

The third PLATO Workshop for High School Teachers was held July 25th-July 28th in conjunction with the AAPT conference in Greensboro , North Carolina. Nine participants formed a wonderful group, along with two facilitators. [See list at end.] One participant had been at the 2016 workshop but we judged that she contributed and gained significantly from this one. We ran program for three days in the mornings. We had planned on trying to get together on Wednesday evening but since the AAPT did not sponsor a welcome evening event, we were unclear how to convene so we simply started introductions on Thursday morning. This time we structured the workshop as a combination of discussions on the assigned readings, both classical and contemporary, and presentations from each of the participants. We also had participants lead the discussions on the assigned readings to encourage more active involvement with texts and pedagogy. This time we assigned individuals to readings and scheduled them for their presentations before we traveled so that they knew ahead of time which reading they were a co-leader on as well as what morning they were to present their own questions/activities/ideas.

Again we had a mix among those who had been teaching a philosophy course for a while, whose who were already incorporating philosophy into their regular curriculum, and some who were just beginning to develop a course/unit. This year was a particularly strong group who grasped the structure of the readings as well as clearly prepared their presentation. They were a delight to work with.

We met each morning and for the afternoon, participants attended sessions at the AAPT. The following day we would share ideas learned from the presentations. They were uniformly helpful and often connected to concerns that our participants had in their own classrooms. Several of the teachers commented how pedagogy presentations to college instructors covered techniques long known and practiced by pre-college teachers.

This AAPT conference had little down time. For one or two of the days there was not even a scheduled lunch break. So, we were unable to offer a "Meet the PLATO teachers" session as we had done in 2016. But our participants fully engaged in the AAPT sessions and plenary talks. During our last morning session we spent extra time discussing ethics bowls as there was widespread interest in starting or developing these. The last evening we arranged a dinner off campus for our group and they really bonded.

After the conference ended we sent out a survey to get some feedback. Of the 9 participants, only 3 responded. Lesson learned: give out a survey at the end of the workshop and ideally encourage them to complete it before they leave and get back to their busy lives. That said, we ended on such a positive note that we are hoping many of them will come to the next PLATO conference in 2019. They uniformly appreciated the opportunity to participate in the workshop and the AAPT conference and would share ideas with colleagues.

On behalf of PLATO, we are grateful for the support from the APA to make this event possible.

--Steve Goldberg and Wendy Turgeon
9/15/2018

Some quotes from the survey:

In response to the question, "If you were to describe your experience in the seminar to a friend, how would you describe it?"

Philosophy Camp! It is the opportunity to share pedagogical ideas with like-minded educators while engaging in deep philosophical discussion about the big questions. I would DEFINITELY recommend it to others, even if they didn't have a philosophy background.

Has participation in the seminar changed the way you think about teaching and learning, and philosophy? If so, in what ways? Yes, very much so! It was a very personal experience- first time that I was surrounded by people who shared a love and dedication to a field of study which is little appreciated in our national culture, and yet it seems to possess great, potential for help as our education crisis deepens. This workshop was so affecting, I will be starting a Masters program in philosophy at the end of this month!

Considering content, format, presenters' style, or other variables, what would you say were the weaknesses of the seminar or areas we might improve? Not so much a weakness, but I wish that the presenters had shared more of their personal experiences as philosophers and teachers of philosophy. I also would had liked more time to discuss the AAPT workshops in greater detail and apply this very survey on the presentations themselves so that we, the participants, been able to crystallize specific takeaways. Lastly, many of us were a bit confused as to how extensive, detailed our teacher's presentation should had been. A bit more direction on this I think would be very valuable!

Would you recommend the experience to others? If you were to describe your experience in the seminar to a friend, how would you describe it? Yes, very much so!

It was a multifaceted experience, rich enough to incur a serious debriefing on the participant's part. The balance between one's exposure to professional philosophers/professors and the PLATO group's own work was a rich experience that inspired one's professional development and helped in a very personal manner: to come to a better appreciation of philosophy in a historically anti-intellectual society.

A "take-away": I experienced how when a person (myself, for example) was led into philosophical consideration of a text, my thinking expanded and the process of exchange consumed me (in the role of the student). That is to say, I lost all track of time. I found myself repeatedly surprised (and disappointed even) when we had to move on to another subject. This experience is one I hope to find as a fruit of my reframing my classes using this process.

And last comment from one of the participants:

I just want to thank you for making these seminars possible. I also found that both Wendy's and Steve's encouragement and hospitality made the environment for learning imaginative and expansive. Engaging with the thinkers of the past -- Socrates, Plato etc - is meaningful today. This seminar offered great examples of how one might incorporate dialogue into the classroom.

Schedule for PLATO-AAPT Summer 2018 Seminar

Pre-Conference:

Background reading:

Read some of the [resources](#) on PLATO website; check the entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/children/>

Recommended: *Provocations* by David Birch, Crown House Published, 2014. [Available on Amazon]

This workshop is a collaborative experience with participants actively engaged in co-facilitating the experience along with Steven Goldberg and Wendy Turgeon. Each of you will be working in a team to lead the discussion on a piece of philosophical writing as well as having an opportunity to present something of your own to the group.

Three readings: The Crito by Plato, On Personal Identity by David Hume, "Puppies, Pigs, and People" by Alastair Norcross.

Individual Presentation options:

Please plan on a presentation for the participants of 40 minutes in length (including time for questions). Consider the following suggestions:

- a. a lesson plan/project/unit that they have used that works particularly well
- b. a lesson plan/project/unit that you have tried to use and that did NOT go well but that they think should have and would like feedback
- c. a lesson plan/project/unit that they are working on or planning to present for the first time.

We hope to have a good cross section of varying options here so please let us know some options for what you would like to present so that we can structure this with wide appeal. You can choose a piece of philosophical literature, some other prompt, or whatever approach you use or are interested in.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, July 25

Casual Meet and Greet get together in the evening—hope you can make it!

Some background discussion: Paths to Philosophy-Direction—administration

- history, approaches, rationale
- how philosophy was introduced to school—a brief history
- place of philosophy in the curriculum: fitting it in?
- the range of approaches available: models of philosophy as forensic debate, community of inquiry, historical sweep/Great Conversation, problems application, philosophy as stand-alone/as interwoven within disciplines, rigorous analysis vs. free-flowing reflection, others?

Thursday, July 26

- 8:30-9:00** Getting Oriented—intro to AAPT and to our workshop
- 9:00-9:45** Reading a text—reflecting on the given: David Hume on personal identity
Facilitated by Landon Hedrick, Wendy Way, John Keenan and the facilitators
Discussion: What is the central philosophical question, theme, or issue in this reading? How would you reconstruct the arguments presented in the reading? What teaching strategy would help students understand the text and spark lively discussion?
- 9:45-10:00** Coffee Break
- 10:00-noon** **Your turn:** presenting a unit or program
Alejandro Ramirez, Patrick Touhey, and Kristin Kramer (40 minutes each)
- distinctive nature and value of philosophy as a discipline
 - characteristic philosophical questions and problems
 - philosophical reasoning and conversation
 - intellectual and moral virtues cultivated by philosophy
 - tackling challenging readings with students;
 - Getting productive classroom discussion

Afternoon: **AAPT sessions begin at 1 PM each day**

Friday, July 27th

- 8:30-9:00** Review of AAPT Sessions you attended yesterday
Ideas for college teaching from yesterday's afternoon sessions that can be adapted to high school philosophy
- 9:00-9:45** Reading a classical text in political philosophy-- Platonic Dialogue, *The Crito*
Facilitated by Twila McDonell, Jayme Kerr, and Andrew Smith and the facilitators
Discussion: What is the central philosophical question or issue in this reading? How would you reconstruct the arguments presented in the reading? What teaching strategy would help students understand the text and spark lively discussion?
- 9:45-10:00** Coffee Break
- 10:00-noon** **Your turn:** presenting a unit or program
Wendy Way, John Keenan, and Landon Hedrick (40 minutes each)

Afternoon AAPT sessions

Saturday, July 29th

- 8:30-9:00** Review of Friday AAPT Sessions
- 9:00-9:45** Reading a text-- philosophical analysis: Alistair Norcross's *Puppies, Pigs, and People*
facilitated by Alejandro Ramirez, Patrick Touhey, and Kristin Kramer
Discussion: What is the central philosophical question, theme, or issue in this reading? How does Norcross argue his position here through a series of thought experiments and an analysis of alternative answers? What teaching strategy would help students understand the reading and spark lively discussion?
- 9:45-10:00** **Coffee Break**
- 10:00-noon** **Your turn:** presenting a unit or program
Twila McDonell, Jayme Kerr, and Andrew Smith (40 minutes each)

Possible extra: Aesthetics: the forgotten philosophical area: demonstration of a community of inquiry and/or other areas of interest to the group **OR** Ethics Bowl demonstration

- *Motivating the Question:* thinking about art and aesthetic experience: maybe it is not all opinion?
- *Central Question and concepts:* what is art? The roles of artist, audience, critic
- *Close reading and discussion:* Leo Lionni's **Frederick** and Clive Bell on significant form

Afternoon AAPT sessions

General Information

Opportunities for Teachers and Students

- PLATO conferences: next one in summer 2019
- PLATO teacher awards
- PLATO student essay competition
- NEH seminars and Institutes
- ICPIIC and its upcoming conference in July 2019
- *Questions*, a pre-college philosophy journal for students and teachers
- APA Committee for Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy (CPIP)
- APA Teaching Hubs at the regional APA meetings
- Useful Online Materials for teaching philosophy

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