AAPT Graduate Student and Early Career Seminar on Teaching and Learning, Summer 2020

Abstract
The American Association of Philosophy Teachers biennial Graduate Student and Early Career Seminar on Teaching and Learning brings together philosophers from all over the country to study materials on the teaching of philosophy in a four-day, interactive workshop led by philosophers with pedagogical expertise. We provide participants with research-based best practices from both the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and the science of learning. Participants develop quickly and thoroughly into thoughtful and innovative teachers. Supporting this seminar is a central way for the APA to meet the teaching component of its mission.

Basic Information

Project Coordinator(s)
Alexandra Bradner, Jennifer Mulnix, Emily Esch, Stephen Bloch-Schulman

Steering Committee
Jennifer Mulnix, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth
Emily Esch, College of Saint Benedict-Saint John's University
Stephen Bloch-Schulman, Elon University

Funding Amount Requested
$5,000

Expected Project Completion Date
July 2020

Project Description
The American Association of Philosophy Teachers’ Graduate Student and Early Career Seminar on Teaching and Learning provides the highest level of teacher training available by and for philosophers. The four-day seminar will be held in conjunction with the late July 2020 biennial AAPT conference: twenty participants attend seminar sessions in the mornings and attend conference presentations in the afternoon.

Through readings and interactive experiences, the Teaching and Learning Seminar participants explore issues, experiment with approaches, and engage in a community of reflection in order to strengthen their pedagogical choices. Participants study how to identify and select challenging and transformative learning objectives and, by understanding the principles of integrated course design, participants will examine how to best guide students to the successful achievement of these goals. Topics include preparing to teach,
developing learning-centered philosophy classes, using traditional and non-traditional methods of assessment, outreach to students of underrepresented groups in philosophy, and engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The friendships and collegial relationships built are long-lasting, and the benefits for the larger philosophical community have been well documented. The AAPT T&L seminars have been crucial in moving our profession away from a teacher-centered model of teaching to a student-centered model of learning.

Our seminars are grounded in best practices from the most recent pedagogical research and provide one of the only venues for new instructors to acquire philosophy-specific pedagogical training. Given that only 12.6% of emerging philosophers end up in institutions that strongly emphasize research over teaching, and that the great majority of PhD granting programs offer little expert teaching training, it is crucial that the APA and the AAPT serve the profession by providing the training needed. Nearly 70% of faculty members in graduate programs “agree” or “strongly agree” that more teacher training should be offered and 31% of early career philosophers report that they were not well prepared for the teaching aspect of their job. When former seminar participants are asked an open-ended question regarding what helped them to become good teachers, the AAPT teaching and Learning Summer Seminar is frequently cited as a singular bright spot. (Data is from D. Concepcion, M. Messineo, S. Wieten, and C. Homan, "The State of Teacher Training in Philosophy," Teaching Philosophy, 39:1, 2016.)

This proposal has secured local support. The AAPT is contributing funds for participant travel and waiving the conference registration fee for participants. Otterbein University in Westerville, OH, is the 2020 site host and will be providing the necessary infrastructure.

The AAPT has been conducting a teaching and learning seminar since the late 1980s. The current version was created in 2008. It continues to evolve to include the latest and best scholarship regarding teaching and learning, but its core message of the importance of learner-centered teaching remains the same. The AAPT has the administrative experience and the resources to ensure that the money requested in this grant will be well used to provide an inclusive experience for a diverse group of philosophers, as our history of excellence in this area demonstrates. We have a strong Teaching and Learning Committee, chaired by David Concepcion, who will issue the call for facilitators and provide support guidance for the three facilitators of the seminar.

Our summer conference Teaching and Learning Seminar has served as a model for the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization’s (PLATO) summer seminar for high school teachers, which was held for the first time in 2014 concurrently with the AAPT’s Seminar. PLATO will again be organizing a summer seminar at the AAPT’s 2020 conference. Additionally, the summer conference Teaching and Learning Seminar has become a model for the one-day regional teaching and learning workshops organized by AAPT around the country. The AAPT has organized Teaching and Learning Workshops at the San Francisco APA, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Wisconsin, Loyola University Chicago, San Francisco State, North Texas University, Salem State University, Western University, University of Michigan, MIT, University of Minnesota, and Mount St. Mary’s (in LA), among other places. We are regularly contacted by philosophy departments hoping to host one of our workshops, and we expect to expand our regional Teaching and Learning Workshops in the coming years.
Project Impact
The AAPT Teaching and Learning Seminar draws participants from all over the country who return to their home campuses after the seminar and share what they have learned with their colleagues and advisors. Most importantly, seminar participants implement in their classrooms the teaching materials developed within the seminar. Seminar facilitators also benefit from the program, in that they must update their knowledge every two years in order to share the very latest literature from both SoTL and the science of learning with participants. Over the years, the seminar has produced a cadre of young leaders in philosophy teaching, who move on to present their pedagogical work at the APA-AAPT Teaching Hub and in other venues, such as our discipline’s central teaching journals.

Project Goals
- To provide the training in philosophical pedagogy that is so often neglected by graduate programs by sharing best practices and the very latest literature in both the science of learning and SoTL.
- To create a community of philosophers interested in sharing experiences, innovations, expertise, and wisdom related to the teaching of philosophy.
- To improve the inclusiveness of our discipline by sharing the scholarly literature on inclusive teaching.
- To highlight the work of philosophers who write scholarly books and articles on pedagogy.
- To create a space in which teaching is celebrated as one of the most impactful things philosophers do.

Project Timeline
August 2019: The call for facilitators is distributed. The AAPT Teaching and Learning Committee selects facilitators using a competitive process, in order to ensure that the seminar is led by experienced leaders in philosophical pedagogy.

October 2019: The AAPT's Teaching and Learning Committee selects three facilitators, and the facilitators begin to plan the seminar.

February 2020: The call for participants goes out through the AAPT's listserv, PhilEvents, broader disciplinary listservs, and social media.

April 2020: Participant acceptances are announced.

May and June 2020: Participants are sent the homework readings, which must be completed before the seminar. Participants and facilitators begin pre-seminar blogging.

Late July 2020: The seminar is conducted during the AAPT's biennial conference, which will be held at Otterbein University in Westerville, OH.

August 2020: The seminar is evaluated by both participants and facilitators. Facilitators continue to work individually with participants. Travel stipends are distributed.

We are asking for $5,000 to provide a travel stipend to each of the twenty participants. The AAPT waives the AAPT conference registration fee for the participants and the facilitators. However, the participants
have to pay for their own travel, food, and lodging. Since most of the participants are graduate students, their access to travel funds is limited. The travel stipend makes it possible for many of the participants to attend. The graduate students do not receive any academic credit for participating in the Teaching and Learning Seminar.

**Project Outreach**

The call for participants for the Teaching and Learning Seminar will be posted on the AAPT website, the APA website, and philosophy listservs. It will also be pushed to graduate students at most of the post-secondary philosophy degree granting institutions in the United States and Canada with special attention paid to those programs nearest the conference. Because the seminar can accept only 20 participants and is only offered once every two years, acceptance into the seminar has become quite an honor, a mark that a job candidate has both expertise and interest in teaching.

**Accessibility Plan**

The Teaching and Learning Seminar will be conducted on a college campus that is ADA compliant. Beyond mere compliance, our facilitators have expertise in “universal design for learning” (UDL) and will create resources, deliver content, and manage interactions according to the best UDL practices. In addition to modeling these best practices, the facilitators will also discuss the content of UDL so the participants will be in a position to use UDL practices when they return to their home institutions.

**Evaluation Plan**

The AAPT sends an evaluation survey to all participants. The seminar facilitators prepare a report summarizing the evaluation data and reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses for the AAPT Board of Directors. The report is used by subsequent facilitators as they prepare the next iteration of the seminar. Feedback from past seminarians encouraged the addition of readings and discussions on how to best reach members of underrepresented groups in philosophy. In short, we repeatedly close the assessment loop. Please see the attached documents for the 2018 seminar report from the AAPT’s 2018 conference at NCA&T. We would use this report as a model for our assessment of the 2020 seminar.

**Online Presence**

The seminar schedule and calls for both participants and facilitators will be posted to the AAPT website.

https://philosophyteachers.org/2018/

**Budget Narrative**

We request $5,000.00 ($250 per participant) to be paid after the seminar is completed, around August 1, 2020. The AAPT will contribute $1,000 so that the total travel stipend will be $300 per participant. The AAPT waives the Teaching and Learning Seminar participants’ conference registration fees, which are subsidized by other conference attendees and AAPT membership dues.

**Other Funding Sources**

Funding confirmed: The AAPT will contribute $50 to each of the twenty participants’ travel stipends, for a total contribution of $1000.