



Perspectives: Inside the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children



Since its inception in 1974, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (“IAPC”) at Montclair State University has pursued a three-fold mission. First, the IAPC provides systematic curriculum materials in Philosophy for Children and offers teacher preparation in the use of this curriculum, with emphasis on developing classroom communities of inquiry. Second, the IAPC conducts, sponsors, and advises scholarship and research in pre-college philosophy. Third, the IAPC contributes to educational reform initiatives that are consistent with the institute’s educational commitments.

The primary constituency the IAPC aims to serve is schoolchildren: preschoolers to teenagers, from schools close to the IAPC to schools in the approximately 60 nations with active Philosophy for Children centers. In addition to working directly with schoolchildren, members of the IAPC work with public and private professional and pre-professional educators; educational administrators and policy-makers; and college faculty and students of education, philosophy and related disciplines.

The IAPC has had many transitions over the last few years, including the retirement in June 2001 of its founder, Matthew Lipman. Professor Lipman founded the IAPC in 1974. His final achievement as IAPC Director was the 2001 Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Philosophy Programs, awarded to the IAPC by the American Philosophical Association and the Philosophy Documentation Center. Professor Lipman continues his theoretical and curricular work as Professor Emeritus of Philosophy.

The IAPC’s new Director is Maughn Gregory, who also directs Project THISTLE, a critical thinking outreach program for public school teachers in Newark, NJ. Joanne Matkowski continues as Assistant Director. Other faculty include Laurance Splitter, who recently joined the MSU faculty and became the IAPC’s Associate Director for Local and National Outreach; Darryl De Marzio, the IAPC’s Director of Field Services, who is also a doctoral student at Columbia University; Ann Margaret Sharp, who continues her work as Associate Director for International Outreach and is currently working on grants for work in China, India, Nigeria, and Ukraine; David Kennedy, who is the president of the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children, editor of *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children*, and director of a group of teachers and graduate students doing philosophy at the Edgemont Montessori School in Montclair, where he also conducts a P4C faculty study group; and Megan Laverty, who is the faculty advisor for graduate degree programs in Philosophy for Children. The IAPC is proud to support the Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children in Seattle, and similar centers and organizations around the world.

Visit our website at: www.montclair.edu/iapc

Why do people fight?

Why do we have teachers?

Who invented rain?

Who invented numbers?

Why don't frogs have wings?

Where does infinity end?

Why is school long?

Why can't babies talk?

When is it time to have fun?

Poem on Ethics: Deontological Dilemma?

ETHICS

By Shyamal Patel

Shyamal Patel is a senior at Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren, NJ.

And one does feel the pressure to not feel,
To deny oneself emotions so true,
As to cause anguish great and unreal,
Leaving one knowing not what one can do.
For while there exists duty to oneself,
Duties to all else by far do not cease,
And the mind does become a cluttered shelf,
A multitude of persons to appease.
So should one follow the mind or the heart?
Seeing as how one cannot follow both.
From which duty can one rightfully part?
To part from either, one is truly loath.
In the end what direction is taken?
The heart, for then one feels not forsaken.

This sonnet serves to demonstrate what some may consider to be a flaw in the deontological system of ethics. If one were to follow this system, what would happen if a conflict arose between obligations? For example, in this poem the person described has a duty to his mind to not follow through with feelings emanated from his heart, figuratively speaking, but he also has a certain obligation to his heart to indeed follow through with his feelings.

What does one do in such a situation? Which duty is more important? In the poem, the person chooses to follow emotions as it would fulfill the duty to the heart. In doing so, the person chooses to forgo the duty to the mind, which may in turn leave one in an unpleasant situation. Therefore, some may find the deontological system of ethics to be flawed. —S. Patel