AAPT Summer Seminar on Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Abstract
PLATO (Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization) requests $4500 to cover the travel costs for 15 high school and middle school teachers to attend the 2020 AAPT Summer Seminar on Teaching and Learning Philosophy. In 2014, PLATO and AAPT hosted the inaugural joint high school and middle school Summer Seminar with support from the APA. Due to its great success and enthusiastic reports from the participating teachers and facilitators, the program will be offered again. At the Seminar, selected high school and middle school educators will discuss new approaches to engaging students with philosophy, and exchange ideas with university faculty attending the conference. Expanding the AAPT Summer Seminar to include high school and middle school teachers accomplishes 2 goals: it furthers PLATO’s mission of building a national support and resource-sharing network of all those committed to advancing pre-college philosophy, and helps ensure the high quality of pre-college philosophy instruction.

Basic Information
Project Coordinator(s)
Stephen K Miller, Wendy Turgeon

Steering Committee
Jana Mohr Lone, University of Washington Center for Philosophy

Roberta Israeloff, Squire Family Foundation

Wendy Turgeon, St. Joseph’s College

Stephen Miller, Oakwood Friends School and Marist College

Funding Amount Requested
$4,500

Expected Project Completion Date
July 2020

Project Description
In June 2015, AAPT agreed to partner with PLATO again for this important initiative. Wendy Turgeon has agreed to return as facilitator with Stephen Miller in 2020. Wendy is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Philosophy Department at St. Joseph’s College; she has worked with pre-service and in-service teachers to provide training in philosophy, and has developed an undergraduate concentration in philosophy in the K-12 curriculum at St. Joseph’s. Stephen teaches philosophy at Oakwood Friends School and Marist College and publishes frequently about teaching philosophy in high school and middle school. Both Wendy and
Stephen are on the board of directors of PLATO and are past members of the Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy (CVs attached).

**Project Impact**
Inviting high school and middle school teachers to attend the AAPT Summer Seminar serves a dual purpose: it will provide a forum for those already teaching philosophy pre-collegiately and those interested in doing so to meet and exchange ideas and resources, thereby encouraging more pre-college philosophy instruction, and it will enhance the quality of that instruction. As such, the high school and middle school Seminar fulfills the goals of both PLATO and AAPT, respectively.

Since 2009, PLATO has been a national network for all those working in pre-college education that advocates for the introduction of philosophy into schools and connects education and philosophy communities through programs, resource-sharing, and research. It was formed in response to the growth of pre-college philosophy in the U.S. over the past decade, and with the support of the APA and its Committee on Pre-college Instruction in Philosophy.

According to its website, AAPT was founded in 1976 “to promote and improve the quality of instruction in philosophy at all educational levels,” and is dedicated to the advancement of the art of teaching philosophy. Its seminar for university faculty and philosophy graduate students has long been recognized as a valuable resource for all those interested in pedagogy.

In 2014, nine high school and middle school teachers from across the country participated in the inaugural joint PLATO/AAPT Summer Seminar. The high school and middle school program, which took place each morning, interwove focused readings from philosophical literature with presentations by the participants. In the afternoons, teachers attended the regular AAPT sessions.

**Project Goals**
- To further PLATO’s mission of building a national support and resource-sharing network of all those committed to advancing pre-college philosophy
- Help ensure high quality of pre-college philosophy instruction.

**Project Timeline**
In January 2020, applications for the 2020 Summer Seminar from high school and middle school teachers will be published on all websites and social media sites mentioned below (see Outreach section). Applicants will be asked to submit a statement of interest and a letter of support from a school supervisor, such as a principal, vice principal or department chair.

A committee, including the two facilitators, will be formed to review the applications; the committee will meet to determine its procedures and rubrics for evaluating the applications.

March 15, 2020 – Applications due.

April 2020 – Participants will be notified of their acceptance to the Seminar.

July 2020 - Seminar will take place
Plans for 2020

The high school and middle school component of the 2020 AAPT Seminar, which will take place at Otterbein College in Ohio in July 2020, will build on the momentum and enthusiasm generated at the 2014 Seminar. The high school and middle school program will run four consecutive mornings. Topics will include syllabus design, developing learning-centered philosophy classes, and traditional and non-traditional methods of assessment.

In the afternoons and evenings, high school and middle school teachers will be free to attend AAPT conference sessions, giving them the opportunity to forge relationships and share ideas with those who teach philosophy at other educational levels.

**Project Outreach**

Outreach is central to PLATO’s mission: to increase access to philosophy around the country, and to bring together all those who share an interest in philosophy for young students so that they may share information, resources, networks and support. PLATO maintains a database of about 200 teachers and others interested in pre-college philosophy; it has 14 institutional sponsors; and hosts a blog and listserv. Questions is its official journal. It works closely with the Squire Family Foundation, the National high school and middle school Ethics Bowl, the American Association of Philosophy Teachers, and the American Philosophical Association.

Updated information about the program will appear across many platforms including the websites and, where available, Facebook pages and blogs of: PLATO, APA, Squire Family Foundation, AAPT, National high school and middle school Ethics Bowl, Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, Ethics Across the Curriculum Society, as well as K-12 educational associations and organizations.

**Accessibility Plan**

The AAPT Summer Seminar will make every effort to accommodate those with special needs.

A sign interpreter will be available if needed. All presentations will be oral. The buildings and rooms at the location are fully accessible.

**Evaluation Plan**

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants will be asked to provide feedback, including the completion of a survey, to assist in evaluating the schedule and program of the seminar.

As they did at the close of the previous conferences, the facilitators will convene to assess and record what was most effective, in addition to making recommendations for those things that could be improved.

**Online Presence**

We will work through existing online sites such as PLATO, Squire Family Foundation and the PLATO partner organizations.

**Budget Narrative**

To continue to meet its outreach goals, funding from the APA to help defray travel and lodging costs incurred by teachers attending the conference is particularly important: travel stipends for teachers to attend professional conferences have been slashed as school districts across the country reduce their
discretionary budgets. Specifically, housing and registration costs for participants will be paid by PLATO (we estimate the total cost per participant for registration, travel and housing to be $650-700). Participants will be responsible for the cost of meals. Historically the APA has offered stipends to defray travel and housing costs of up to $300 for each participant in the AAPT graduate student seminar, and in 2018, the APA provided similar stipends for high school and middle school teachers participating in the first AAPT high school and middle school seminar. We request that the APA provide similar stipends for participants in the 2020 AAPT high school and middle school seminar, provided the teachers are Teacher Associate Members of the APA.

**Other Funding Sources**
Squire Family Foundation

PLATO