John F. Kennedy Middle School, Florence, MA; the Smith Vocational School, Northampton, MA; and the William Peck School, Holyoke, MA. We have already tested our pilot in five classrooms in these schools. We are in the process of incorporating their feedback into the program. Based in feedback from the teachers, we are planning to design activities and readings for before, during and after the class. We are also designing activities that will foster more self-moderated dialogue among students so that teachers are not always acting as mediators.

In addition to Dr. Nancy Cheevers, who is serving on the Steering Committee of the Project, two other teachers will consult with us on the design of the website, both by piloting the project in their classrooms and by meeting with us. They are:

1. Dinah Mack. Ms. Mack is an educator with over 15 years of teaching experience. She is currently teaching 7th grade Social Studies at JFK Middle School. When she is not teaching, Dinah is a freelance writer working on various projects, both fiction and non-fiction. She also writes curriculum for The New York Times Learning Network.

2. Leslie Skantz-Hodgson. Ms. Skantz-Hodgson has worked for 18 years in education. She has taught English in middle and high school, worked as an administrator overseeing professional development, curriculum, Title I and ESL programs, as well as some state and federal grants. Other duties include conducting teacher evaluations and running the school library program. Ms. Skantz-Hodgson also has 12 years of experience as a consultant and lobbyist for the National Writing Project, most recently leading trainings in transitioning to the New Massachusetts ELA frameworks (based on the Common Core State Standards).

### **3. A plan and timeline**

Spring, Summer 2011 Groundwork including research, fundraising, shooting, rough-cut editing  
Chapter 1, Bullying.

Fall 2011 Chapter 1, Bullying will be completed  
 Spring 2012. The website will be launched  
 Summer 2012. Research, shooting will begin on Section two and three and the sections will be completed by Winter 2012

#### **4. Detailed Project Budget**

Project Director, Salary	\$ 2,500
Filmmaker, Salary	\$ 2,500
Steering Committee, 2 Honoraria @ \$300	\$ 600
Editing	\$ 1,500
Web Development	\$ 1,400
Camera Rental	\$ 1,000
Materials	\$ 500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

#### **5. Fiscal Agent for the Grant**

Mount Holyoke College, 50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075

#### **6. Other Funding Sources**

##### *A. Funding received to date:*

Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities - \$10,000  
 Northampton Education Foundation - \$2,000.

##### *B. Prospective funding sources:*

Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation  
 The Community Foundation of Western MA  
 The Art Angels  
 The Squire Foundation

## **7. Assessment of the Project**

As we have already mentioned, we will test every stage of the development of this project in five classrooms at three local middle schools: the John F. Kennedy Middle School, Florence, MA; the Smith Vocational School, Northampton, MA; and the William Peck School, Holyoke, MA. We have already tested our pilot in five classrooms in these schools. We are in the process of incorporating the very useful feedback we received into the website. Based on feedback from the students and teachers, we are now designing activities and readings for before, during, and after the classroom activity.

At every stage of the project, we plan to engage our advisors and collaborators to test-pilot the web site and curriculum in the classroom. We have already found this practice to be extremely useful and we will continue to use it until we all feel that the website is working effectively in classroom settings.

## **8. How the project will be advertised to the larger philosophical community and public?**

Once the website is active, we will publicize it in a variety of different ways. Professors Wartenberg and Goering plan to present the material at meetings of professional organizations, such as the APA, PLATO, and SPEP. We will work with the teachers with whom we have collaborated to publicize the program's existence to their professional organizations. In addition, we will use websites such as that of the Squire Family Foundation to link to and publicize our website. We will also use social media such as Facebook (e.g. the Teaching Children Philosophy page) to get the word out to teachers and other educational professionals.

## **9. Additional Materials**

The following materials provide more evidence of what has been done on the project so far.

1. Sample storyboard for chapter #1 on Bullying (attachment)
2. Link to short film "Picture Book Philosophy" by Tom Wartenberg and Julie Akeret [www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org](http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org) .
3. Link to the pilot on Bullying. Please keep in mind this is a rough draft and will be re-shot and re-edited once comments from teachers and students have been fully evaluated. [http://dl.dropbox.com/u/23804573/Philosophy%20Karate%20Kid%20%20061311%20%201\\_1\\_MP4%20480p%20%2816x9%29%20VLB.mp4](http://dl.dropbox.com/u/23804573/Philosophy%20Karate%20Kid%20%20061311%20%201_1_MP4%20480p%20%2816x9%29%20VLB.mp4)
4. First draft of curriculum that will introduce website to teachers (attachment)

## *Rough Draft of Material for “What’s the Big Idea?” Website*

### An Intro to: What’s the Big Idea? – Teaching Ethics through Film

Have you ever thought of using films to teach philosophy to middle school children?

Contrary to what many people think, students of all ages are both interested in and good at discussing philosophical questions. Films are a great way to initiate a philosophical discussion with students because many films raise important philosophical questions and issues that middle-schoolers enjoy thinking and talking about. This web site (still to come) contains all the materials that you will need to begin discussing the important topic of ethics, a key concept in philosophy with your students.

There are many benefits of doing philosophy with children. Having philosophical discussions is a great way to improve their verbal skills. They learn to listen carefully to other students, to formulate their own opinions in a clear manner, and even to defend their opinions against objections from their peers. Practicing philosophy builds a real sense of community in the classroom and at the same time aids in the individual intellectual development of your students.

We've chosen a set of films that illustrate various ethical questions and dilemmas that young people may encounter. All you need to do to begin is to select one of the five topics: Bullying, Peer pressure, Friendship, Lying, and Environmental Action, read the accompanying page that introduces you to the topic and then show the segment of your choice to your students. There are accompanying support material and questions to help begin the discussion. The questions after the film clips will guide you in getting the students to discuss the philosophical issues raised by the films, but they are suggestions and you can use them or not depending on what is appropriate for your students.

Remember that doing philosophy is not so much about leaning about a particular philosopher or theory as it is about learning about how to have a philosophical discussion. And following basic recommendations will aid in that goal.

#### **RULES FOR THINKING PHILOSOPHICALLY**

The first rule for doing philosophy is to be respectful of what everyone says. Even if you disagree with what someone says, you need to present your disagreement in a way that does not make fun of or disparage the person you disagree with. In philosophy discussions, disagreement is great...so long as it is done respectfully.

The second rule for doing philosophy is to think carefully about the question that has been asked, figure out what you think and why you think it, and, when you are called on, explain your view clearly and succinctly. When you philosophize, what you think is important, but why you think it even more so.

The third rule of philosophy is LISTEN! It's harder to listen than we generally think, but, as a philosopher, you have to listen very carefully to what everyone else says.

Only if you do, can you figure out whether you AGREE or DISAGREE with what's been said and WHY. That's the fourth rule. Philosophy is all about sharing ideas so that you can decide what you think about important issues.

Finally, remember to have fun, rule number 5. Philosophy can really be enjoyable as well as useful, so long as you follow these simple rules!

## Introduction to *The Karate Kid*

As you all know, bullying is a really hot topic these days. That's why we've chosen it to be the subject of our first philosophy discussion. What we are going to do is to show you four short clips from a very entertaining film, *The Karate Kid*, and, after each clip, give you a chance to discuss among yourselves some important issues relating to bullying. At the end, we'll also provide you with a chance to raise questions that you have and discuss them as well.

In having a philosophy discussion, remember that the point is to figure out what you think, try to support your ideas with reasons, to consider what other people have to say and whether you agree or disagree with what they have said. And always, be respectful of one another.

*The Karate Kid* tells the story of a young boy, Dre, who moves to China with his mother, Sherry. Dre doesn't speak Chinese and has a hard time figuring out how to adapt to his new environment. When he first meets Meiyong, he begins to feel that the move might not be so bad, but he is immediately confronted by Cheng, a bully. Cheng is the leader of a group of students who are learning karate and Cheng is able to beat Dre up. Dre doesn't want to tell his mother. The school principal misunderstands what's happened. And even Dre's best or only friend, Harry, isn't able to stop the bullying.

We're going to show you four different scenes from the film and after each one of them, you'll see a number of questions for you to discuss with your classmates. These questions are designed to raise important issues in regard to bullying. As you begin your discussion, remember that we're not trying to find out "the right answer," but rather to figure out what we think about these issues and to share our ideas with others.

## Conclusion

We hope that you have enjoyed the opportunity to discuss bullying using *The Karate Kid* as a way to get at some important issues. Of course, the issues we have raised are not the only significant ones. We now want you to think about issues that we haven't raised about bullying that you think are important. You'll have a chance to share these questions with your classmates and discuss some of them, as time permits.

What sort of issues might you discuss? We haven't talked about classroom teachers at all. Can they be helpful to students who are being bullied? What about classmates? Harry is certainly powerless to stop Cheng and his gang from beating up Dre, but are there other things that he might have done to help out?

These are just a couple of examples of issues that we haven't raised and I'm sure you each have other important ones to bring up. So please, follow your teacher's instructions and continue to discuss this very important topic with your classmates.

Oh, and by the way, in case you're worried, things turn out all right for Dre. But you'll have to watch the whole movie to see how.

## Steering Committee for “What’s the Big Idea?”

Tom Wartenberg, Project Director, is a Professor of Philosophy at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. In the last ten years, Professor Wartenberg has been working in various local schools developing a program on teaching philosophy to elementary schools students through children’s literature. His book, *Big Ideas for Little Kids*, published in 2009, explains why it is important to introduce young children to philosophy during primary school. Last April, *The New York Times* published an article on his work in the Education section. For more information, visit [www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org](http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org) . Expanding on his work with *Big Ideas for Little Kids*, Tom provides the philosophical basis for the project, ensuring that the questions, discussions and educational materials have a strong intellectual basis and are an effective tool for teachers and students in understanding and engaging with philosophy. He is a member of the APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy

Julie Akeret is an established filmmaker who has been working in documentary film for twenty-five years. In the last ten years, many of her films have focused on the importance of education, specifically the relationship between the arts and social change. Her films have won numerous national awards and been aired on WGBH/Boston, WNET/NY, and WGBY/Springfield. Her work is distributed by Filmmakers Library and Women Make Movies, both national distributors in New York. For more information, visit [www.akeretfilms.com](http://www.akeretfilms.com) Julie brings her filmmaking expertise to the project. She will select the film clips based on how well they integrate with the topic, ensuring that the selected films are popular choices and age-appropriate. She will work with web designers to make sure that the web site design is effective and attractive.

Nancy Cheevers, Ed.D, is currently a reading specialist at the John F. Kennedy Middle School in Northampton, Massachusetts. Dr. Cheevers has taught middle school English language arts, reading, social studies and is a National Board Certified Teacher of Literacy for Adolescents. She is also the curriculum coordinator in English language arts for the Northampton school system and was named the 2010 National Education Foundation Teacher of Excellence for the state of Massachusetts. Dr. Cheevers has designed on-line courses for the Collaborative/Fitchburg State University and uses technology when teaching graduate courses at the Collaborative for Educational Services. She has agreed to help with designing and testing the program, which includes presenting the film in various classes, monitoring and evaluating the discussions that are generated, and offering critiques on the usability and clarity of the web site.

Sara Goering is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington-Seattle. She has been active in teaching pre-college philosophy for many years. She co-

founder the program for pre-college philosophy at the University of Colorado-Boulder and was the Managing Director for the Center for the Advancement of Philosophy in Schools at Cal State Long Beach. She is currently the Program Director for the Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children. She has been a member of the APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy and has published a number of important essays on working with children philosophically.

## Curriculum Vitae of **Thomas E. Wartenberg**

Department of Philosophy  
Mount Holyoke College  
South Hadley, MA 01075  
413-538-2273

136 Crescent Street  
Northampton, MA 01060  
413.586.6259  
[twartenb@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:twartenb@mtholyoke.edu)

### **Professional Experience**

Professor, Mount Holyoke College, 1992-present; Associate Professor, 1984-1991; Chair, 1989-90, 1991-94, 1995-96, 2003-2007; Chair, Film Studies Program, 1996-99, 2001-02  
Leverhulme Visiting Professor, University of Kent, 2003  
Member, Graduate Faculty, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 1988-present  
Honorary Visiting Professor, University of Auckland, 1994-95  
Visiting Scholar, Harvard University, 1990-1991  
Visiting Assistant Professor, Hampshire College, 1983-1984  
Assistant Professor, Duke University, 1977-1983  
Teaching Fellow, University of Pittsburgh, 1973-1976

### **Postdoctoral Fellowships and Awards**

NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers, Director, 2011 and 1992  
Research Grant to Support Philosophy for Children, Squire Family Foundation, 2007-2011  
Mount Holyoke College, Faculty Fellowship 2006-2007  
Service Learning Course Development Grant, American Philosophical Association Committee on Teaching, 2002  
NEH Fellowship for College Teachers, 1990-91 Senior Fulbright Research Fellowship, Munich, 1986-87  
ACLS Travel Grant, 1986

### **Education**

Amherst College, B.A., 1971 *summa cum laude*  
Stanford University, M.A., 1973  
University of Pittsburgh, Ph. D., 1977  
University of Heidelberg, 1976-1977

### **Membership in Professional Organizations**

American Society for Aesthetics, Trustee 2006-2009  
American Philosophical Association  
North American Society for Social Philosophy, Co-Chair, Eastern Division, 1990-93  
Society for the Cognitive Study of the Moving Image  
Society for the Philosophic Study of the Contemporary Visual Arts

### **Other Professional Activities**

American Philosophical Association: Committee on the Teaching of Philosophy, Member 1989-92; Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy, Member 2009-present  
Editorial Board Member, *Film and Philosophy*, *Critical Horizons*  
Reviewer for numerous journals and publishers

### **Selected Publications**

**Books**

1. *Fight Club (Philosophers on Film Book Series)*. Editor. (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming).
2. *Big Ideas for Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy Through Children's Literature* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009).
3. *Existentialism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Press, 2008).
4. *Thinking On Screen: Film as Philosophy* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).
5. *Thinking Through Cinema: Film as Philosophy* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006). Co-editor with Murray Smith. First appeared as a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Volume 64, Number 1 (Winter/Spring 2006). Runner Up Winner of Special Issue Prize for 2006 awarded by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals
6. *The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings*(Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2005). Co-editor with Angela Curran.
7. *The Nature of Art* (Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace, 2002). Editor. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: (Wadsworth Publishers, 2007). Chinese edition, 2006. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (forthcoming, 2010)
8. *Unlikely Couples: Movie Romance as Social Criticism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).
9. *Philosophy and Film* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995). Co-Editor, with Cynthia Freeland.
10. *Rethinking Power* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992). Editor.
11. *The Forms of Power: From Domination to Transformation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

**Videos**

1. *Teaching Children Philosophy* (South Hadley: 2004). 30-minute dvd. Co-producer with Kelly Albrecht.

**Articles**

1. "On the Possibility of Cinematic Philosophy" in Havi Carel and Greg Tuck, eds., *Film and Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 9-24.
2. "Wordy Pictures: Theorizing the Relationship between Image and Text in Comics" in Aaron Meskin and Roy Cook, eds., *The Art of Comics: A Philosophical Approach* (Blackwell, forthcoming)
3. "Moral Intelligence in Carol Reed's *The Third Man*" in Ward E. Jones and Samantha Vice, eds., *Ethics in Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
4. "Teaching Philosophy Through Film: Aristotle's Theory of Friendship and *The Third Man*," *Film and Philosophy*, Volume 13 (2008), pp. 19-34.
5. "Philosophy for Children Goes to College," *Theory and Research in Education* Volume 5 Number 3, pp. 329-340.
6. "Teaching Philosophy with Children's Literature," *Gifted Education Communicator* Vol. 35. No 3 (Fall 2004), pp. 22-25.
7. "Teaching Philosophy through Teaching Philosophy Teaching," *Teaching Philosophy* Vol. 26 No. 3 (September 2003), pp. 283-297.
8. "Teaching Women Philosophy (as a Feminist Man)" in Tom Digby, ed., *Men Doing Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 131-45.

## **SARA GOERING**

3716 Sunnyside Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 633-0089  
e-mail: sgoering@uw.edu

Department of Philosophy  
Box 353350  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA 98195  
(206) 616-2102

### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D. June 1998      University of Colorado, Boulder  
Dissertation: The Ethics of Human Genetic Therapies: A Proposal for  
Setting Moral Limits on How We Change Our Genes  
Committee: N. Ann Davis, Dale Jamieson, Claudia Mills, Annette Dula,  
Patrick Hopkins

B.S. May 1989      University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Psychology (neuropsychology), with distinction

### **AREAS OF SPECIALTY**

Biomedical Ethics, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy for Children

### **AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE**

Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Assistant Professor, 2003-present  
Department of Philosophy and Program on Values in Society  
Program Director, Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children (K-12 grades)  
University of Washington, Seattle

Assistant Professor, 1999-2003  
Director, Center for Applied Ethics, 1999-2003  
Managing Director, Center for the Advancement of Philosophy in Schools, 1999-2003  
Department of Philosophy  
California State University, Long Beach

Instructor, Summer 2002  
Summer Philosophy Discovery Institute (for high school students)  
Stanford University

Co-founder and Assistant Director, 1994-1999  
Summer Philosophy Institute of Colorado (high school summer camp)  
University of Colorado, Boulder

Co-founder and Co-Director, 1996-1998  
Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)  
University of Colorado, Boulder

## **RECENT PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN GRANTS/SERVICE**

Squire Family Foundation Grant, co-recipient with Jana Mohr Lone and David Shapiro, support for Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children summer teacher training workshop (2010) and graduate assistance for inner pipeline courses on philosophy for children -- \$33,000 over three years, 2010-2013.

Pacific APA mini-conference grant, co-organizer with Tom Wartenberg and Gary Matthews; funds to support a philosophy for children mini-conference at the 2011 Pacific APA meeting, total grant: \$6330.

Member of the APA Committee on Pre-College Philosophy, 2000-2003.

## **PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN PUBLICATIONS**

“Finding and Fostering the Philosophical Impulse in Young People: A Tribute to the Work of Gareth Matthews” invited for a special volume of *Metaphilosophy* (edited by Tom Wartenberg) to honor Gareth Matthews 39(1): 39-50, 2008.

Book review -- Michael Hand and Carrie Winstanley (eds) *Philosophy in Schools* London: Continuum, 2008, in *Teachers College Record* (Columbia University), published September 26, 2008.

“Integrating Philosophy for Children and Young Adults into the Public Schools: Tales from Long Beach, California” with Debbie Whittaker, invited for special issue of *Theory and Research in Education*, 5(3): 341-355, 2007.

"The Summer Philosophy Institute of Colorado: Building Bridges" with Robert Figueroa, *Teaching Philosophy* 20(2): 155-168, 1997.

## **RECENT PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN PRESENTATIONS**

Panel on ethics in pre-college philosophy, Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Institute, June 2011.

TEDx Overlake (“How we learn”), talk titled “Philosophy for Children: Sparking a Love of Learning with the Big Questions” Redmond WA, June 2011.

“College Students as Pre-college Philosophy Teachers” panel at the Pacific APA mini-conference, San Diego, CA, April 2011.

Critic for Author-meets-critics session on Tom Wartenberg’s *Little Kids, Big Ideas* at the Central APA, Minneapolis, MN, March 2011.

JULIE AKERET  
69 Grove Avenue  
Leeds, MA 01053  
413-586-1209  
akeretfilms@verizon.net  
www.akeretfilms.com

## Producer/Director

*Theatre on the Edge*, a one-hour documentary exploring the innovative work of the internationally recognized laboratory theater company, Double Edge Theatre. A co-production with WGBY. (Broadcast on WGBY and WGBH in July 2011)

*Finding Ourselves in Springfield*, a one-hour documentary featuring five Somali Bantu women who are enrolled in a unique arts program, sharing thoughts on family, faith, and feminism. In Progress. (Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and Massachusetts Cultural Council grant recipient)

---

*Sankofa!* (2008), a thirty-minute documentary about an innovative dance program at The University of Massachusetts that brings together distinguished choreographers and musicians from New York City with underserved students from the Pioneer Valley to celebrate the African roots in American dance. *Sankofa!* is a co-production with WGBY.

---

*Step by Step: Keeping the Arts Alive* (2007), a thirty-minute documentary about *Over the Top*, a popular ballroom dancing program for fifth graders in Springfield, MA led by volunteers Allyson and George Gouzounis.

Quotes: Dr. Warrick L. Carter, President, Columbia College, Chicago says, "This film demonstrates how the arts can impact and change the lives of children."

Bob Flaherty, Daily Hampshire Gazette says, "A great film."

---

*Someone Sang for Me* (2003), a one-hour documentary about the critically acclaimed African-American music educator Jane Sapp. (Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Sister Fund, NYC grant recipient)

Awards: Women's Film Festival in Brattleboro, Vermont - Best of Show audience award; Wisconsin Houston WorldFest - Bronze Remi Award; Aurora Award – Platinum

Quotes: Ken Burns, documentary filmmaker, says, "Julie Akeret has made a beautiful, insightful, humane film. Her vision is generous and uncompromising."

Suzanne Pharr, Director, of the Highlander Research and Education Committee in Tennessee, says, "It is a video of miracles and hard work with people who have been marginalized by this society."

Amy Kroin of the *Valley Advocate* says, "While the documentary boasts its share of heartwarming moments, it never turns maudlin or manipulative. Indeed, *Someone Sang for Me* is that rare thing: a film that is as moving as it is provocative."

---

*Tomboys! Feisty Girls and Spirited Women* (2003), a thirty-minute documentary celebrating four real-life tomboys of all ages. (Valentine Foundation and the Lucius and Eva Eastman Foundation grant recipient)

Quotes: Lyn Mikel Brown, Professor of Women's Studies at Colby College says, "A rambunctious documentary that gets to the heart of the matter by talking with 'tomboys' of all ages about what it feels like to be embodied, lively, and full of themselves."

Festivals: Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival, Brattleboro Women's Film Festival, Seoul Women's Film Festival

*Sharing Stories: Polish Life in Our Valley* (2003), a one-hour documentary collaboration with WGBY-Springfield exploring the Polish community in the Connecticut River Valley. In October 2004, WGBY was awarded a PBS National Award for Excellence in the Special Achievement category for its day of Polish programming, the centerpiece of which was *Sharing Stories: Polish Life in Our Valley*.

---

*Looking for Common Ground* (2001), a thirty-minute documentary chronicling the fiery debate over gay and lesbian issues in a rural Massachusetts high school. (Northampton Arts Council and Frameline Grant recipient)

Quotes: James Peyser, Chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, says, "I found *Looking for Common Ground* to be an excellent film. The protagonists from both sides speak for themselves without heavy editing and intrusive narration. The net result is a tone of civility and respectfulness that is too often lacking in media coverage of this controversial issue."

Howard Zinn, author and activist, says, "I think *Looking for Common Ground* is wonderful because it is honest in depicting different attitudes towards homosexuality."

---

*In Defense of Animals* (1990), a thirty-minute documentary about Australian philosopher and animal rights activist Peter Singer. Premiered at The Public Theatre, NYC.

Awards: 1st Place, Birmingham International Film Festival; Silver Cindy Award, Association of Visual Communicators; Finalist, American Film Festival

Quotes: John Hoyt, President of the Humane Society of the United States says, "Excellent. Ms. Akeret has made a moving and persuasive profile."

---

*Not Just Garbage* (1987), a thirty-minute documentary about Mierle Ukeles, artist-in-residence at the New York City Sanitation Department. Premiered at the Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC. (Women's Interart grant recipient)

Awards: Best Documentary Short, USA Film Festival, 1st Place, National Educational Film Festival, Finalist, American Film Festival

Quotes: Woody Allen says, "A charming film with a witty, sophisticated choice of subjects. Thoroughly entertaining."

Paul Mazursky says, "Julie Akeret captures Mierle's means of expression beautifully. It takes guts to make films about maintenance artists and garbage."

---

Television: Julie Akeret's documentaries have been aired on WNET, New York; WGBH, Boston; KCET, Los Angeles; WYBE, Philadelphia; WNBC, New York; WGBY, Springfield, MA; The Learning Channel; WNYC, New York; Free Speech TV

---

- Julie Akeret works freelance as a cameraman, director, and producer. Prior to producing and directing, she worked in NYC as sound editor, production assistant, and assistant film editor for filmmakers David Grubin, George Nierenberg and Skip Blumberg.
- Her documentaries are distributed by Filmmakers Library, Women Make Movies, and Bullfrog Films.

Education: Columbia University, NYC, B.A. Psychology; Center for Film and Video Arts, NYC

References: Skip Blumberg, Videographer, NYC; Alan Dater, Producer, Marlboro Productions

# NANCY A. CHEEVERS, Ed. D.

23 Upland Road • Leeds, MA • 01053  
(413) 586-2465

---

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over 25 years experience as a teacher to middle school, high school, undergraduate and graduate students
- Areas of expertise include general curriculum development, math and science literacy development, reading and writing curriculum development, assessment and interventions, ELL interventions, interdisciplinary planning, MCAS analysis and teaching implications, and incorporating multicultural education with reading and language development
- National Board Certified, experienced researcher, experienced literacy curriculum developer, ethnographic study in media literacy, recipient of grants and scholarships to study literacy learning and multicultural contexts
- Ed.D. in Language, Literacy, and Culture; C.A.G.S. in Education; M.Ed. in Reading and Writing; B.A. in English

## EXPERIENCE

JFK Middle School, Northampton, MA 1992-2000, 2006- PRESENT

### **English Teacher, Reading Specialist, Inclusion Specialist, Mentor**

Teach English and reading 6-8. Duties included curriculum development, writing and computing across the curriculum committee chair, classroom and individual instruction, organizing and facilitating interdepartmental activities, testing and evaluation, IEP implementation, ELL reading inclusion and instruction.

Hampshire Educational Collaborative, Northampton, MA 2000-PRESENT

### **Professor, Consultant**

Teach Reading, Writing and Language Learning, Reading and Writing in Math and Science 5-12., Consult with Western Mass. Schools in general curriculum development, specializing in reading and writing programs, and standards-based teaching and assessment, ELL strategies for math and science literacy, online course writing and evaluation, distance teaching curriculum development, teaching standards evaluation.

Northampton High School, Northampton, MA 2001-2006

### **English Teacher, Department Chair, Mentor**

Taught ninth grade Honors English and College English courses. Duties included curriculum supervision, budget, and mentoring.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 2001-2004

### **Visiting Professor**

Taught graduate courses including Literacy Learning at the Secondary and Adult Levels and Writing and Language Development.

Northampton Public Schools, Northampton, MA 2000-2001

### **English/Language Arts Coordinator, One Year Position**

Researched best practices, revised existing curriculum grades six-twelve, and developed new curriculum for middle school programs and high school courses.

Easthampton High School, Easthampton, MA 1999

### **Program Director**

Wrote curriculum, trained teachers and implemented tutorial program in reading, writing, and math. Duties also included hiring faculty, managing program budget, evaluating program and faculty, and organizing student schedules.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 1990-1996

### **Teaching Assistant 1992-1993, 1995-1996**

### **Microteaching Supervisor 1992**

### **Clinical Site Coordinator 1991 to 1993**

### **Supervisor of Student Teachers 1990 to 1993**

EXPERIENCE cont.	<p>Lenox Memorial High School, Lenox, MA  <b>English Teacher</b>  Taught courses in creative writing, drama, and English. Served as curriculum coordinator for English and interdisciplinary team leader.</p> <p>Smith/Northampton Summer School, Northampton, MA  <b>English Teacher and Cooperating Practitioner</b>  Taught sixth and seventh grade English. Supervised Smith College student teachers in English and reading.</p> <p>Mount Greylock Regional High School, Williamstown, MA  <b>English Teacher</b>  Taught writing workshop and courses in middle and high school English. Served as curriculum developer and interdisciplinary project leader.</p> <p>St. Mary's High School, Westfield, MA  <b>English Teacher</b>  Taught regular and advanced classes in sophomore, junior, and senior English and served as supervisor of literary magazine.</p> <p>Westfield High School, Westfield, MA  <b>English Teacher</b>  Taught summer school courses in English literature and composition.</p>	<p>1987-1990</p> <p>1991-1992</p> <p>1986-1989</p> <p>1984-1985</p> <p>1984</p>
EDUCATION	<p>University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA  Ed. D., Language, Literacy and Culture, 1999  C.A.G.S., Education, 1997  M.Ed., Reading and Writing, 1992</p> <p>Westfield State College, Westfield, MA  B.A., English with concentration in literature, 1984</p>	
CERTIFICATIONS	Massachusetts: English 6-12, History 6-9, Reading K-12, National Board Certified	
AWARDS	<p>Massachusetts National Education Association Award, 2009  National Teacher Certification Scholar, 1999  Drafted Massachusetts State Standards for English, 1997  UMASS Assistantship, 1990-1996  Northampton Educational Foundation Grants, 1996-2000  Phi Delta Kappa Educational Honor Society, 1993  National Endowment Scholarship for the Study of Shakespeare and Theater in Education, 1988  Horace Mann Grant for Television Theater for At-Risk Students, 1987  Westfield State College Excellence in Education Award, 1984</p>	
PRESENTATIONS	<p>Hampshire Educational Collaborative: 1999 to present  National Education Association: 2009  Northampton Public Schools:      Reading, Writing, and Learning Across the Curriculum 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2006  The National Council of Teachers of English:      Language Curriculum and Instruction in Pursuit of Equity and Social Justice, 1994      Toward a More Democratic Society: Student Projects That Inquire Into Language, 1994      Gender: The Hidden Curriculum in English Education, 1992  University of Massachusetts Department of Language, Literacy, and Culture:      Ethnography Conferences 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999</p>	

## **SARA GOERING**

3716 Sunnyside Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98103  
(206) 633-0089  
e-mail: sgoering@uw.edu

Department of Philosophy  
Box 353350  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA 98195  
(206) 616-2102

### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D. June 1998      University of Colorado, Boulder  
Dissertation: The Ethics of Human Genetic Therapies: A Proposal for  
Setting Moral Limits on How We Change Our Genes  
Committee: N. Ann Davis, Dale Jamieson, Claudia Mills, Annette Dula,  
Patrick Hopkins

B.S. May 1989      University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Psychology (neuropsychology), with distinction

### **AREAS OF SPECIALTY**

Biomedical Ethics, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy for Children

### **AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE**

Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy

### **EMPLOYMENT**

Assistant Professor, 2003-present  
Department of Philosophy and Program on Values in Society  
Program Director, Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children (K-12 grades)  
University of Washington, Seattle

Assistant Professor, 1999-2003  
Director, Center for Applied Ethics, 1999-2003  
Managing Director, Center for the Advancement of Philosophy in Schools, 1999-2003  
Department of Philosophy  
California State University, Long Beach

Instructor, Summer 2002  
Summer Philosophy Discovery Institute (for high school students)  
Stanford University

Co-founder and Assistant Director, 1994-1999  
Summer Philosophy Institute of Colorado (high school summer camp)  
University of Colorado, Boulder

Co-founder and Co-Director, 1996-1998  
Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)  
University of Colorado, Boulder

## **RECENT PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN GRANTS/SERVICE**

Squire Family Foundation Grant, co-recipient with Jana Mohr Lone and David Shapiro, support for Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children summer teacher training workshop (2010) and graduate assistance for inner pipeline courses on philosophy for children -- \$33,000 over three years, 2010-2013.

Pacific APA mini-conference grant, co-organizer with Tom Wartenberg and Gary Matthews; funds to support a philosophy for children mini-conference at the 2011 Pacific APA meeting, total grant: \$6330.

Member of the APA Committee on Pre-College Philosophy, 2000-2003.

## **PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN PUBLICATIONS**

“Finding and Fostering the Philosophical Impulse in Young People: A Tribute to the Work of Gareth Matthews” invited for a special volume of *Metaphilosophy* (edited by Tom Wartenberg) to honor Gareth Matthews 39(1): 39-50, 2008.

Book review -- Michael Hand and Carrie Winstanley (eds) *Philosophy in Schools* London: Continuum, 2008, in *Teachers College Record* (Columbia University), published September 26, 2008.

“Integrating Philosophy for Children and Young Adults into the Public Schools: Tales from Long Beach, California” with Debbie Whittaker, invited for special issue of *Theory and Research in Education*, 5(3): 341-355, 2007.

"The Summer Philosophy Institute of Colorado: Building Bridges" with Robert Figueroa, *Teaching Philosophy* 20(2): 155-168, 1997.

## **RECENT PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN PRESENTATIONS**

Panel on ethics in pre-college philosophy, Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization (PLATO) Institute, June 2011.

TEDx Overlake (“How we learn”), talk titled “Philosophy for Children: Sparking a Love of Learning with the Big Questions” Redmond WA, June 2011.

“College Students as Pre-college Philosophy Teachers” panel at the Pacific APA mini-conference, San Diego, CA, April 2011.

Critic for Author-meets-critics session on Tom Wartenberg’s *Little Kids, Big Ideas* at the Central APA, Minneapolis, MN, March 2011.