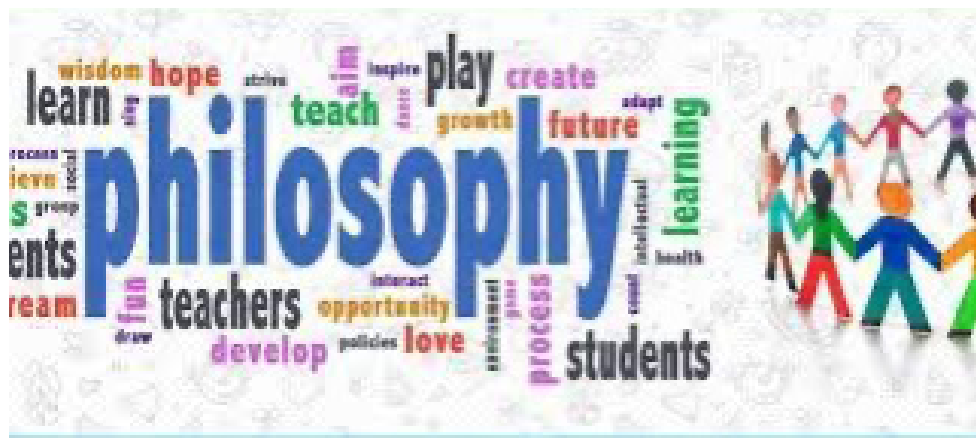




New Online Ten-Week Program in Philosophy for Children

The Center for Philosophy for Children will offer a new ten-week online program in Philosophy for Children for educators, to begin in March 2022. The program will provide participants with knowledge and skills to support facilitation of philosophy sessions with children and youth from preschool through high school and will be designed primarily to serve classroom teachers and other educators as well as post-undergraduate students and those interested in philosophical inquiry with children and youth.

The program will involve synchronous two-hour weekly Zoom meetings, as well as an asynchronous forum for further interaction among participants, and include an online Capstone event at the conclusion of the program. The program will include philosophical and pedagogical discussions about such topics as how to foster a community of philosophical inquiry, choosing prompts, philosophical sensitivity, epistemic injustice, social inequalities, and philosophical recognition of young people.

After the program has ended, the Center will provide ongoing resources and mentorship for all participants. We estimate that the cost of the program will be approximately \$1,000.

More information and an application process will be available in September. In the meantime, please feel free to contact Jana at mohrlone@uw.edu if you have any questions.

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Zoom Philosophy Classes for Young People

When Washington State's stay at home order began last March, the Center's work with young people moved online. We ran several weekly Zoom philosophy sessions for small groups of children all spring. As a result of the positive feedback we received from students, parents and teachers, we decided to develop [Zoom Philosophy Classes](#) open to students in any location.



Since October, we have run 11 classes for students 7 to 13 years old. Living all over the country, and some joining us from other parts of the world, these children are exploring some of life's big questions, inspired by various books, films, games, and thought experiments to reflect about and discuss some of philosophy's perennial questions, about identity and justice, happiness and knowledge, goodness and beauty. Our spring session runs through the end of May and we plan to offer online classes again next fall.

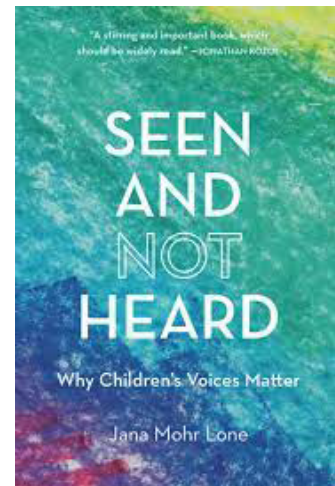
Monthly Professional Learning Community

For the fourth year this year the Center has been hosting a monthly seminar on philosophical inquiry in classrooms. This year the seminar is virtual. Approved for up to 13.5 clock hours, the seminar includes teachers and others interested in exploring how introducing philosophy can enrich student learning. The seminar's online status has allowed teachers from other parts of the country to participate this year.

Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the seminar is free. Our last session is in June, and we plan to resume the seminar in person at the University of Washington in the fall. For more information, contact Center Program Director [Debi Talukdar](#).

Seen and Not Heard: Why Children's Voices Matter

Described by Jonathan Kozol as "a stirring and important book, which should be widely read," director Jana Mohr Lone's [newest book](#) has just been published. Portraying a series of conversations with children about childhood, friendship, justice and fairness, happiness, and death, the book reveals children's perceptive and original philosophical approaches and invites us to become more receptive to the ways we can learn from them.



From the Director



As we begin to anticipate the end of the pandemic, I have been thinking about the challenges of the past year and all the learning that has been a part of this difficult time.

At the Center, one of the things we have learned is that our assumption that our work was not possible in virtual settings was wrong. It has been a joy to watch vibrant online philosophical communities grow among young people, their teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, and other adults involved with the Center. A ten-year-old student in one of my classes recently commented that one of the good things to come out of the pandemic has been online philosophy classes.

As we consider the Center's post-pandemic future, there is little doubt that it will include virtual programs, such as our new online program for educators, which we anticipate will involve an international group of participants, and our Zoom classes for children around the country. This year's [June workshop](#) will be completely virtual, and participants will include educators from nine states and three countries. The workshop is now full and we have a growing waiting list.

We have also learned a great deal about the importance of flexibility and openness. For example, we listened to our coaches last fall and adapted [the High School Ethics Bowl](#) program to this year's circumstances. Rather than the large winter event we have hosted in the past, this year the program has involved a series of online scrimmages among schools. We have worked with coaches and teachers to create a more flexible structure that maintains the Ethics Bowl's commitment to thoughtful, civil dialogue about complex ethical issues.

Perhaps most importantly, we have been able to strengthen our own work community by paying attention to the needs of all our staff and instructors, and being guided by the principle that nothing is more important than making sure we are supporting the physical, mental, and emotional health of all of those involved with the Center. One of the gifts of this year has been our deepening community and commitment to one another.

I feel very grateful that I have been able to remain engaged in work I love during this very long year. I've spent a lot of time writing and published several articles, including a recent piece in [Aeon Magazine](#), as well as given several online talks. And I am very excited that my new book, [Seen and Not Heard: Why Children's Voices Matter](#), was released at the end of last month.

I am looking forward to being back in classrooms next year with students, and to having many more of our philosophical and social exchanges be in person!

Philosophers in the Schools

I have been teaching philosophy for/with children for nearly 5 years. Starting as a graduate fellow at the Center for Philosophy for Children, I entered the practice of guiding philosophical inquiry in partnership with many elementary school classrooms, facilitating ~20 sessions over the course of a year. In more recent years, I have worked primarily with younger children through the UW's Robinson Center's Saturday School program, which is organized on a quarterly basis. While several students stay from quarter to quarter, it is common for over half of our class to change each quarter. Though the class benefits from new perspectives, the influx of new students presents challenges in quickly orienting young students to the nature of philosophical activities and how our time together might differ from other classes.

When working with new students, I often notice that they approach topics assuming that the path of inquiry is predetermined at the outset, and that there is a single "correct" answer that I, the teacher, already have worked out in advance. It is important to address these assumptions directly, stating that we often discuss ideas without one settled "right" answer. More important than answers is making sense of what kinds of questions help us understand a topic more deeply. What are the important questions to ask, and what makes them important anyway?

Especially for our youngest learners, I have found it helpful for classes to follow a predictable routine with relatable materials that encourage low-stakes opportunities to take up multiple perspectives and ask each other questions. We begin and end our class in routine ways, engage a philosophically generative prompt (typically a book, video, or thought experiment), and always include open time for group discussion where children can probe the topic and ask each other questions. I work to normalize children calling on one another to speak next and restating the ideas of others before contributing their own thoughts.

A primary goal of mine is to help children build positive associations with the practices of philosophy. Too often, philosophy is portrayed and practiced as the study of other's ideas, as a strict discipline primarily concerned with understanding what dead white men considered important or "correct". While there is certainly a time and place to bring in questions, distinctions, or thought experiments from the "traditional" canon (The Ship of Theseus and Plato's Ring of Gyges are personal favorites), I am much more concerned with the affective and emotional elements underlying our collective inquiries. When they encounter philosophy later in life, I want the children to fondly remember our time together such that they feel motivated to continue engaging in the great conversation wherever they encounter it. Deep thought and puzzlement should be paired with opportunities for open wondering and laughter.

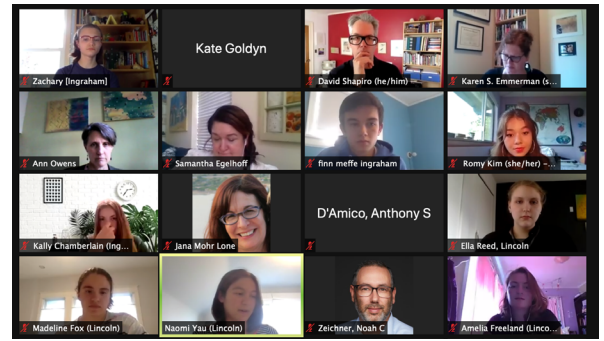
The goal of my work is to help young people learn that philosophy is always around them and to develop tools to make sense of complex issues that will arise throughout their lives. This looks different depending on the makeup of any class, but in being responsive to that difference we can be better prepared to help young people develop ways of seeing and interacting with the world that nurture their ability to ask fundamental questions, appreciate different perspectives, and deliberate within a community of inquiry. To develop a positive and enduring relationship with philosophy.

-Jordan Sherry-Wagner, College of Education

Washington State High School Ethics Bowl

The [2020-2021 Washington State High School Ethics Bowl](#) has been a different program than in the past, due to the pandemic and the challenges facing high schools this year. After consulting with all our coaches in the fall, we decided not to hold a formal event in 2021 (which would have been online), and instead arranged a series of two-hour virtual scrimmages between schools between April and June 2021.

Schools were given 10 cases to consider and discuss over the course of the year, with some schools beginning to meet in the fall and others waiting to start until winter.



Scrimmages each include two cases, both involving a presentation, a commentary on the presentation, a 10-minute open dialogue, and judges' questions. Scrimmages are not scored, but three judges provide detailed feedback at the end of each scrimmage and are often engaging in extended conversations with students about the scrimmage. We have held four scrimmages so far, with several more scheduled this spring.

This year's cases asked the students to discuss such topics as:

- Should schools hold classes virtually during the pandemic?
- Should buildings and institutions be renamed if their namesake has a problematic past?
- Is it ethical to dine-in at a restaurant during a pandemic?
- Is it unethical to buy fast-fashion clothing?

Read these and the rest of the 2021 ethics bowl cases [here](#).

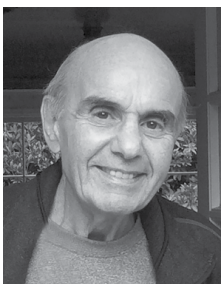
We are so inspired by the thoughtfulness and dedication of all the students and coaches, who have helped make the scrimmages a delight to attend. We thank our judges and moderators for their flexibility in scheduling, generous contributions of time, and the valuable feedback they are providing to our students.

In The Press

[7 Values to Teach Your Child By Age 10](#) - Parents Magazine

[Philosophy with Children](#) - Aeon Magazine

Milt Yanicks



This winter the Center's website honored [Milt Yanicks](#), who died on November 4, 2020. A teacher at Mercer Island High School for 30 years, Milt was passionate about philosophy. He dedicated his career to teaching high school students in the humanities and particularly in philosophy. The Center is honored that his family chose our organization as a fitting one for donations in his memory, and we thank all of the individuals who have donated in his memory.

From the Blog

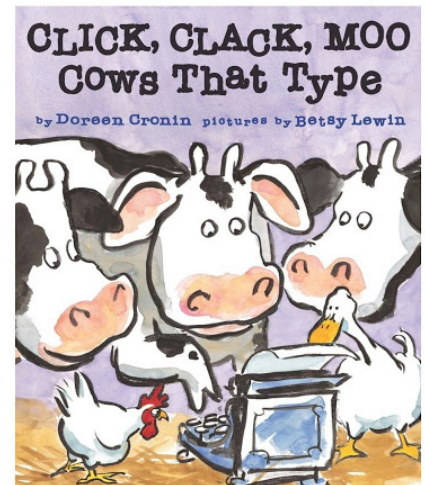
Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type

Doreen Cronin's book [Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type](#) is one of my favorite books to use in philosophy for children sessions. It lends itself to many different sorts of wondering.

In the book, animals on a farm acquire a typewriter and generate a list of demands for Farmer Brown. The cows and hens are cold at night and demand electric blankets. Farmer Brown is angered by these demands and insists on productivity from the animals. In return the cows and hens go on strike, refusing to produce milk and eggs.

Through a neutral third party (the duck), negotiations ensue, and a compromise is reached. The cows and hens get their blankets and they are supposed to return Farmer Brown's typewriter to him. Unfortunately for Farmer Brown,, the ducks take the typewriter and write a letter demanding a diving board for their pond, thus beginning a new cycle of demands on the farm.

Recently, I read Click, Clack, Moo in an online session with second-grade students. We talked about how the cows, hens, and ducks made demands and then we generated a list of students' demands for their teacher. The resulting list contained everything from "less homework" to "movies all day instead of school." We then reviewed the list, vetting the demands for whether they were reasonable, a good idea, and/or something to which everyone could agree. [Read more here.](#)



What is memory?

In a discussion yesterday with a group of eight- and nine-year-old children, we talked about what is most important for our identities; in other words, what could we not lose without ceasing to be ourselves? During the conversation, we began talking about the role of memory in making us the people we are. One child observed that "memory is what keeps us holding all our experiences over time," and another child commented that without memories your experiences wouldn't be meaningful. We began talking about whether remembering one's experiences were as important as having them.

This led to a conversation about the nature of memory. One child said that we think of memory as "seeing things" and recalling images, but that memory is more than that, and includes scent and touch and sound. This prompted another child to ask, "But what exactly is memory?" [Read more here.](#)

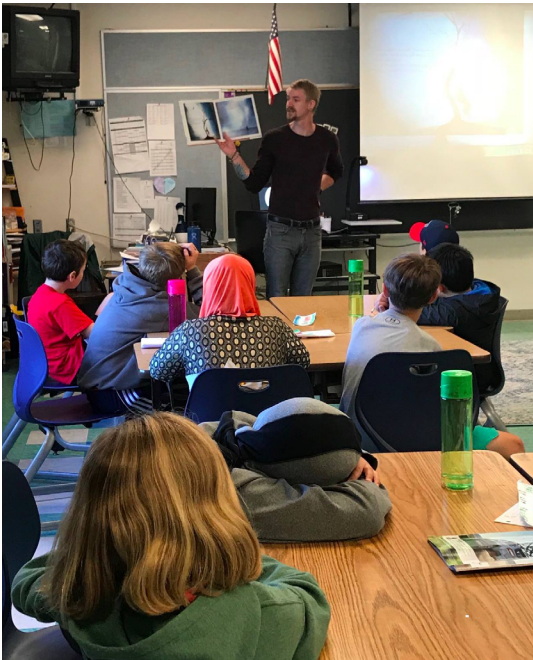


Certificate of Mastery in Philosophy for Children

A couple of years ago, the Center launched a [Certificate of Mastery in Philosophy](https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/certificate-of-mastery-in-philosophy) for Children for University of Washington graduate students interested in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully lead philosophy sessions in K-12 classrooms. Students are required to take courses in philosophy and in education, to spend a minimum of 40 hours in K-12 classrooms (observing, assisting, and/or facilitating philosophy sessions), at least half of which involves facilitating philosophy sessions as the lead instructor. When the candidate has met all of the requirements, there is a Capstone Experience.

Our first two graduate students – Jordan Sherry-Wagner (College of Education) and Jack Flesher (Ethnomusicology) – will receive their certificates this year. Their Capstone Experiences will take place at our June “Philosophy in the Schools” workshop.

Jordan writes:



I have been doing philosophy with children for nearly five years. Starting as a Graduate Fellow at the Center for Philosophy for Children, I learned the ropes of guiding philosophical inquiry in partnership within many elementary school classrooms serving young people from kindergarten to 6th grade. I also teach philosophy classes for early-grade children (K-1 and 2-3) through the Robinson Center’s Saturday School program. The Center for Philosophy for Children and the Mastery Certificate hold together my mutual interests in early childhood education and philosophical inquiry in ways I have not found elsewhere.

I did not discover philosophy until my late teens. When I finally did, I found myself wondering why it had taken so long for the great conversation to find me, and what may have been different had I been introduced to the ideas, tools, and practices of philosophy earlier in life. In my work within early childhood education, it was clear to me that young children were already grappling with philosophical ideas in their own ways, and I wondered what could be done to nurture and support these sensibilities earlier in life. Through the Center for Philosophy for Children, I have found a group taking up similar questions in serious ways - a community of inquiry that values the contributions of our youngest philosophers and aims to create opportunities that might better prepare them to take part in these kinds of conversations over the course of their lives. Through the Center and the Mastery Certificate I have developed relationships, skills, and dispositions that prepare me to work alongside young people in asking fundamental questions and making sense of complex issues. My work aims to pay these sensibilities forward in ways that help young people see philosophy in their everyday lives and enjoy making sense of the complex ideas they encounter.

Certificate of Mastery in Philosophy for Children (Continued)

Jack writes:



My experience in the Certificate of Mastery program at the UW Center for Philosophy for Children has been, in a word, inspiring. While I initially began working with the Center and taking classes with Dr. Jana Mohr Lone as part of my graduate certificate in Ethics, the support and community I found at the Center is what ultimately convinced me to dive deeper and complete the Certificate of Mastery in earnest. Beyond opportunities to philosophize with young people in student-centered communities, I have benefitted greatly from the community of likeminded scholars, philosophers, and teachers that make up the Center. It has been refreshing and enjoyable to find my own path and tailor my experiences with the certificate towards my own interests, the intersections of music and philosophy, with their full support and guidance. For example, in my work with Magnolia Elementary School over the past year, I have been able to design and lead numerous lessons and sessions integrating music and the arts into moral and social philosophy, finding new ways to consider musicking with children as it intersects with philosophy. These experiences, while wonderful in themselves, have also helped ground my own ethno/musicological work

with children, which now includes philosophical methods. For these reasons and more, I remain inspired by the work I am doing within the certificate program and thankful for the community I've found at the Center.

For Parents: Expanded Online Resources

During the pandemic we expanded the our [website offerings for families](#) to include [resources, including questions, children's books, and short videos](#), to help parents and other adults facilitate conversations with kids about some of the questions the pandemic raised for children, such as loneliness and friendship, illness and death, and boredom. The site also features [resources on other topics](#), including how we know things, relationships with animals, imaginary friends, and the nature of art.



Philosophical discussions afford an opportunity for different kinds of interactions with children because, unlike many of the topics about which we talk with children, philosophical questions don't have settled and definite answers. These resources are intended to help parents, grandparents, and other caregivers to listen to children's questions and to think aloud with them, remembering that sometimes asking the questions is more important than finding the answers.

Focus on the (Zoom) Classroom

Self-Driving Cars: A Thought Experiment



Moving online has had its benefits. We've been able to continue our philosophical discussions with kids not just in Seattle schools, but beyond through the Center's online [Zoom philosophy classes](#). But after months of online instruction, both kids and adults alike are getting tired of Zoom meetings. While many students have expressed how much they look forward to philosophy, Zoom fatigue is real and I can see how it affects my students. With this in mind, I've been trying out different activities in the hope of keeping students engaged.

Thought experiments have served us particularly well. Over the last two iterations of my Zoom class for 11-13-year olds, ethical

thought experiments have been a favorite. So with the start of the spring session, I decided to begin with a topic that was once science fiction but is increasingly becoming a reality: self-driving cars.

We began by watching a short animated [TED-Ed video](#) that asks the viewer to imagine being in a self-driving car, driving down a busy highway. Suddenly, the cargo being carried by the truck in front of the car begins to fall off the truck bed. With other vehicles to the right and left, there is no place for your car to safely swerve away. What should the car be programmed to do?

The video presents multiple versions of this thought experiment, but we focused on the version which has two motorcyclists on either side of the self-driving car. The video presents three possible options: (1) hit the motorcyclist to the left who is wearing a helmet and is thus more likely to live; (2) continue straight and crash into the truck's cargo, possibly resulting in your own injury or death; or (3) hit the motorcyclist to the right who is acting irresponsibly by not wearing a helmet.

The discussion started off straightforwardly, with students taking a stand on which option they believed to be the most ethical and explaining the reasoning behind their choices. Most felt that the second option would be best, as it prevented the car from putting others at risk. But the conversation quickly turned to more complex considerations, ones that the video did not present. One student commented, "If it's a self-driving car, does it need a window in the front? Because if it's armored on the front, it could hit the boxes and the people in the car would still be safe." This led to further considerations about just how many things go into making an ethical decision in this case. It's not just a matter of how the car should be programmed, as the video initially presents. As the students continued to discuss the problem, it became clear that factors such as the car's structural design, marketing, social expectations, and the number of self-driving cars on the road at any given time are also relevant, highlighting just how complex and fascinating applied philosophy can be.

-Nic R. Jones, Department of Philosophy

Our Donors

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.

And philosophical conversations at home help families to have deeper and more mutual conversations, and to listen to children in new ways.

We need your help!

The Center's work is largely made possible through individual donations.

Gifts from donors fund our Philosophers in the Schools program, the Philosophy for Children graduate fellowships, the High School Ethics Bowl, our family programs, our monthly seminar for educators, and our annual workshop for teachers.

Resources are needed to provide more support and education for teachers and reach more young people interested in philosophy. We are working to build our capacity to keep philosophy in the schools and in the community growing! Please help us with a gift to support this work.

Consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Center!

You can make your donation [here](#).



Advisory Board

Thank you to our Advisory Board for their ongoing support and enthusiasm for the Center's work!

Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at University of Washington

Karen Emmerman, Center Education Director, and Part-Time Faculty in the Department of Philosophy at University of Washington and Philosopher-in-Residence at John Muir Elementary School, Seattle

Dan Gerler, University of Washington Philosophy Alumnus

Sara Goering, Professor of Philosophy at University of Washington

Jean Hanson, Community Volunteer and Former Seattle Middle School Teacher

Judith Howard, Professor Emeritus, Sociology & Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies at University of Washington

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Terrance McKittrick, Teacher at Nova High School, Seattle

Janice Moskalik, Instructor in Philosophy at Seattle University

David Shapiro, Faculty in Philosophy at Cascadia Community College

Christine Stickler, Director of the Riverways Education Partnerships at University of Washington

Debi Talukdar, Center Program Director and Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Education at University of Washington and Philosopher-in-Residence at Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, Seattle

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