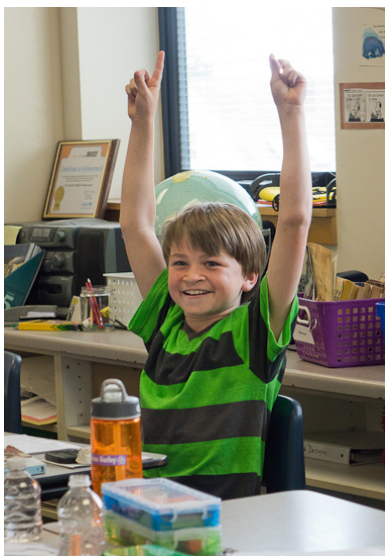




Philosophy for Children Graduate Program

We are in the third year of the Center's graduate fellowship program. The program has enhanced considerably the Center's efforts to introduce philosophy into schools, by allowing us to increase the number of primary and secondary classrooms we serve and improve training for the undergraduates working with us. In these three years, we have had eight graduate fellows - four from the Department of Philosophy and four from the College of Education - with two of them continuing for a second year. Fellows facilitate philosophy classes in Seattle schools, mentor undergraduate students involved in the program, participate in the High School Ethics Bowl, and are involved in research about the effects of philosophical inquiry on children and teachers. Several graduate students are now working on dissertations in the field of precollege philosophy.



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The involvement of these UW graduate students has forged stronger connections with the [College of Education](#). We are currently working with Education faculty and graduate students to develop and fund a research study that will evaluate how fifth-grade students in a diverse, public school develop particular dispositions and practices through philosophical inquiry, connected to a new program we are instituting next year at [Thurgood Marshall Elementary School](#) focused on issues of social inequality in general and racial inequality in particular.

Next year we will again have four Philosophy for Children Graduate Fellows. The growth and sustainability of this program has been made possible in part through a generous gift from Dan Gerler (BA, Philosophy and Psychology, 1983). Dan's gift will fully support two Philosophy for Children Fellows for four years, fostering the continued expansion of our work in Seattle. We are honored by Dan's support of and confidence in our work.

We also now have an annual fall graduate seminar in philosophy for children, in addition to our three undergraduate courses, in which we explore such topics as the nature of childhood, the connection between philosophical inquiry and identity, and social inequalities in the classroom.

We are very appreciative of the Department of Philosophy's continued support of the Center!

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From the Director



In the midst of our 20th anniversary year, it is gratifying to reflect about how far we have come from our 1996 beginning as a new non-profit organization, attempting to determine the most effective path for bringing philosophy into local schools. Since then, hundreds of adults have been involved

in our programs and we have introduced philosophy to thousands of young people.

In 1997 we became affiliated with the [UW Department of Philosophy](#), and this year our board decided to commit to becoming an official UW Organized Research Unit (ORU). ORUs are collaborative centers involved in work that cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Our UW ORU application was approved last month, providing the Center with increased access to UW resources and greater campus visibility.

Our role as one of the preeminent precollege philosophy centers continues to grow. In the past year or so, we have had visiting scholars and students from Mexico, Turkey, Japan, Norway, and other parts of the US, all of whom have spent time at the Center to observe our precollege philosophy classes and work with our staff and students, in order to enhance their own research and program development.

Finally, a new textbook, published this winter, is the first complete precollege philosophy textbook published in the US. [Philosophy in Education: Questioning and Dialogue in Schools](#), by Jana Mohr Lone and Michael D. Burroughs, offers practical resources and lesson plans for use in precollege classrooms, as well as consideration of many of the broader educational, social, and political topics in the field. The book includes sections on the importance of wondering, questioning and reflection, how philosophy is uniquely suited to help students cultivate critical reasoning and independent thinking capacities, strategies for recognizing and diminishing the impact of social inequalities in classrooms, and ways to cultivate philosophical sensitivity.

High School Ethics Bowl

The 2016 [Washington State High School Ethics Bowl](#), held on Saturday January 30, was a great success! Over 100 high school students and teachers and 40 judges, lawyers, UW faculty and other educators participated, as well as many undergraduate and graduate student volunteers. The high school student participants inspired all who attended with their thoughtfulness, enthusiasm, and openness.

One of the coaches involved wrote: "The students could not stop discussing the cases and were thrilled with how much they connected with students from other schools. I just want you to know how much the students enjoyed and were inspired by the event."

Awards went to the following schools:

First place: Seattle Academy

Second place: Lakeside High School

Third place: Chief Sealth High School

Award for Civil Dialogue: Rainier Beach High School



The students from these four schools participated in "Olympia Day" on February 23, which involved private tours of the Washington State Supreme Court, including attendance at an oral argument session, the Capitol Building, where students met with selected state legislators, and the Governor's Mansion, as well as a lunch reception with all of the Supreme Court justices and Governor's Counsel Nick Brown.

We look forward to hosting the next Washington High School Ethics Bowl in 2017! Information on the event will be posted on the UW Center for Philosophy for Children website in the fall.

We greatly appreciate our generous 2016 High School Ethics Bowl sponsors:

[Jewel Hospitality](#)

[Washington Interscholastic Activities Association](#)

[University of Washington College of Arts & Sciences, Division of Social Sciences](#)

[University of Washington College of Education](#)

[University of Washington Department of Philosophy](#)

[University of Washington Program on Values in Society](#)

[University of Washington School of Law](#)

Philosophers in the Schools

This spring our [Philosophers in the Schools](#) program involves over 25 philosophy classes in Seattle public school classrooms in five elementary schools and three high schools, with 15 faculty, graduate students, and volunteers involved in this effort, as well as a number of undergraduate students who are enrolled in our class.



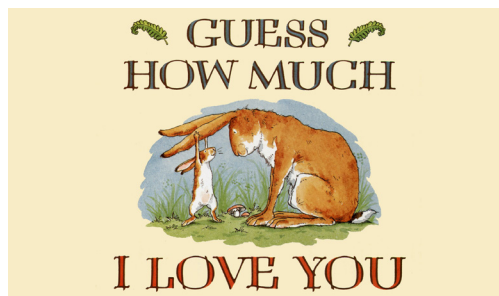
We are in the third year of our philosopher-in-residence program at [John Muir Elementary School](#), and very fortunate to have Karen Emmerman (Ph.D. philosophy, 2012) continuing to serve in this role. We greatly appreciate the support of the [Squire Family Foundation](#), which has funded this position for the past three years and recently committed to continue this funding for the next three years.

RubyDawn Lyman, a College of Education Ph.D. Candidate who is involved in the program, writes:

This school year I was fortunate enough to work with Ms. Emily Freeman's fifth grade class at John Muir Elementary. Many of the students were familiar with philosophy, having had philosophy classes with Jana Mohr Lone in third grade. On the first day when I arrived for class, the students were extremely enthusiastic about philosophy. As a former language arts teacher, I was very excited to bring all kinds of books and writing into the classroom with philosophy as the center focus. We started philosophy journals on the first week and continued to add to them almost every week that I was there.

While many weeks we followed the basic P4C format of sharing a piece of literature, having the students come up with wonder questions, and then discussing those questions as a group, one week we had a silent discussion. The purpose of the silent discussion was two-fold. First, although students were pretty good at participating equally, I wanted a couple of the quieter student voices to be heard. Second, I really wanted the students to be thoughtful and serious about the topic that we were discussing: love.

The week of the silent discussion happened to be Valentine's Day and the book that we read that week was *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney. Some of the students were familiar with the book and were enthusiastic about reconnecting with it. After reading the book, we brainstormed questions that were written on the board. The questions centered on what love is, why there is love, and what kinds of love exist. The students were divided into table groups of three. Each group had a poster-size piece of paper and markers with which to write. The first thing each group did was to choose their question and write it at the top of their paper. Then each group began writing responses to their questions. Absolutely no talking was allowed.



To close the session, everyone came together in a circle. The students shared their posters and then debriefed the experience overall. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, some of the more vocal students said they felt frustrated by the process of silent discussion because they disliked having to wait to write down their responses. A couple of the quieter students verbalized their appreciation of the process, because they felt they could share their thoughts

without having to be in the spotlight. Overall, it was a positive experience, because every voice was able to have an outlet without the pressure of being the focus of the class.



June Workshop

We will be holding our annual two-day workshop on philosophical inquiry in classrooms on Wednesday June 29 and Thursday June 30, in Savery Hall at the University of Washington, from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm both days. The workshop is open to teachers and others interested in exploring how introducing philosophy can enrich student learning. Participants will learn about the history and methods of pre-college philosophy, and will engage in philosophical discussions on topics such as: "What can we know? What makes something right or wrong? Are we free? What is a mind? How do we define happiness?" We will have sessions specifically for elementary school teachers and for middle/high school teachers, as well as sessions for the entire group. The sessions for middle and high school teachers will include at least one session on the High School Ethics Bowl.

Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the workshop is free, including clock hours, materials, refreshments and lunches, and parking. Space is limited. To register, please send a brief statement of interest, including school and grades taught if you are a teacher, and contact information (phone/email) to mohrlone@uw.edu by May 31,

For Parents

**Taking Care of Mom and Child, by
Wondering Together**
-Jean Hansen

Between my two children, I'm entering my sixth year of diaper changes, and at times still feeling overwhelmed by the responsibilities and questions that parenting brings. Just last week, my soon-to-be three year-old daughter and kindergartener son both "flipped their lids" during a rare excursion to a restaurant. The phrase "flipping your lid" and the hand model of the brain have become common images presented to parents as new neurological understandings of the brain have made their way to advice on parenting for "Social and Emotional Learning" and "Executive Function." All these terms and research-based recommendations can be overwhelming for parents experiencing the very real responsibilities and the identity changes of having become "Mom" or "Dad." We all want to do what's "right" for our children. I have come to appreciate that a philosophical mindset with my children not only helps my children develop greater mental flexibility, emotional control and social learning, but also benefits me since, like my children, my understanding of being (as a parent) is developing as well.

My introduction to philosophy for children came at a time when I was experiencing a similar identity change and becoming directly responsible for the care of others. I was in a Masters in Teaching program and beginning my career as a middle-school math teacher. I was in a position, like parenting, where it is often assumed that the "teacher knows best," and struggling with this misplaced understanding of authority and learning. Luckily, taking David Shapiro's Philosophy for Children class saved me. Here I experienced philosophy's authentic wondering and questioning, which is the core of all learning. I left UW knowing more about how and what I wanted my math students to learn. But more importantly, I learned that wondering together helped the way that we could relate together and improved my students' thinking about their place and potential in the world.

When I left the classroom and became a stay-at-home mom, I was again experiencing a change of identity and



responsibility. I wanted to understand the child-development research and make the "right" choices. I also quickly discovered that parenting touches on many of the big questions in life. I found that tapping into my experience with philosophy for children helped me to strengthen my children's social and emotional skills, while at the same time improving our relationship. My wondering with my children is authentic as children's questions often do not have simple textbook or Googled explanations. Instead of feeling deficient as a parent for not having all the answers, I can model habits of mind that help their brains develop while I also take care of my own brain.

A simple activity that I used in my math classroom from David Shapiro's class, "class, ["Good News, Bad News,"](#) was perfect for both my child and me. The activity asks students to respond to a "good news" statement written by another student with a statement of "bad news," and vice versa. This game-like play naturally touches on key executive function skills such as emotional control, flexible thinking, and impulse control, along with identifying and acknowledging feelings and the ways our feelings change as we learn more. My children's lives are filled with these up and down moments of "good news" and "bad news," and I am often taken on the same ride. Doing a simple thought experiment helped both our brains so that in the future they may be less likely to "flip."

Developing the kind of "philosophical sensitivity" described by Jana Mohr Lone, has benefited both my children and me. Here's a quick story to illustrate this. At age three, my son picked up a stick and said, "Mom, I have a REAL gun." Instead of launching into a discussion of gun safety and where-or-where-not he

could point his "gun" or letting myself fall down a path of self-scrutiny about my own stance regarding gun play in play-based parenting, I was in a philosophical space and responded with, "What makes it real?" I was honestly wondering as he had never used this term before to describe the multitude of items that could be transformed into guns and blasters. His response: "It's POWERFUL."

Wow. I then spent the following week responding to his stick in a way that suggested it had "power." This opened up a space for me to wonder with my son about the idea of power, helping us both learn.

Today has been another busy day filled with challenges, including a first attempt at wearing underwear for my daughter. All of us have had our social and emotional skills tested. I find myself even more eager to read tonight with my children, as many of the beautiful and brilliant picture books with which we end the day naturally open a space where we can all do some self-care (and social-emotional learning) by participating together in philosophical wondering about our worlds.

Jean Hanson is currently a stay-at-home mom to Henry and Lucia. She has taught middle school math and her favorite pastimes are wondering and wandering. She is a member of the board of directors of the Center for Philosophy for Children.

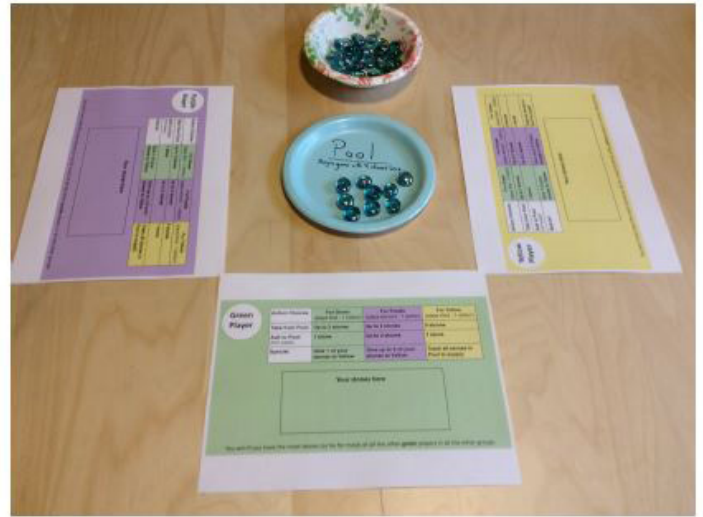
For the Classroom

Playing with Difference

David Phelps, Ph.D. Candidate, College of Education

"How should we live together?" This question gets at the heart of a wide range of fascinating and hotly debated issues—from animal rights to climate change, from who we should trust to what do we owe each other.

At Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, in an ethnically diverse 5th grade classroom, this question recurred in discussions about race and about income disparity after reading books such as *Freedom Summer* and discussing whether life is fair. Across several sessions, students pondered the realities of injustice in animated and lively ways. The enthusiasm of kids thinking deeply and philosophically is always contagious and it left me with a vision for how to design a board game to further our investigation into inequality.



The board game, *Difference*, is modeled on classic common pool resource games. Students are divided into groups of 3 players and each group is given a common pool of resources and a set of 3 roles. Although all 3 roles start out with 0 resources, the students were quick to characterize one of the roles as rich, one as poor, and one somewhere in the middle. This was because the 'rich' players always went first and could freely take many resources as they wished from the common pool on their turns, while the poor players always went last and could not take any.

To counterbalance this dynamic, the rich and middle players have the options to give their own resources to the poor player, while the poor player has the unique ability to sanction the other players by trashing the resources in the common pool. Some groups puzzled over why players would ever give their own resources away, while other groups figured it out right away why that might be a good idea!

These dynamics simulate the inequities of capability (to benefit from the common pool) and inequities of sanctioning power, as well as issues of dependency and othering. Because I wanted players to work well across these differences I added a twist: in most games individuals compete against others within their group, or alternatively their group wins or loses as a team competing against the other groups. In this game, however, individuals compete against all the individuals in the other groups who share their role. This means that each player in a group will win or lose independently of how well the others in their group do, but in order to have a chance to win, they will have to learn to work well across their differences.

The debrief questions - Is there a right thing to do in this game? Is this game fair? Is this game like real life? - generated vivid arguments on both sides as the inquiry into inequity came alive. Some noteworthy student comments include one student's characterization of the 'poor' role as a person "who lives from paycheck to paycheck," and another student's conception of the 'poor' role as the most generous person because even though they have very little they are still willing to give and help others.

This experience has taught me that games can be productively integrated with book-based activities to further students' inquiries into fundamental questions such as, "How should we live together?"

The instructions and print and play materials for *Difference* can be accessed at <http://depts.washington.edu/nwcenter/lessonsclassroom.html>

San Juan Island Philosophy Program

Karen S. Emmerman, Ph.D. Philosophy

In February, I had the pleasure of leading three and a half days of philosophy classes and workshops at Friday Harbor Elementary School (FHES) on San Juan Island. Thanks to a generous grant from the Community Foundation of San Juan Island and support from the UW Center for Philosophy for Children, teachers in first through sixth grade were able to participate in a full day of workshops and classroom observation. On the last day of workshops, I met with the specialist teachers (e.g., Physical Education, Special Education, and English Language Learning). These workshops were a testament to the amazing work that can happen when funding is provided for teachers to step outside of their classrooms for a day, learn together, and observe their students doing philosophy. The days were informative, eye-opening, and great fun.

Each day, I would meet with a group of teachers, talk with them about philosophy for children, and do demonstration classes in their classrooms. Afterwards, the teachers and I met to debrief about the sessions. I was thrilled to see that it wasn't just the students who were excited about philosophy. Many of the teachers were equally thrilled to think and talk together about big questions. For some teachers, the freedom of a philosophy session driven by questions rather than an agenda for completion of content was exhilarating. They could easily feel the shift that happens when lines of inquiry are driven by student engagement rather than teacher direction.

Many teachers marveled at how students who frequently do not share ideas in class were transformed into serious talkers during our philosophy sessions. Along the same lines, students who were known as discussion dominators were quieter than usual. This spoke to what we've been saying for years about philosophy for children, namely that when kids think about big questions with no immediate need for a clear answer the children who are fearful of getting it wrong in math or reading are provided with a low-stakes opportunity to share their thoughts. Alternatively, the students who are the first to shoot their hands in the air with the right answer tend to sit thoughtfully on the perimeter of the philosophical conversations coming to grips with their discomfort at there being no obvious answer to the kinds of questions under discussion.



Because teachers were able to observe all the sessions on their workshop day, they were also able to see how the very same book can generate completely different conversations in different classrooms. For example, I used the book *Frederick* (Leo

Lionni) for all of my third and fourth grade sessions. *Frederick* is about a mouse who gathers colors and sunshine to prepare for the winter, rather than nuts and seeds like the rest of his family. In the first session, we discussed why *Frederick* doesn't act like a regular mouse and why some people act differently from others. In the second session, we took up the epistemological question of how *Frederick* knew he could do poetry. In the third session, we started off asking why the other mice do not initially feel that *Frederick's* work is important. This quickly veered into thinking about how grown-ups often don't think what kids want to talk about is important and then considering why it is that adults talk so much. Finally, in the fourth session, we thought about how imagination works. I asked the students where their imagination is located, and received several very interesting responses, including the claim from one girl that her imagination is in the dangling thing in her throat because her mind is too cluttered to house her imagination.

In addition to the daytime workshops with teachers and students, I facilitated three evening workshops open to parents and teachers. Each evening workshop had a different theme and brought together different people. These evening times were an opportunity to extend our reach outside the walls of FHES and into the community at large.

I am grateful to have had a chance to work with this extraordinary group of teachers, students, and parents. We plan to continue our work with San Juan Island next year. I am also hopeful that, with more financial support for workshops like these, the UW Center for Philosophy for Children will be able to share our work with more schools outside of Seattle.

Supporting the Center

Philosophy in schools makes space for children and youth to explore together some of the foundational questions in life that matter most to them. Students often observe that this is one of the few places in school that they feel empowered to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, building their confidence in their own perspectives and ideas.



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We need your help!

The Center's work is largely made possible through individual donations. Gifts from donors help fund our Philosophers in the Schools program, the Philosophy for Children graduate fellowships, the High School Ethics Bowl, our parent programs, and our annual workshop for teachers.

We are working to build our capacity to keep philosophy in the schools continuing and growing! Resources are needed to provide more support and education for teachers and reach more young people eager for engagement with essential questions and sustained inquiry.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Center!

You can donate online [here](#).

You can also send a check to the Center for Philosophy for Children, mailed to:

UW Center for Philosophy for Children
University of Washington Box 353350
Seattle, WA 98195

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