# Australie : Coming in from the Margins, Teaching philosophy in australian schools

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This paper provides a critical examination of philosophy teaching at all levels in Australian schools[1]. It looks at the points of difference and congruence between the States and Territories and argues that teaching philosophy through the philosophical community of inquiry should be a core element of school curricula. In spite of a growing interest in philosophy in schools, its documented benefits and the high degree of "fit" with a revised curriculum in at least two states, the implementation of philosophy by education departments has been relatively slow and piecemeal. There are discrete courses available in upper secondary school, but approaches differ between the various education jurisdictions. The work of the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations, and the branches at State level, provide training and networking for interested educators but this has not translated into policy. An education policy that gives a central role to good, clear philosophical thinking will give children the tools they need to succeed in the rapidly changing cultural, technological, social and cultural environment of the 21st Century.

## Introduction

Philosophy in Australian schools in the process of coming in from the margins.

It is emerging despite the limitations imposed on it by authorities uncomfortable with what may be perceived as its potentially subversive nature and such unsettling aspects of the discipline as the undecidability of concepts, or at least their negotiability. It is entering the mainstream through a primary articulation in junior schools that is itself promoted by loose associations of interested people operating outside the major curriculum-defining structures of the state education departments and national curriculum corporations. It is being articulated in varying terms, but it is entering mainstream curricula as the creators of these curricula recognise a central need to teach clear thinking while also recognising that they do not have even an agreed language for describing thinking or a widely-accepted and rigorous pedagogy of thinking.

We need, though, to differentiate between philosophy as it is might be commonly understood (or misunderstood) and the approach to philosophy for children based on Lipman's model of community of inquiry (Lipman, 1980; Splitter and Sharp,1985). The Lipman model promotes a pedagogy with a heritage in John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky and presumes both that humans are firstly social beings and that it is possible to build democratic principles into classroom practices. The Lipman model does teach Philosophy, but the method and the content combine to produce rich benefits for children. In Australia this model has been adapted for local conditions predominantly in primary schools, but in two states the model has strongly infiltrated upper secondary courses.

Despite the consistent positive impact of philosophy for children "on a wide range of outcome measures" (Trickey and Topping, 2004), in Australia, philosophy in schools has emerged almost despite the academy and state departments of education. Some academic philosophers, suggest that what is known in Australia as Philosophy in Schools is not, in fact, philosophy at all (SBS Insight, 2002). But if they were to look at Lipman's teacher support materials and the dialogues in primary school philosophy classes, such as those that Pritchard (1985) recorded, there would be less doubt. With some exceptions, in the English-speaking world academic philosophers have tended to keep philosophy within the walls of universities. They have encrypted certain modes of thinking and kept them cloistered within the academy and in the process have both limited the ability of education to use philosophical modes of speech and consolidated the academy as the only site from which these modes of speech are enunciated. This has tended to marginalise any who try to enter the philosophical discourse, but it is particularly true for teachers. Much of the informal and anecdotal evidence for the efficacy of philosophy in the classroom comes from teachers themselves, a group that has been disempowered in the presentation of education research findings and in the main unable to present to curriculum planners the argument that philosophy in the classroom benefits students, schools and the community, not least by generating thinking, caring and articulate citizens. We cannot afford for this to continue. As Matthew del Nevo (2002) argues:

"There is a lot of negotiating going on, as to the place of philosophy in the curriculum. My worry is that philosophy doesn't just become another subject alongside the others and on a par with them.... Philosophy - in the broad sense of good ideas and values, texts and traditions - needs to infiltrate the governing system. It is no good having philosophy domesticated by educational norms that are sub-philosophical. Philosophy needs to enter education, not just schools, not just curricula. Philosophy has been sidelined or academicised in our time. If philosophy wants to make a push for itself, it is in the broad direction of education as a whole, at its conception and inception, that [is where] I think it should head; not toward some educational niche where the whole point of it is lost. Philosophers may specialise, but philosophy is not a specialisation; this is what we've got to keep in mind."

But while philosophy has a long tradition as a school subject in France and Germany, and the teaching of it has been supported publicly by such luminaries as Derrida, there are distinct pedagogical differences between philosophy in these Continental classrooms and the pedagogy of philosophy that del Nevo is referring to: the philosophical community of inquiry.

In Australia the existence of the discipline of philosophy has not been well known in schools and use of the term "philosophy" tends to scare off teachers and schools because of the way in which the academy has defined it, closeted it and mythologised it as something suitable only for an elite. Generations of school leavers entering university have largely stumbled upon it or found out about it as they work in areas such as cultural studies, literature or even communication studies that have adopted, renamed and refashioned philosophy into something else. In Foucault's terms, different discursive formations (Foucault, 1975) can be said to have colonised philosophical concepts and diluted them so that in Australia in the early 21st Century what we might understand as "philosophy"

has only been permitted to emerge, to be specified in schools, under the aegis of something called "thinking". But as philosophy comes in from the margins, even as "thinking", there is now a change occurring. Each of the states in the federation that makes up Australia has embraced in some form the idea of including philosophy into the final years of secondary school, but the models vary, implementation is incomplete and the pedagogical underpinnings of the various courses lack a common thread. However, philosophical communities of inquiry have established over the past two decades a toehold in primary education through the good work of converts who operate primarily from outside the education system, most often in state-based professional associations. That toehold is still tenuous, but as state departments reflect on and change the foundations of their core curricula there is a growing realisation that philosophy has something to offer.

In talking about the need to foster autonomy, which is a key outcome of well-conducted philosophy courses, Paul Jewell puts it this way:

"...in practice modern democratic societies are multicultural, so methods are needed for navigation through differing traditions and competing concepts of the good. Citizens need navigation equipment and a modern democracy needs citizens who are so equipped. Educators, then, have an obligation to provide the equipment. Mere knowledge of the cultural landscape is insufficient. The navigation of it requires the skills and dispositions to make decisions..." (Jewell, 2005)

In Australian schooling, despite the well-recognised importance of primary education, there tends to be a de facto hierarchy in which upper secondary teachers are (self-) marked as superior to middle and primary educators, possibly because to teach upper secondary subjects teachers generally need to have tertiary qualifications in the subject area. From my observations, changes in pedagogy have been most innovative in primary education and some of these changes flow on to secondary teaching. Now that philosophy is being taken up in the final secondary years, it will be interesting to observe over the next few years whether attitudes to philosophy change among school administrators and in universities, which for the first time will have both a ready-made feeder group for university philosophy courses, but also - as demand for philosophy classes in schools grows - a ready-made alternative career path for philosophy graduates. Philosophy departments have been very slow to grasp the opportunity presented as philosophy comes in from the margins and asserts a strong claim to be at the centre of good teaching.

## Pizza and pedagogy

Although philosophy is finding its way into upper secondary classrooms, there is a wide disparity in the underlying pedagogy of these new philosophy courses and a big variation in their intended target market. For example, some are highly content-based and aimed at an elite student cohort, while others are outcomes-based and available to all learning abilities. This latter approach is the most desirable because the ability of philosophy to transform a society is greatest when the tools, skills and dispositions of philosophy are placed into the hands of all students, not just an intellectual elite. This is because philosophy is like pizza. It can be plain and simple or have a wide choice of toppings.

We can buy our pizza off the menu, have half this and half that, or make our own, but everyone can eat it.

To continue the simile, philosophy is a base on which we can build an astonishing intellectual menu, but a menu everyone can try. To provide our children with skills necessary to flourish in the Information Age, we need to be making philosophy pizzas in our schools, not just waiting to preach to the converted in universities.

Philosophy is about wonder. It is about awe. It is about imagination. It is about making sense of what there is. It is about knowing what, knowing how and deciding what best to do. It keeps questioning ever open, while providing closure. It is about finding simplicity in complexity and pointing out the complexity of simplicity. It cannot and should not be reduced to mere critical thinking, as important as that may be.

Philosophy is something that we DO, it's an activity. It is a necessarily shared activity: we do it with others, or carry on an internal dialogue with ourselves, as other.

To do philosophy is to analyse, clarify, define and evaluate. To be philosophical is to have a disposition to undertake these activities as a practice. For a flourishing, reflective, democratic, caring society, these should become part of our character and the basis of a society's character.

I have spent much of the past eight years teaching philosophy in schools to children aged five to 17. But is it really philosophy? Let us think about these questions from a group of 9-year-olds [Year 4 (term 2, 2004)]

- How do we know we are really here? Our mind could be creating an illusion.
- How do you know what you are seeing is not an illusion but what you are actually doing?
- Could our minds be creating something to see? Because our minds might be very powerful
- What is the mind?
- How do we know the earth is spinning around the sun, because we can't see it?
- How do we know God is actually there?
- He could not have created himself, so how did he get created?
- What if heaven is actually earth?
- When you are asleep, how do you know your dreams are not your real life?
- How do you know?

These questions would certainly fit the bill as philosophical for Aristotle. But these are just questions: what about discussion, about pursuit of truth?

What follows is a summary of a discussion between a group of 6 and 7 year olds [Year 2, 2003]

- What happened before the Big Bang? The Big Singularity. What happened before the Big Singularity? A Big Bang.

- Unless it goes on for ever, something must have started it.
- God started it.
- Who created God?
- God.
- Can anything start itself?

This was a small-group discussion involving six children. The interchange involved three of the six, with the others listening intently. Implicit in this discussion by small children is an understanding of infinite regress, an understanding of causation and clear evidence of engagement with philosophical questioning. These children were clearly doing philosophy, and interchanges like this are not rare in philosophy classrooms involving small children. The teachers know it, but they are busy teaching and are mostly unable to record such gems.

Those who do philosophy for a living are an elite, but clearly, Philosophy is something most people can do. Philosophy is not the preserve of an elite; in fact the elite may have a duty to take philosophy to the people. And this is where we come back to pizza.

Philosophy is a base for clear thinking. Like a pizza, philosophy is a base on which we can place a range of toppings. But to teach thinking without philosophy is to make a pie without a base. Without a base it may taste OK, but it will probably fall apart and you may not be able to take it away.

## Uptake

In Australia it is has been difficult to sell the idea of philosophy in schools to education decision-makers. The benefits of teaching philosophy are diverse and more difficult to quantify than some other pedagogical innovations and while some of the strongest advocates are classroom teachers, their voices do not get heard. Australian educational research has long had a preference for producing quantifiable evidence. While some of the benefits of philosophy can be quantified in terms of improved literacy and improved numeracy (Hinton, 2003b), the most important may be in areas most amenable to qualitative research. As this research bears fruit, philosophy may be able more successfully to argue for inclusion in mainstream curricula.

However, the argument for inclusion of philosophy has come from outside the mainstream of education research. Laurance Splitter began the early promotion of Philosophy for Children in Australia in 1984, first from his position as a philosophy lecturer at the University of Wollongong and later as a research fellow at the Australian Council for Education Research. He had been to Montclair, where he was strongly influenced by the work of philosopher-turned educator Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp. After returning from working with Lipman, he ran a professional development workshop in Wollongong in New South Wales in 1985 and subsequent workshop in Lorne, Victoria in 1989. The Wollongong workshop brought Deakin University academic Clive Lindop into the field. Lindop, who was based at the Warrnambool regional campus went on to become the first editor or the Australian Philosophy for Children journal Critical and Creative Thinking until his retirement in 2005. But it was

the participants at the Lorne workshops who made the most marked impact on the emergence of Philosophy for Children in Australia. The participants in that workshop went on to found state associations and write classroom materials (Haynes, 2006) and Lorne became a seminal event in the history of philosophy in Australian schools. Splitter's location at the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) and support from the then head of the Council might have ensured viability for philosophy in Australian schools, but Philosophy did not seem to sit comfortably with the empirical basis of most of the research undertaken at ACER and there was resistance. ACER did, however, put Philosophy for Children books into its catalogue and became the first major source of these books. Splitter was speaking for philosophy, but it could not really be said that ACER itself was also speaking for it. In effect, one of the earliest sites where Philosophy for Children emerged in Australia also contributed, through omission, to limiting its effective spread.

Other voices arose. Many of these were also present at Splitter's Lorne workshop. From the School of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales Philip Cam published short texts for easy classroom use. From an independent school in Tasmania Tim Sprod published a book that allowed teachers to use existing library texts. And also from UNSW School of Philosophy came books by DeHaan, MacColl and McCutcheon that used existing library books and combined philosophical communities of inquiry with innovative and fun classroom activities.

State-based associations were formed, again from the seed planted at Lorne, and a loose grouping of these became the Federation of Australasian Philosophy for Children Associations, later the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations. With the exception of Queensland, where the Buranda primary school has made a strong individual contribution and worked with the State department of Education (Hinton and Vaseo, 2003) these state-based organizations have continued to be the primary vehicle for disseminating professional development in Philosophical Inquiry for teachers, certainly for nearly all primary teachers. Each of these state organization has been carried by the efforts of key individuals and the fortunes of the organizations have fluctuated with the energy levels of people, usually with other full-time jobs, trying to keep alive an idea that they almost universally believe can transform education and the lives of children and which, if allowed, can transform society by creating a critically-aware and open-minded populace accustomed to reasoned, open and democratic discussion.

In this overly brief summary many people have been left out. The main point I wish to make is not to show an accurate history, but to indicate that there is a clear genealogy in the rise of Philosophy in Schools. Dedicated individuals operating outside mainstream education spoke for philosophy and a way to teach it to children and in the process established a tenuous foothold in a few schools. The same is true today, but there are more voices and education departments have slowly begun to listen. Philosophy is coming in from the margins, but the movement is slow, relying on the efforts of individuals. If it were to be taken up as a system-wide initiative there would be remarkable benefits for children and their societies.

In Australia, uptake of philosophy has been sporadic. However each of the states has pockets of philosophy in primary school and each is now actively working toward philosophy in the senior years of high school, but there is no consistent approach for the middle years. There is no unified national curriculum (whether this is desirable is another matter) and there is a clear disjunction in all states between the three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. This disjunction creates big problems of transition from one level to the next and has been one impetus behind the creation of middle schooling.

The cross-disciplinary nature of middle schooling and its more relaxed timetabling structure should provide fertile ground for philosophy and in places does, but there is no uniform approach to middle school across the nation and philosophy has not established a secure place. Middle schools operate somewhere in the range of age 10 to age 15, but most middle schools in the public sector are merely the first two or three years of high school. Middle schooling as an approach to education is not served merely by creating a middle school, by creating a new structure for the age groups concerned. Middle schooling is much more than an institutional structure, and when implemented well is a very fertile place in which a philosophical community of inquiry can grow. Because of a lack of definitional clarity on middle schooling I will stick to the traditional three-sector approach in describing the current status of philosophy in Australian schools.

## Primary

Despite Lipman's influence, despite Splitter's influence and clear evidence as to its effectiveness (Trickey and Topping, 2004) there has been in Australia little uptake of philosophical communities of inquiry beyond primary school (Collins and Knight, 2005) and in the primary school sector uptake is sporadic at best. Some school districts have taken it on but it has mostly been introduced by individual schools or, more commonly, by individual teachers within a school. Philosophy clearly has the most impact on behaviour, on literacy, on numeracy, on engagement when it is introduced in a whole school (Hinton, 2003a) but these schools are relatively few. There are programs that focus on philosophy for talented and gifted kids which are highly effective, but philosophical communities of inquiry can bring significant benefits to all children.

Each of the states has relatively new frameworks within which their curricula have been modified. And while a philosophical community of inquiry provides a cheap, reliable and effective vehicle with which to deliver key outcomes in each state-based framework, there has been institutional resistance. While this resistance may not be conscious, it exists all the same.

Implementation of philosophical communities within the primary sector began as a marginal activity and through the efforts of state associations and key individuals, the message has begun to be listened to, but it is yet to find a very strong voice, with the exception of Queensland where Buranda State School in inner-city Brisbane has experienced such striking outcomes since introducing the teaching of philosophy eight years ago, that it was awarded the Queensland showcase school of the year in 2003 and received an award for Outstanding National Improvement by a School in 2005. The

results have been dramatic. Eight years on, Buranda students achieve exceptional academic and social outcomes. They are considered to be excellent problem solvers, and there is little or no bullying at the school. Enrolments have quadrupled. (Hinton, 2003b; 2005)The program's success has attracted a great deal of interest and there have been many requests for visits to the school from Australian and international educators, as well as requests for Buranda staff to speak at conferences and provide training to other teachers. The school and Education Queensland also offer an online training course.

In Victoria, an increasing number of schools are introducing philosophy, ranging from primary to secondary to senior colleges. The Victorian Association for Philosophy in Schools won a grant to employ a coordinator and runs regular workshops for teachers. The Association runs an active website and encourages schools to share their philosophy offerings, but again, the major impetus for philosophy is from outside the major structures of the education system.

There are a number of schools in Sydney which are incorporating the philosophical community of inquiry methodology into their curriculum, and at least two of Sydney's education regions are investigating implementing philosophy. In one case the impetus has come from work by Philip Cam, one of the participants in the Lorne meeting and a significant national figure in philosophy for children. But even from his position, his influence in his own state has been and it is his collaboration with Buranda school in Queensland that has figured most prominently.

When Tasmania established its new Essential Learnings framework it put "Thinking" at the centre. It then became apparent that there was no agreed, consistent pedagogy for thinking. This led to a significant increase in demand for training in philosophy, provided by the state philosophy in schools association, headed by Lorne participant Tim Sprod.

The success of Buranda sparked interest from two Western Australian schools (Blackmore primary school and Pemberton district high school). Buranda principal Lynne Hinton referred them to me (Stephan Millett) as I had established a program of Philosophy at Wesley College and had attended training workshops with her. Using these schools' interest in training as a starter, the then dormant state association for philosophy in schools was re-invigorated. The association had been established in 1990 by Lorne participant Felicity Haynes, but key participants in the association had since left the state. Interest from these schools and their demand for training encouraged the association out of dormancy to a point where it now offers professional development intensive courses three or four times a year, runs a website, a monthly philosophy café, has trained approaching 200 teachers and had a major influence on the framing of the new secondary course of study.

Philosophy in primary schools is spreading slowly, but it will take deliberate action by state education departments to make a distinct difference.

## Secondary

Philosophy is being introduced into the senior years of secondary school in all states. With the exception, perhaps, of Western Australia which has a policy of inclusivity so that vocational education students must have access to all courses, the programs are geared toward high academic achievers aiming to enter university. The programs, again with the exception of Western Australia and South Australia, are predominantly content-based and offer curricula that differ little in structure from a great many tertiary programs and which provide little guidance in terms of pedagogy. Western Australia's course makes participation in a philosophical community of inquiry a required outcome, while South Australia's course prescribes a philosophical community of inquiry in its pedagogy. Queensland's course asks teachers to provide a "vocally interactive classroom" in which students are free to express opinions. The legacy of the Lorne workshop can be seen in both the Western Australian course and the South Australian course, with Felicity Haynes and Sue Knight, both of whom were at Lorne, strongly contributing, respectively to the Western Australian and South Australian courses.

The most well-established secondary program operates in Victoria. The Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) course consists of four units: Introduction to philosophical inquiry; Philosophical issues in practice; The good life; Mind and knowledge. The first two units are school-assessed and the second two externally assessed. Although each unit has two outcomes, these vary between the units and the syllabus is traditional and content-based. Some secondary schools offer philosophy in years 8, 9, 10 as well as at VCE level. The Victorian Distance Education Centre also offers the subject. As elsewhere in Australia, some schools offer the International Baccalaurete course in Philosophy as well as the core IB Theory of Knowledge course. The VCE program in Philosophy began in 2001 and is now undergoing a review. Key individuals on the review group support the introduction of philosophical communities of inquiry as the core pedagogy in philosophy classrooms and have heard reports on the structure and strategies of the Western Australian model.

The Western Australian course in Philosophy and Ethics is being trialled this year (2006) with a view to full implementation in 2008. As noted earlier, this course of study is available as a choice for all upper secondary students, whether they are heading for university, the workplace or further technical education. It fits within a restructured state-wide curriculum framework that itself is based on the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and which is mandated for all schools. Introduction of outcomes-based education in primary and lower secondary classrooms has been achieved, but there is vocal resistance to its implementation in the final years - although the scale of the resistance is hard to determine because the local press has mounted an ill-informed campaign against OBE in which a very small opposition group is frequently cited. The arguments against have not been well-articulated and often rely on an "argument from nostalgia": that there was a golden age of education and that we should return to it. The Western Australian course has four outcomes as well as required content. The outcomes are: Philosophical Inquiry, Philosophical and ethical perspectives, Philosophy and ethics in human affairs and Applying and relating philosophical and ethical understandings. It is

the first outcome that is most notable here. Key players in the Western Australian Philosophy in Schools movement were part of the reference group writing the new course and were able to build in as an outcome the requirement that students demonstrate that they can engage in philosophical communities of inquiry. This will have a marked effect on the way the subject is taught as teachers will have to use a philosophical community of inquiry in their classrooms. It also serves as a significant common element that will link junior and middle school philosophy to that taught in senior school. In this way it will provide a more coherent and cohesive experience of philosophy and limit the disjunctions between upper secondary courses and those that precede them. The Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council of Western Australia) uses an eight-stage scale of achievement. Having consistent pedagogical elements between the primary and secondary courses allows students to demonstrate achievement at any of the eight levels.

South Australia introduced Philosophy into its upper secondary Society and Environment strand in 2003. The first stage of the course requires students to become familiar with Community of Inquiry methodology to "allow for students to familiarize themselves with key philosophical ideas and to appraise the application" of philosophy to specific issues. (SSABSA support materials 2005). In stage two, illustrative programs provided by the state Senior Secondary Assessment Board build a community of inquiry into the pedagogy. The role of Sue Knight, from University of South Australia, has been significant in the development of the South Australian courses: the Lorne heritage emerges again.

Since 1994 in New South Wales a Distinction Course for exceptionally gifted and talented students has been offered at Higher Schools Certificate (HSC - university entry) level. These are nominally 2-unit courses requiring a minimum of 120 hours study time, but they are well above the usual HSC standard and equate with a first year university course. The course is delivered by the University of New England in Armidale and covers metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. In addition to the Distinction Course, some schools offer the IB curriculum and some private schools teach philosophy as a separate subject, usually as part of a gifted and talented program.

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), offers Philosophy and Reason as a strand of the Mathematics syllabus (QSA, 2004). The three main areas of study are: Critical Reasoning, Deductive Logic and Philosophy. The emphasis is on the development of rational thought and the skills of analysis, argument presentation and rational justification. In the Philosophy unit students study three options from a range including philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, Moral philosophy, social philosophy, philosophy of human nature, philosophy of education, history of Western philosophy and Eastern philosophy. Although the syllabus seeks to "provide a vocally interactive classroom" (QSA, 2004. p. 26) this could be achieved in ways other than a community of inquiry. The most common is what I call "philosophy as blood sport" where the object is not increased shared understanding but the domination of argument until one party submits.

The Tasmanian Certificate of Education offers a course called 'Religion and Philosophy'. This course has five themes: Introduction to traditions; Comparative studies in religion; Contemporary issues in religion and philosophy; Christian perspectives on religious issues; and Ways of knowing. The course has adopted a version of outcomes-based assessment called criterion-based assessment, but except for one criterion that requires students to demonstrate that they can work constructively with others, there need be no philosophical community of inquiry. But more than this, there is no necessity for students to take any philosophy within this course. The course is offered in three sections: Religious traditions, Issues (one topic in which is ethics) and Philosophy. Students must choose a minimum of four topics from a minimum of two of the above sections. So, it is possible that schools could offer only the religion components and still allow students to meet the requirements for passing the course. The philosophy section of the Tasmanian course has five topics: What is a human being? What can we know and how can we know it? How should we be governed? What is art? Where do I belong? Lorne participant Tim Sprod was on the panel establishing the course, but the religion lobby proved to be very strong.

The relationship between religion and philosophy is both complementary and competitive. In Western Australia there was a strong effort by religious groups to have only Religion offered, based on the presumption that a course in religion would deal adequately with philosophical positions. But the Association for Philosophy in Schools (WA) representative argued against this and the Western Australian Curriculum Council agreed that religion and philosophy should be offered as separate courses. Again, decisions were influenced by individuals operating outside the mainstream of education, and again from structures put in place as a result of the Lorne meeting in 1985.

The push for the inclusion of religion came from religious institutions, but there is no natural constituency arguing for the inclusion of philosophy, in part because university Philosophy departments have until recently not focused on the issue. In the case of Tasmania voices arguing for Philosophy were marginalised by the strength of representation from religious institutions. In Western Australia the same forces were aligned against Philosophy, but the decision went in Philosophy's favour.

## Tertiary

Although things are beginning to change, it has proven difficult to introduce philosophy for children into the curriculum of pre-service teachers.

The most integrated relationship is that between Latrobe University and the Victorian Certificate in Education course in philosophy. Latrobe's Philosophy department offers a support program, including a four-day intensive short course focusing on both academic philosophy and pedagogy. In Western Australia there is one unit available in the postgraduate program at the University of Notre Dame while at the University of Western Australia, a Graduate Diploma in the Teaching of Critical Thinking is offered, but an examination of its content shows it has very little to do with philosophy in schools. One unit of this course has been taken up by a lone academic and provides some instruction

in the philosophical community of inquiry, but this work is done against a departmental background predominantly hostile to philosophy in schools. The University of Queensland's School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics offered for the first time in 2005 a standalone professional development course in philosophical inquiry in the classroom. It is planned to build on this to create a more extensive postgraduate program. It is worth noting that this is offered outside of the Education faculty. Also in Queensland is an online course offered by the Queensland education department. This was created by Lynn Hinton from Buranda school (with help from Philip Cam from the University of NSW and other school staff). The course is moderated by classroom teachers from Buranda and although aimed predominantly at primary classes, can be taken by secondary teachers.

In South Australia, Flinders University now offers a distance education Graduate Certificate in Education focusing on teaching philosophy. Flinders has also provided professional development support for the International Baccalaureate program in Theory of Knowledge and two academics in particular have championed the introduction of philosophy units into the upper secondary Society and Environment course.

Philosophy departments have begun to take up the challenge of supporting philosophy in the senior school curriculum, but there has been little in the way of obvious support for teaching a philosophical community of inquiry in the middle and junior years. With the exception of a few notable individuals operating almost in spite of the faculties they work within, little is being done within education faculties to teach pre-service teachers the pedagogic strategies that make a philosophical community of inquiry such a powerful classroom tool with far-reaching benefits for children and schools.

## A polemical conclusion

The arguments and research evidence are clear (e.g. Lipman , Trickey and Topping ,2004; Knight and Collins,2005; Millett,2000): there are significant and undeniable affective, cognitive, social and moral benefits from the introduction of philosophical communities of inquiry. However, there have been considerable forces arrayed against the introduction of philosophy into schools and these need to be countered. If philosophical communities are to take root in normal classroom practices, and they should, there needs to be a concerted effort that integrates teacher-training, training in philosophical disciplines, curriculum change and continuing professional development. This concerted, integrated effort needs to include all levels of education and to value each of them. Tertiary training in philosophy must address the needs of primary teachers as well as secondary specialist courses. Researchers must listen to the voices of ordinary teachers and value their views: a teacher with 10, 15 or 20 years experience in the classroom knows when something is making a difference to their students. It is time we listened more carefully.

Finally, governments must ensure that their education policies actively encourage open philosophical discussion - involving defining, clarifying and evaluating concepts and critically evaluating decisions of all sorts - and ensure that this is available to all students. The benefits are potentially enormous. The costs of missing this opportunity are huge.

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