



Questions

Philosophy For Young People

No. 10, Fall 2010

From the Editor



Welcome to the TENTH issue of *Questions*.

There is something very gratifying about reading submissions from all across the world, talking with others who are interested in philosophy with young people, and learning so much about what different methods are used in the various approaches we all take.

This issue contains some very interesting articles, several photos, work by pre-college philosophers, and those who work with pre-college students. I would be particularly interested to hear how you use the *Questions*, and what you think we can do to improve it as we move into our second decade.

Please keep in touch via mail, email, or Facebook.

Best,
Rory

After regular philosophy sessions throughout the school year, in April a class of fifth grade students at Methow Valley Elementary School in Winthrop, Washington, was asked:

What do you think is the most important question in philosophy?

Throughout this issue you will see their questions to ponder. Enjoy!

New Research on Programs for Classroom Discussion

Maughn Gregory



A recent issue of the *International Journal of Educational Research* (Vol. 47) includes a summary report of a major evaluation study of nine different educational programs for small-group discussion, including Philosophy for Children. "What the discourse tells us: Talk and indicators of high-level comprehension" (372-391), describes one phase of a three-year project funded by the US Department of Education and conducted by four researchers from Ohio State University (Anna O. Soter, Ian A. Wilkinson, Lucila Rudge and Kristin Reninger) and two from Pennsylvania State University (Karen Murphy and Margaret Edwards). The nine classroom discussion programs they evaluated were selected on the basis of (1) being centered around literary texts and (2) having "a recognized and published track record of research and scholarship" (373). The researchers requested four typical, complete transcripts of actual classroom discussions from each of the nine programs. The IAPC provided transcripts from its Philosophy in Schools program conducted in schools near Montclair State University.

The researchers grouped the nine programs into three categories, based on the kind of "stance toward a text" the programs encourage:

- Three programs – *Grand Conversations*, *Book Club* and *Literature Circles*—take the "expressive stance," which encourages students to talk about their personal reactions to the text, giving "prominence to the reader's affective response" (374).
- Three other programs—*Instructional Conversations*, *Questioning the Author* and

(continued on next page)



Photo by Wendy Turgeon

Why is there always light at the end of the tunnel?

Contents

New Research on Programs for Classroom Discussion	1
Questions from Methow Valley Elementary	1
Editorial Board	2
Corrections	2
Matthew Lipmann's Obituary	3
Aristotelian Morality and Groundhogs: The Moral Evolution of Phil Connors	3
Engaging in Philosophical Enquiry in the Classroom has Impressive Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Benefits	6
Discussing Language with Children	8
Author Bios	11
Book Reviews	11
<i>Aristotle: Philosopher, Teacher, and Scientist</i> <i>Socrates: Ancient Greek in Search of Truth</i>	
Subscription Information	12