pesgb

Newsletter
2019

Information and notices | Reports | Articles | Creative writing | Conferences 2019 | Future events

Welcome to the annual Newsletter of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB).

The Society was formed in 1964 to promote the study, teaching and application of the philosophy of education. The Society holds an annual three-day national residential conference, other regional conferences and local branch meetings. The Society's primary publication is the internationally renowned *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (*JOPE*). See the exciting news about changes in publication on page 2.

Administrative enquiries concerning the Society and its activities should be addressed to Stephne Graham at pesgb@sasevents.co.uk

Contact Stephne at this address if you have a notice you wish to circulate to the membership.

Readers might like to pass this Newsletter to education students and professionals, or direct them to the Society's website at www.philosophy-of-education.org

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Edited by Ruth Heilbronn and Ruth Wareham

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Information and notices

From the Chair

Paul Standish
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The times are changing. The world of academic publishing has been undergoing major changes over the past 30 years, as a result of new technology and with moves more recently towards open access to published research. These are set to accelerate in the years to come. It is this topic that is the main focus of what follows here.

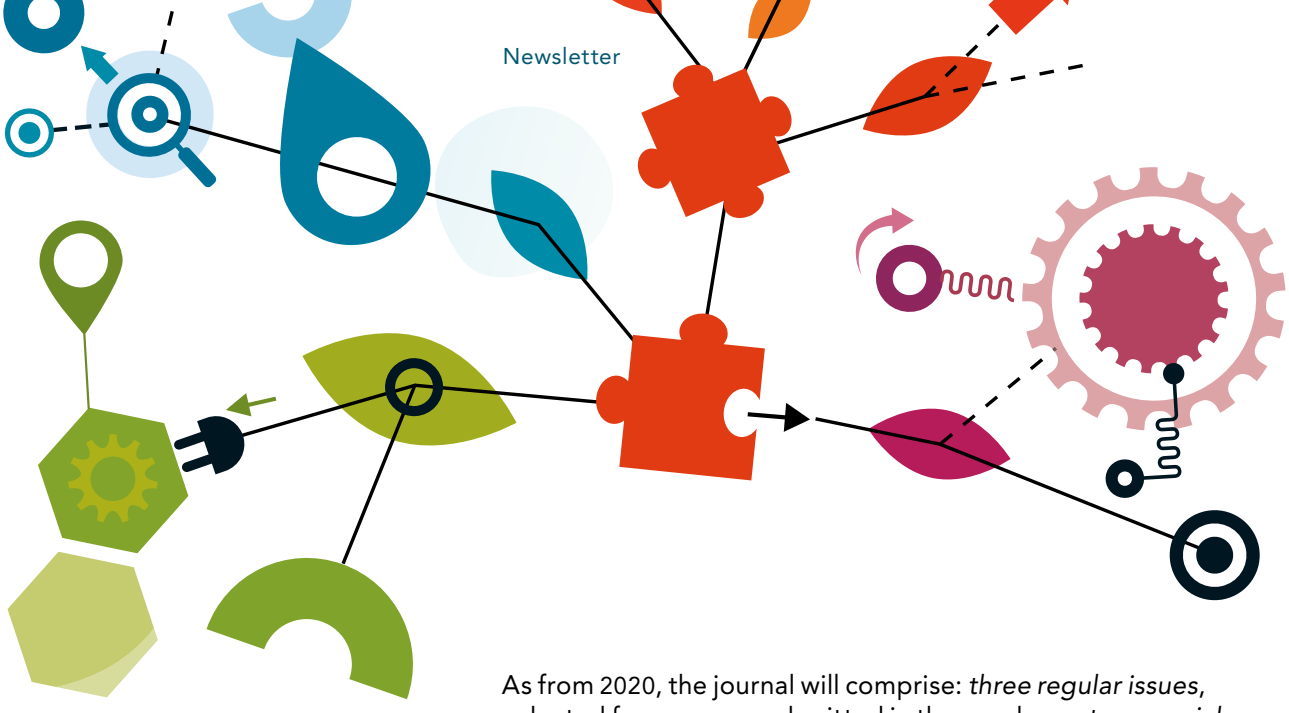
At the end of my piece in last year's Newsletter, I expressed thanks to Bob Davis, the Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, and the Editorial Board, as well as to Wiley, our publisher. In the context of this changing world, and with the support of Blackwell Publishing, now Wiley, *JOPE* has done very well. The journal has proved itself consistently to be in demand, not just amongst readers and libraries, but among publishers themselves.

We are periodically courted by prospective publishers who would like to acquire our title. Over the past two years, we have been engaged in negotiations, as a result of which we have elected to extend our 25-year connection with Wiley. The improved contract that has again been secured will bring the Society approximately £1.25 million over the next five years (2020–24). At the start of each of the five-year contracts we have had, Wiley have stated their belief that the returns would in fact be greater than the amount specified in the contract, and they have consistently delivered on this. So, in the current parlance, we surely have a good deal!

There is no need for me here to labour the point that this income is what enables us to support activities on such a wide scale – including our conferences and branch activities, our grants and awards, our various sub-committee developments, our summer schools, our retreats, our impact work, and our growing social media presence. What's not to be missed also is the fact that the calibre and prestige of the publisher have been important factors in consolidating and extending our international presence in the field.

> “The journal is expanding from four to six issues per year”

But let me say more about those changes in publishing, for what is new will already become apparent within the coming year to anyone reading the journal. As from 2020, the journal is expanding from four to six issues per year. This will emphatically not be a redistribution of the existing volume of material into six thinner issues, but will constitute a substantial increase in the number of pages published. It will broaden the journal's reach and sustain the high quality for which the journal is known.



As from 2020, the journal will comprise: *three regular issues*, selected from papers submitted in the usual way; *two special issues*, each on a specific theme or topic; and *a more explicitly policy-related issue*, styled in a way intended to appeal to practitioners and policy-makers, to bloggers and influencers, and to the broader reader. The policy-related issue provides an opportunity also to reinforce the connection originally intended between the journal and our excellent *Impact* publications and initiatives, and hence to strengthen the journal's impact in broader terms.

> “Our tenacity and success say something also of the importance of asking philosophical and sometimes untimely questions about education”

The average reader is likely to have little awareness of the amount of work that goes on in the course of the editorial process, but it will be clear to anyone that the increased volume of publication will add to the pressure. To this end, we are revising arrangements, primarily to ease the burden that falls on the Editor. The Editor of the journal will become the Executive Editor, and this role, although still bearing overall responsibility for the running of the journal, will be addressed more towards matters of strategy and vision than to the everyday business of securing the efficient processing of submissions and publication. The latter role will substantially be devolved to two new positions, the Co-Editors. One Co-Editor will have responsibility for the three regular issues, and the other will handle the two special issues and the policy-related issue.

Topics for special issues, as well as for the new policy-related issues, are sometimes initiated by the Editorial Board, but proposals are welcome from any source, so please take note of this new opportunity. The Editorial team of Associate Editors (that is, ex-Editors) and Assistant Editors will still be in place to handle much of the detailed work involved in co-ordinating the reviewing of papers. ▸ page 4

At a time when academics are under increasing pressure, and in a climate where one rarely finds any concessions at all in support of this crucially important academic work, we believe it is important to share the burden more broadly. The new arrangements should make us more efficient, as well as helping us to take full advantage of the wider platform for publication that the new contract secures.

“The journal is, in so many respects, the engine for the Society’s success”

The introduction of the changes in management structure described above coincide with the last year of Bob Davis’s second five-year term as Editor of the journal, and at present a search is underway as part of the selection process for his successor. That appointment will be made at the 2020 AGM. The person selected will then shadow Bob through the year that follows, taking up the position of Executive Editor in April 2021. This is not the occasion to thank Bob fully for the immense amount of work he has done as Editor since 2011, but I would like to record our gratitude for the efforts he is currently making in taking the journal through this period of transition. It is timely also to acknowledge the work of the Editorial Board and the Executive, in discussing the new contract and the journal’s management carefully and laying the way for these new arrangements.

I have drawn attention to the way that the journal is, in so many respects, the engine for the Society’s success, but it is also the most public expression of the good work, commitment and enthusiasm that characterises so much of what we do. The widening circles of people who contribute to this are a testament to the strength of the Society. Our tenacity and success say something also of the importance of asking philosophical and sometimes untimely questions about education, and of raising these questions in new ways – amongst teachers and policy-makers, in the wider circles of educational research, and, in these politically impoverished and environmentally threatened times, through the variety of initiatives that come under the name “philosophy in the community”. Ultimately, these are questions that lie at the heart of philosophy itself, and they will not just go away!

“Proposals are welcome from any source”

I shall not now extend this into a list of thanks to the many people who have contributed so much to the Society’s success, but I would like to compliment Ruth Wareham and Ruth Heilbronn on their patient work in bringing together this Newsletter. It is a fitting record of many of the things that have been going on in the Society this year and an attractive invitation to what is to come.

My own term of office will come to an end at the AGM in 2020, when, while stepping down to the role of Vice-Chair, I shall hand over to my successor, Michael Hand. It has been a privilege to act as Chair for the Society during these years of change and with these exciting prospects, and I wish Michael every success in the role. ■

Information and notices

David Lewin
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Editorial note

Ruth Wareham has done sterling work as Newsletter Editor for the past few years and now has the enormous responsibility of conference organiser. She is relinquishing the editorial role after this issue and a small group of people are stepping up as an editorial team. We would like to thank Ruth very much for all the work she has done on this publication, to create lively and interesting Newsletters for the Society.

This edition has been jointly edited with **Ruth Heilbronn**.

Secretary's notices

PESGB Officers and Executive Committee

The Society's affairs are managed by an Executive Committee of President, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Conference Programme Chair, Conference Organiser, Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, six elected members and up to six co-opted members.

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PESGB Annual General Meeting 2020

The 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 28 March 2020 at the Society's Annual Conference at New College, Oxford.

Branch Secretaries

The Society currently has 22 branches. The list of branches and secretaries is as follows:

All-Ireland	Ian Munday	ian.munday@nuigalway.ie
Bath and Bristol	Darren Garside	d.garside@bathspa.ac.uk
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Yorkshire	Ed Podesta	E.Podesta@leedstrinity.ac.uk

If you live in an area without an active branch, please consider starting one. The Society has money available to help set up and run branches. Contact the Secretary, David Lewin, for advice (david.lewin@strath.ac.uk).

BPA/SWIP Good Practice Scheme

Since 2014, the PESGB has signed up to the British Philosophical Association (BPA) and Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP) Good Practice Scheme regarding the conduct of academic conferences and seminar series. You can find information here: http://bpa.ac.uk/resources/women-in-philosophy/good-practice

Branch secretaries are encouraged to take note and adapt these guidelines for use at their own branches. ■

Information and notices

Small Grants Scheme 2018/19

Carrie Winstanley
University of Roehampton

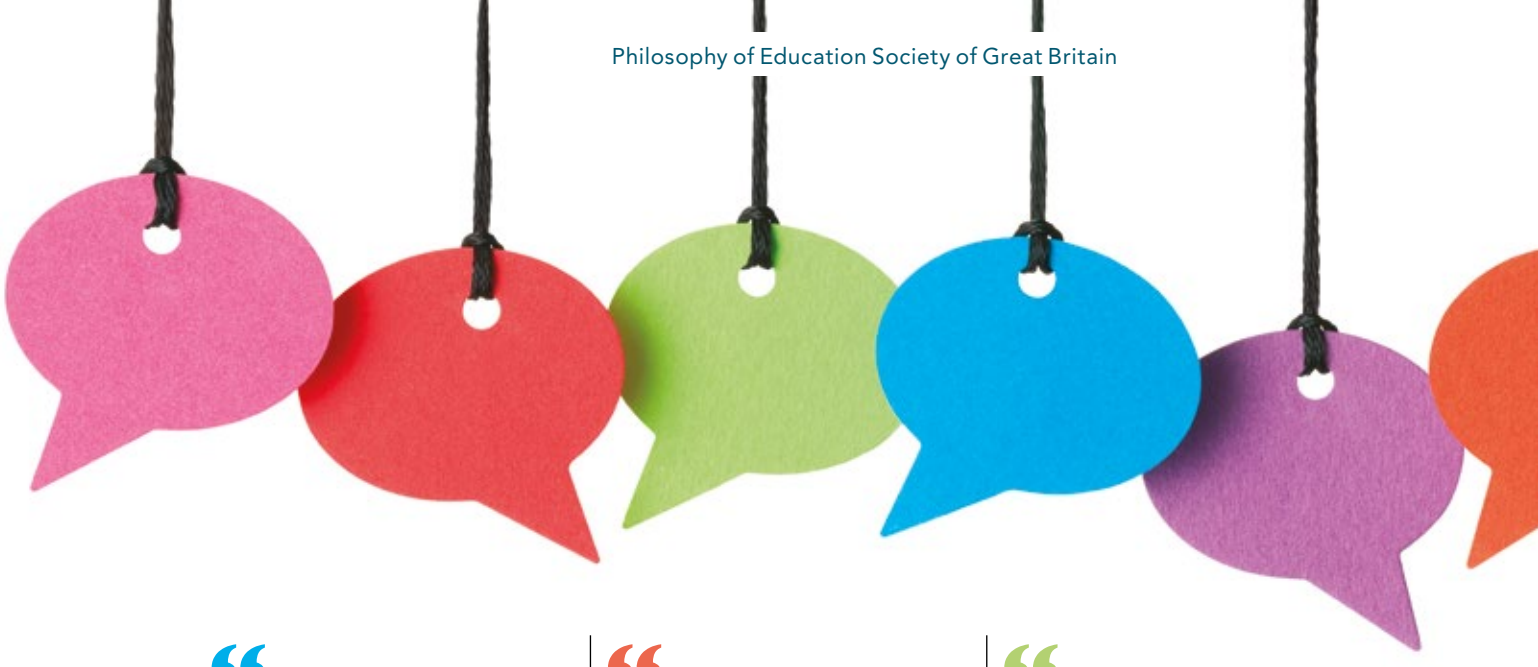
It's a real joy administering the Small Grants, since my main job is doling out money to people, who are – generally – absolutely delighted to be able to attend an event or engage in some kind of collaboration.

Sometimes I can't agree a request, as it falls outside the Small Grants award criteria, but usually I can redirect these enquiries to another part of the Society and hopefully there may be a way of helping.

Recipients of Small Grants tend to be very thankful and, whilst I appreciate being thanked, I need to remind myself that the funds are not from me at all! So, here is an opportunity to thank the Society for funding the Small Grants Scheme – it truly helps to meet the aims of the Society through directly benefiting members. It is open to everyone after one year of membership.

Usually, for the Newsletter Small Grants report, I've provided what amounts to a list of places that people have visited and a reminder to all members that they are eligible to apply for funds. As I started to compile this information at the start of the summer, I felt that it didn't properly convey the impact of the Small Grants Scheme on our members, nor did it make for very compelling reading. So, in order to make the report more interesting and reflective, I asked grant recipients to provide a sentence or two about the value of the scheme to them and the impact on their work. I didn't give people long to respond and I sent the request when many people are on vacation, so I was delighted to get any responses at all (see pages 8–11).

I'll just remind you all to consider applying for a Small Grant (all the details you need are on the website), and then I will hand over to the recipients who were able to get back to me. I hope their comments may inspire more of you to apply for funds. Thanks to the people who responded for their interesting comments and stories. (No one chose to be anonymised, although this option was offered.) ▸ page 8



I used some funds from the Small Grants Scheme to attend a conference in Zaragoza of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI). It was founded by two Israelis 30 years ago, Ezra and Sascha Talmor. They also founded a journal, called *European Legacy*. The ISSEI attracts scholars from North America as well as Europe. I gave a paper on the issue of inclusion, part of a seminar organised on that topic by Marianna Papastephanou.

"At one time, several hundred participants attended the bi-annual ISSEI conferences, but numbers are dwindling. It deserves stronger support and is an excellent forum for meeting scholars with interests across the humanities as well as in education.

"One minor problem: the temperature in Zaragoza got up to 39°C on the last day. Thank God for air conditioning!"

Geoff Hinchliffe, University of East Anglia

Thanks to the Small Grant I was awarded from the PESGB, I was able to attend, and present at, the Cambridge Symposium of Knowledge in Education. At the Symposium I met international colleagues with whom I share common research interests, namely critiques of decolonising discourses in education, and aesthetics as a form of knowledge and implications for curriculum and education. It was especially exciting to co-present with a colleague who is interested in a specifically epistemological critique of educational decolonising discourse, and to meet a doctoral candidate who is an experienced music teacher and who is seeking to construct epistemological criteria for a robust music curriculum. I look forward to working with both, formally or informally, in the future. The event also helped clarify my thoughts for a book proposal I have been working on for a while with limited success."

Alka Sehgal-Cuthbert, London

I attended an event which linked in with my plans to develop an undergraduate module on philosophy of education through film. The event introduced me to different philosophical readings of films of a range of genres. One of the most interesting talks I heard was by Sandra Laugier, who spoke about the ethics of popular culture. Her paper drew on Stanley Cavell's reflections on mainstream cinema and its power to change us – as a form of 'education for grown-ups'. Laugier extended Cavell's account, by looking at the educative potential of a TV series. The conference as a whole allowed me to meet many people who are working on philosophy of film, and to explore its intersections with education. I am really grateful to the PESGB for the opportunity to be part of these discussions and to make some new connections!"

Emma Williams, University of Warwick

In the last 18 months, I've gone through some kind of dialogic transformation. Perhaps, per Oruka, I'm seeking to embody a modern-day sage philosopher, of which I could argue there is possibly no greater honour. Maybe in another space.

"Certainly, without necessarily understanding the intricacies of every philosophical foundation, I'm recognising the importance of dialogue as a means to create, understand, know and gain a deeper, wider and fuller understanding of self, situation and place in space and spaces where I am often located as Other, and often less than.

"Following an application and support of the PESGB Small Grant award, I was able to attend my first international academic conference. I attended the International Conference for Dialogic Pedagogy, Creativity and Learning in June 2019 at EGGET, Studentsenteret, University of Bergen.

"I was blessed to have some time to briefly reason with Ana Marjanovic-Shane, Rupert Wegerif, Eugene Matusov and Kariane Therese Gärtner Westrheim. In different ways, their conversations provoked, challenged and inspired my own thinking about how to proceed in my own study journey. My subsequent readings of their work inspired me to be brave and courageous in my work, remember Freire and, most importantly, remain true to myself, situation and place as a narrative which guides and influences what comes next.

"For me, what came next was blessed. I met a fellow dread, from London, in the middle of the University of Bergen's most prestigious venue, talking about life and levity. The time was precious, but the reasoning was truth. It so happened it was my honour to spend a good time reasoning with Ras Paul Gilroy while he was in Bergen to receive the Holberg Prize, an international award for outstanding contributions to research in arts and humanities, social sciences, law and theology. It was a truly memorable experience, whose impact I am still reflecting upon.

"Post-Bergen, and post-Gilroy, I am rapidly adjusting to a new transformation in my career as a full-time PhD student. The themes of my whole experience connected directly with my proposed doctoral studies at the University of Exeter, which investigate the complexities of critical dialogue about race and racism in school-based education.

"I'd like to apply for a PESGB Small Grant again, perhaps to take time to untangle the *métisses* of 'reasoning', which could be ascribed to intangible cultural practices bound in the hybridity of Gilroy's Black Atlantic, perhaps exploring legacies of Socratic, Rasta and Sage Philosophy within contemporary 'Black' British communities."

Malcolm Richards, University of Exeter

"The Small Grant enabled me to attend the Political Studies Association conference in Nottingham in April 2019. This was my first time at PSA and, while I went to take part in a panel organised by the Anarchist Studies special interest group, the conference was a great opportunity to join in discussions by political theorists working on areas that overlap with a lot of my philosophical interests – for example, on citizenship education, democratic theory, feminist theory and political education in schools. The conference lasted for three days and there was a lot of space for discussion, so I managed to develop some of the ideas for a paper that I hope to submit to a forthcoming special issue of Anarchist Studies."

Judith Suissa,
UCL Institute of Education

"The PES [Philosophy of Education] conference in Richmond [Virginia, USA] proved to be an excellent place to present a book I recently wrote with Piotr Zamojski (*Towards an Ontology of Teaching*). The panel sparked a very lively discussion, and to our surprise, we were offered a book discussion symposium in Studies in Philosophy and Education, which will contain the responses of our 'critics', and our response to them."

Joris Vlieghe,
University of Leuven

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[The most interesting aspect of the event I attended with the Small Grant funds was] the possibility to have longer (and more than one) conversations and discussions about the work presented during the conference with (overseas) colleagues with whom I mostly only have the opportunity to have Skype conversations. In this case, these conversations/discussions even led (quite unexpected actually) to concrete plans for writing a book.

"A bit of a more personal note. I am aware that for good reasons (ecological reasons) universities are trying to look for alternatives for some conferences to reduce flying. And I also think that in some cases, meetings over Skype can be an alternative and can be useful. But for our kind of work (academic work, I mean; our philosophical work), having the opportunity to have more conversations/discussions with the same group of people over a few limited number of days (like for instance in Oxford) is just very crucial. It's necessary to develop ideas; to get one's own thinking going a bit further; to get a bit more clear about one's own writing and thinking. So, again, I really think the most interesting aspect of the event is exactly this: good, extended discussions about one's work, stretched over the time of the conference.

"I finished writing a book with Naomi Hodgson earlier this year. That work kind of concluded a particular stage in my research, and I had to see how I would move on from that. A first (rather preliminary) attempt at formulating where to go next with my research was presented during the conference I went to. As is clear, I guess, from the above, it was more fruitful than I expected it to be. (I am sure that if I [had] not attended the conference and presented this preliminary development of the next step of my research, this would not have happened.)

"It was a colleague of mine from the US who, during one of our discussions, suggested we could bring together a few of the elements we were discussing in a book. I honestly did not see that coming. So, maybe this is not something about the event as such that has led to a slight change of plans in my work; but it clearly was related to being at the event.

"I have been granted sabbatical leave for the upcoming academic year, and I will be working on that new book project most of the time. I will also spend some of my time abroad, at a few other research centres. Any financial help there would be great. Please do keep funding people who are asking for financial support to present their work at conferences they would normally not manage to get to. As I hope is clear from this one personal story: having real-time, long discussions is so crucial for the development of one's ideas."

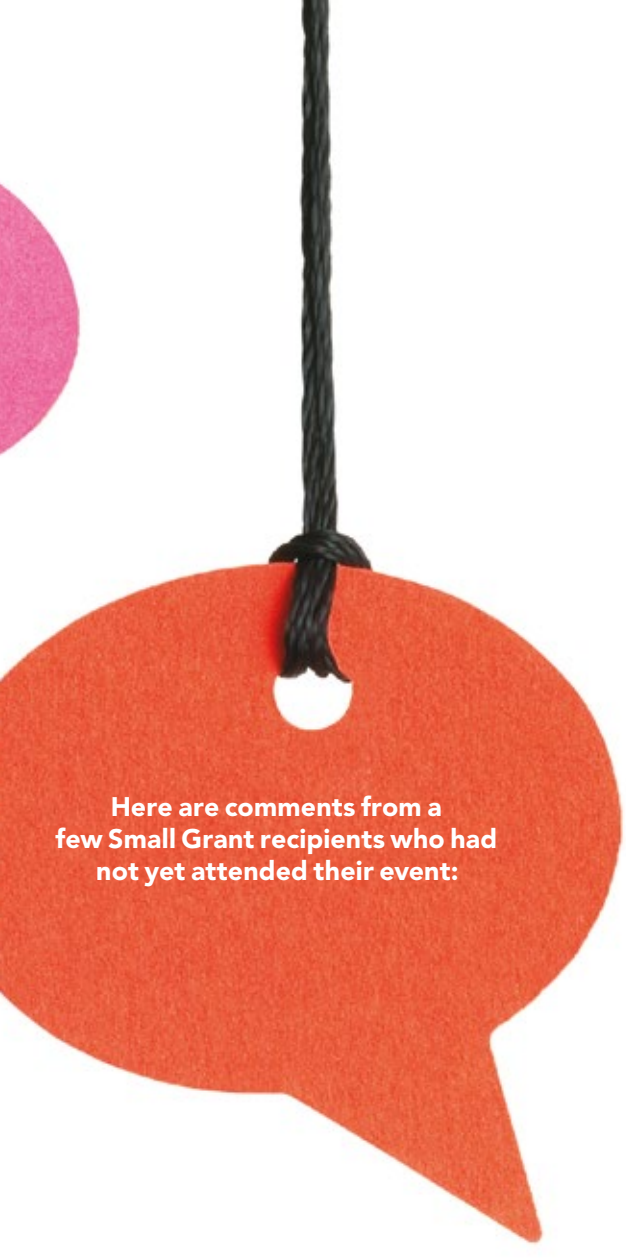
Stefan Ramaekers, University of Leuven

A Small Grant supported my attendance at the 2019 Canadian Philosophy of Education Society Conference, held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The event enabled me to discuss recent work with colleagues beyond my immediate peers and colleagues in the UK/European context, and to strengthen links with colleagues there, with whom I will develop future collaborations."

Naomi Hodgson, Liverpool Hope University

My 2019 Small Grant enabled me to attend a conference in Amsterdam arising from Anders Schinkel's Templeton-funded Wonder-full Education Project, and to engage in a dialogue with Anders on the subject of his recent article *Wonder and Moral Education*."

Michael Hand, University of Birmingham



Here are comments from a few Small Grant recipients who had not yet attended their event:

“

I am grateful to the PESGB for this grant, which will allow me to present a paper in the Philippines. I would love to see further international collaborations and networks develop through the Small Grants programme.”

Rowena Palacios, UCL Institute of Education

“

The Small Grant will fund my participation at the Human Development and Capability Association 2019 Annual Conference in London in September. This wonderful opportunity will further enhance my involvement with the Association and provide time and space for discussions with scholars in a field that has so fruitfully informed my work in the philosophy of education.

“I will be chairing a Panel Thematic Session on ‘Educational Connective HUB: The What, The Why, The How’, based on a project conducted by researchers of the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology (FISPPA) at the University of Padua, Italy, which I oversaw as Scientific Advisor. The panel session aims to investigate how a range of emerging trends within the international community can be used to support educational systems in developing an innovative ‘connective design’ culture, and to work towards an educational system based on an inclusive and universal process.

“The panel papers connect the field of social innovation with the Capability Approach and the constructs of empowerment and participation. Presenters include Drs Elisabetta Ghedin, Debora Aquario, Simone Visentin, Roberto Dainese, Ignacio Païs, Giuseppe Lucio Santamaria, Norberto Boggino, Eleonora Zorzi and Prof. Marina Santi.”

Lorella Terzi, University of Roehampton

“

I haven’t yet used my Small Grant funds, as I am looking to attend the North American Association for Philosophy & Education annual conference (NAAPE) in October. However, I was very grateful to the PESGB for offering this scheme, as it does mean I have the opportunity to attend a conference I would otherwise have missed due to a lack of available funds. In securing the PESGB Small Grant funds to attend and present a paper at the NAAPE annual conference, I will have the chance to network and meet a group of similarly minded academics in North America, who I would otherwise not be able to meet or chat with. This is a great initiative and I am sure it will particularly help postgrads and ECRs, for whom getting to know the people in their field is of critical importance.”

Laura D’Olimpio, University of Birmingham

Information and notices

Emma Williams
Warwick University

Large grants

The Large Grants Committee members are Andrea English, Amanda Fulford, Anders Schinkel, Emma Williams (Chair) and Joris Vlieghe.

After a year in which we were limited in our funding, we were glad to be able to announce in July 2019 that the Society will again be offering grants for seminar series and for 'miscellaneous' activities, as well as the grants for doctoral studentships.

Doctoral studentships

Doctoral studentships were awarded to Marc Deegan, So Young Lee, John McCall, Elizabeth O'Brien and Relve Spread for the 2019/20 academic year. Our congratulations to them.

Seminar Series Grant

The Seminar Series Grant provides support of up to £10,000 for the organisation of seminar series in the philosophy of education. A seminar series typically brings together thematically related papers or other presentations in meetings over the course of a year or in a colloquium lasting a day or a few days.

Seminar series can lead to special issues of *JOPE*, and this is particularly relevant as the journal moves to six issues a year (see the Chair's report on pages 2–4).

The Miscellaneous Grant

The Miscellaneous Grant offers up to £3,000 to support such activities as one-off seminars, seed-corn research meetings and other qualifying initiatives.

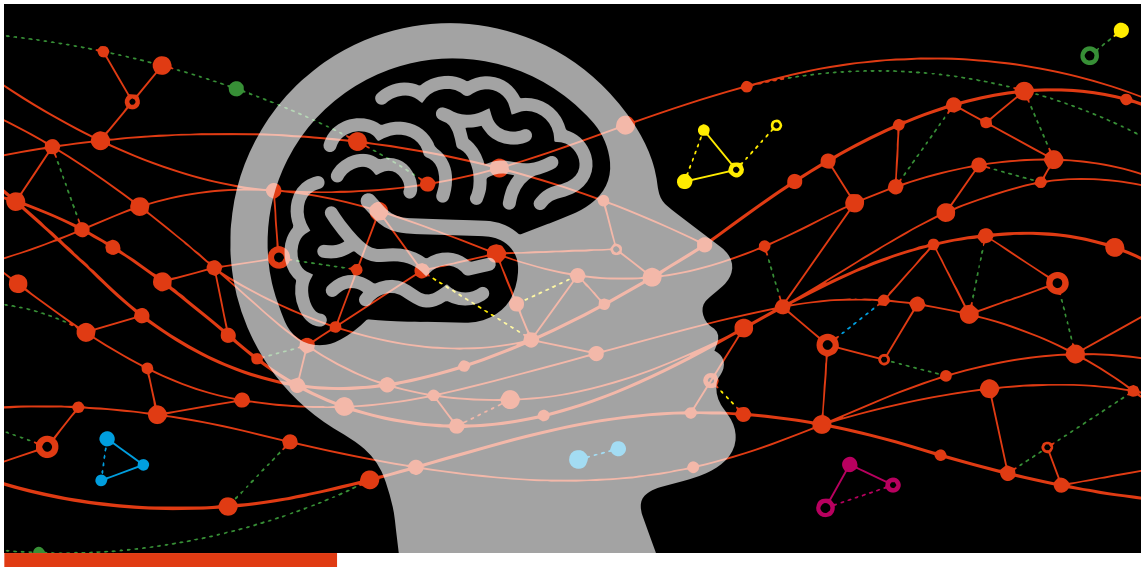
British Academy/PESGB Grants

The PESGB continues in partnership with the British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant Scheme to support research in philosophy of education.

This funding is intended "to facilitate initial project planning and development; to support the direct costs of research; and to enable the advancement of research through workshops or conferences, or visits by or to partner scholars".

Applicants may seek support for any combination of eligible activity and cost, up to the overall limit of £10,000. ■

Full details on how to apply for all these Large Grants appear on the PESGB website.



Information and notices

Digital connections in philosophy of education

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Get ready for a new online face of PESGB in 2020!

We are planning a gentle redesign of our website platform, to ensure that it is accessible to all our readers, to bring it up to date and include more functionality and content.

It's been five years since we had our major overhaul and our new logo – don't worry, that won't be changing. These innovations won't go live until after our Annual Conference in March 2020.

One exciting part of the new website will be a PESGB blog, convened by Dr Oli Belas. Oli will be promoting this later in the year and will be looking for regular content to facilitate active and inspiriting debate online. I really hope that this new development will add to our general online presence and that we can link it in to our popular social media – Twitter and Facebook.

As always, we rely on the support from members for content. Please don't be shy about passing things my way, so I can see where they might fit as part of our online presence.

Thanks to Kim at SAS, who does the actual editing of the site itself, and to Naomi Hodgson and Ruth Heilbronn for continued sterling work in supporting me to lead the Website Steering Group. ■

Reports

Committee on Race and Ethnicity

Jack Bicker
CoRE Chair
UCL Institute of Education

The PESGB's Committee on Race and Ethnicity (CoRE) was set up in 2015, through the efforts of Darren Chetty and Judith Suissa.

I chaired the committee for the first time in March 2019, and will chair it for the last time in March 2020, when I come to the end of my time on the PESGB executive.

Aims

CoRE's express aims are:

- the promotion of new philosophical work relating to education and issues of 'race' and ethnicity;
- the recruitment of new members from 'racialised' groups generally underrepresented in the Society; and
- the creation and support of networks of those interested in philosophical work relating to 'race', ethnicity and education.

Our March 2019 meeting, held at the Oxford Annual Conference, was attended by around 30 conference delegates, representing a wide range of persons from within the PESGB's membership and beyond. At the meeting, three proposals were discussed.

> "Having such a structure in place is geared towards increasing avenues for otherwise underrepresented groups"

Mentoring project

First, we discussed a mentoring project within the PESGB. Philosophy of education, as well as philosophy more generally, suffers from a well-documented underrepresentation of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The aim of this mentoring project (in line with all three of the committee's aims above) is to provide space for students from underrepresented groups to become acquainted with the Society, and to be given guidance on their work and its place within the PESGB (conference submissions, the journal, invitation-only seminars, etc.).

The PESGB has a number of senior members who are nearing, or beyond the point of, retirement from a full-time academic position, but who still, of course, have much to offer to the discipline of philosophy of education, as well as to a new generation of philosophers who are beginning to progress through the Society.

Thinking, talking, engaging ...

Drawing on the premise that good inclusion practices benefit everyone, we proposed that this project be open to both ethnic minority as well as non-ethnic minority students, but with the clear indication that having such a structure in place is geared towards increasing avenues for otherwise underrepresented groups to make a home within the Society and its intellectual community.

> “We aim to produce new work engaging with contemporary educational issues”

Publishing ideas

Second (in line with the first and third aims above), we discussed working towards a proposal for a special issue of *JOPE* (or another publication) under the working title of *Epistemologies of Racialisation, Nation, Belonging and Education*.

This proposal has the aim of providing a space and an impetus to produce new work engaging with contemporary educational issues. It also provides a central fulcrum, around which members might collaborate more closely, as well as reaching outwards to wider philosophers and education researchers interested in contributing to a special issue on this topic.

Public study day

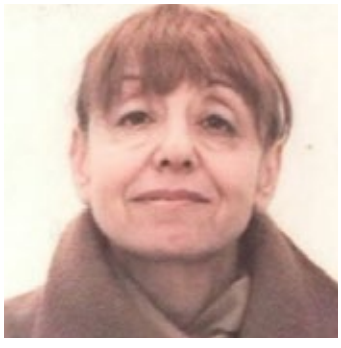
Third (and in line with all three of the committee’s aims above), on 31 January 2020, we will host both a private meeting of the committee and a public study day on topics broadly reflective of our proposed journal title at UCL Institute of Education in London.

This will involve a chance to further steer our thinking, as well as to broaden our discussion to philosophers and education researchers outside the PESGB.

Progress on all of the above matters will be reported on at the March 2020 Executive Committee meeting and CoRE meeting. ■

Reports

Development Committee activities 2019



Ruth Heilbronn
Development Committee Chair
UCL Institute of Education

The PESGB's Development Committee meets twice a year, in the autumn and at the spring Annual Conference, to consider and initiate new developments.

Many of the developments that have become part of the calendar of the Society, such as the summer school, the pre-conference workshop and the various initiatives and events in teacher education, started out as suggestions from members that the Development Committee has taken forward and established over the years. We regularly report on these initiatives in the Newsletter and at the AGM.

We invite members of the Society to suggest future developments that meet the Society's and the committee's aims and objectives (see box below) that might not attract funds under the Small Grants Scheme (see page 7).

We will discuss applications at the two key points in the year when the Development Committee meets. An application form can be found on the website (under the entry for the Development Committee). Applications must further the aims of the Society and the Development Committee (see box below).

The Development Committee's current members are: Steve Bramall, Richard Davies, Andrea English, Patricia Hannan, Mary Healy, Ruth Heilbronn, Eri Mountbatten, Diana Murdoch, Janet Orchard, Doret de Ruyter, Adrian Skilbeck, Judith Suissa and Carrie Winstanley. ■

The Development Committee's aims and objectives are:

1 To initiate and develop proposals for promoting the work of the PESGB to new audiences, including students, educational practitioners and early career academics.

2 To encourage and support the work of PESGB members to network with others across different institutions and disciplines and to collaborate in activities involving work in philosophy of education.

3 To make recommendations to the Executive Committee for financial support of activities to the above areas.

4 To monitor and evaluate ongoing activities in the above areas and to report back annually to the Executive Committee.

5 To encourage members of the Society to help to facilitate projects initiated by the Development Committee.

Reports

Teacher education

Andrea English
PESGB Teacher Education Coordinator
University of Edinburgh

This is my second year as PESGB Teacher Education Coordinator, after taking over from Janet Orchard in 2018. A special thanks to Diana Murdoch, who served in the role during my maternity leave. Diana is now a member of the Development Committee.

Currently, a new initiative is in place (as part of the Society's Branch Secretary role) for branch secretaries to include at least one seminar per year that is particularly relevant to school teachers, as has been in place at the Edinburgh branch for some time. Some topics have been suggested by teachers and teacher educators for meetings and one-day conferences that might be of particular interest to teachers, such as:

- teachers' dilemmas in values education (their own values, the values of a society, professional values, the values of parents and students);
- teacher–parent relationships (parental involvement; the wishes of parents for their children and those of teachers); and
- teachers' professional wisdom.

We again offered teacher bursaries to enable candidates to attend the PESGB's Annual Conference in Oxford. This year, we had five outstanding candidates, who were awarded the bursaries to attend the 2019 Annual Conference. You can read about their conference experiences in their reports on pages 43–50 (and also on the Society's website). We are offering eight bursaries for the 2020 Oxford conference: five to teachers working in schools; and three to teachers working in other contexts, such as museums, youth work and home education. Details of how to apply can be found on the Society's website.

We were glad to participate with colleagues in Warsaw and with the Central European Philosophy of Education Society with Andrea English and Paul Standish giving invited talks in general sessions at the Polish Society's conference in September 2018. The conference was held with parallel sessions in Polish or English. The talks were well attended, with about 50 delegates (including teacher educators, and ITE and postgraduate students from the University of Warsaw, as well as surrounding universities). Rafal Godon, who hosted the conference, provided excellent hospitality.

Many European colleagues expressed gratitude that we had come to Poland and could tell them about the PESGB's work and were interested in coming to our Oxford conference. ■

Reports

World Philosophy Day 2019

Richard Davies
PESGB Development Committee
University of Central Lancashire

In celebration of World Philosophy Day in November, five universities from the North-West collaborated to run four co-badged events during that week. We also took to Twitter for three question-and-answer sessions, and showcased posters on philosophical work in education. The aim was to show what philosophy of education is doing to support educational policy and practice.

A discursive ramble

Liverpool Hope University celebrated World Philosophy Day with an ambulatory discursive ramble around the university gardens and local woods to the theme of nature and childhood. We were blessed with one of the nicest days this dank November had to offer, although the sunshine was not as persuasive to local philosophers as might have been hoped.

Augmented by an entire Early Childhood first-year seminar group, we numbered around 20, dividing into bunches of threes and fours as we entered the woods. Each group took a laminated sheet of three provocations begging a consideration of what nature is, what children are, and what the relationship between the two might be. The sound of philosophical chatter harmonised easily with birdsong and crunching autumn leaves.

Whether it was the philosophy or the unexpected sight of blue skies and sunlight above the trees, it felt a very relaxed party that ambled back an hour later to hot chocolate and a debrief. In these days of continuous aspiration to well-being, much of the feedback veered away from childhood to thoughts on time, peace, colours and companionship; but these are the happy stuff of philosophy too.

> “The sound of philosophical chatter harmonised easily with birdsong and crunching autumn leaves”

A world café

The University of Central Lancashire hosted a World Café on the theme of ‘valuable education experiences’, where we explored and discussed the kinds of formal and informal educational experiences that we remembered, had been ‘formative’ for us (as academics, teachers, students) and how we explained their value to others. We also explored the time spent ‘wasted’ in our education (and whether it was really wasted or just meaningless at the time).

In the light of Thoreau

An essential part of the event was the consumption of a small mountain of biscuits and a lake of coffee. We enjoyed the opportunity to 'address big questions' and 'think philosophically' in the midst of the everyday demands of our various occupations. In time-honoured tradition, we retired to a pub to continue the conversations.

New directions in the light of Thoreau

Liverpool's Centre for Higher Education Research hosted a seminar by PESGB Conference chair Amanda Fulford, with response from Liverpool's Thomas Schramme, entitled 'The Idea of the University, Present and Future'.

The seminar explored a range of questions and issues in contemporary higher education, including some controversial new directions, discussed in the light of Henry David Thoreau. The seminar gave an opportunity for scholars from a range of disciplines to apply themselves to a series of issues of common concern, and stimulated an animated discussion closed only by the demands of the present student population to use the same seminar room!

Thinking philosophically

Manchester Metropolitan University hosted a series of short presentations, where empirical educational researchers discussed the pedagogical and philosophical dimensions of their recent projects (thanks to Steph Ainsworth, Tony Brown, David Menendez, Chris Hanley, Dominic Grifiths and Alex Pais).

The themes explored varied from the relationship between knowledge and affect, mathematical learning, philosophy as a pedagogical tool, some ethical issues in teaching fiction, and interrogating neurodiversity.

The evening gave rise to lively discussion about the specific issues raised, as well as a broader concern with the importance of thinking philosophically about these issues for all educational researchers (regardless of sub-discipline).

Social media

Online, we attempted to host a series of discussions on social media – these were less successful than the face-to-face events, but did encourage a few people to ask what philosophers of education actually do. Just as well there is a book of answers on that one (thanks, Claudia et al).

Thanks to the Society for fuelling the week with coffee, hot chocolate and biscuits (we who got fat salute you…). Thanks also to the organisers: Harriet Pattison (Liverpool Hope), Martin Gough (Liverpool), Chris Hanley (Manchester Met), and to Richard Budd (Lancaster/North West Higher Education Research Group) for regional advertising of the events. ■

Those interested in joining us to celebrate World Philosophy Day 2020, please get in touch: rdavies15@uclan.ac.uk

Reports

Philosophy in schools

Laura D'Olimpio
University of Birmingham

There have been some wonderful developments in the field of Philosophy in Schools, which promotes the teaching of philosophy and ethics in primary and secondary schools. Here are a few highlights from the past 12 months.

New home for the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*

In 2018, the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*, the official journal of the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations (FAPSA), kicked off with a special issue (Vol 5, No 1), comprising seven invited articles that addressed the foundational question of why philosophy should be taught in schools. Guest edited by Michael Hand (University of Birmingham), the papers make a cumulative and convincing argument for why philosophy should be taught across the pre-tertiary educational curriculum.

In 2019, the *Journal of Philosophy in Schools* is moving to a new home. With both editors (Laura D'Olimpio and Andrew Peterson) now at the University of Birmingham, the journal will become the University of Birmingham's first online, open access journal (housed by Ubiquity Press).

With the unanimous support of the Editorial Board and the FAPSA Council, this move is a positive development, and will help to raise the journal's profile and to further the cause of teaching philosophy to young people and extending philosophy beyond the academy.

A School Certificate in Philosophy

John Taylor from Cranleigh Grammar School in the UK has launched a School Certificate in Philosophy, supported by A.C. Grayling.

See the New College of the Humanities website: https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/study/school-certificate/

Philosophy on the curriculum?

The next challenge is to try to get philosophy added to the National Curriculum in the UK, particularly in the form of a Philosophy GCSE.

See John Taylor's 2015 opinion piece 'What would be the benefit of a philosophy GSCE?': https://schoolsweek.co.uk/what-would-be-the-benefit-of-a-philosophy-gcse/

'Philosophy in Schools: Enriched Curriculum, Enriched Lives' organisers and presenters (above L–R): Joshua Forstenzer, Laura D'Olimpio, Michael Hand, Pete Worley, Steve Bramall, Angie Hobbs, Emma Worley

Also making the case for philosophy on the school curriculum, Angie Hobbs (Sheffield University) organised a one-day conference on 19 November at the RSA in London to coincide with World Philosophy Day. Featuring high-profile speakers, 'Philosophy in Schools: Enriched Curriculum, Enriched Lives' was targeted at politicians and policy-makers.

Philosothons arrive in the UK

In more good news, philosothons have arrived in the UK! A philosothon is a competitive event for schools that is designed to give training and experience of communities of inquiry into big questions. Check out the 5-minute video explainer at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nm0kwNVPxWs (filmed in picturesque Perth, Western Australia, birthplace of the philosothon).

The Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford University has been awarded $233,000 by Templeton Religion Trust to expand philosothons in the UK (www.ianramseycentre.info/philosothon-expansion-in-the-uk).

Over the next two years, teacher training and regional philosothons will be held in Cambridge, Gateshead, London, Manchester, Oxford, the South-West and Scotland. The winning groups at these events will then be invited to participate in a national event in London.

PhilPapers

It is important that the Philosophy in Schools movement establishes strong relationships with philosophers and their associated professional bodies. To this end (and thanks to the efforts of Maughn Gregory from Montclair State University, USA), we now have a Philosophy for Children biography on PhilPapers: https://philpapers.org/browse/philosophy-for-children ■

Reports

PESGB writing retreat

Oli Belas
University of Bedfordshire

A fourth writing retreat was held this year with funding from the PESGB on 2–4 September 2019 at Madingley Hall, the country house venue that is home to Cambridge University's extramural division, with five participants.

The Society recognises that academics with squeezed research hours on their workloads are short of time to initiate, consolidate and/or complete research projects. The retreat aims to give a small group of people a chance to help them kick-start projects, or complete some reading, thinking or writing in a congenial and scholarly atmosphere with like-minded colleagues.

The retreat was organised by the Development Committee and co-ordinated by Oli Belas. Feedback was positive, and very much in line with that from previous cohorts. Repeatedly, participants say that Madingley Hall is an excellent environment, conducive to academic work (peaceful, comfortable, suitably isolated from the "real world"), and it is agreed that the environment is crucial to the success of the writing retreat.

Madingley Hall

Repeatedly, too, participants comment on collegiality and congeniality: every time the retreat has run, the group has got on well, offering space to others as and when it is needed as well as friendly informal support.

Conversations to do not only with the research itself but also with working habits and institutional aspects of academic life were shared, and these took place more or less formally – sometimes as a group in the shared workspace, sometimes while imbibing the spirit of Capability Brown and taking an Austenesque turn around the grounds.

People were free to work in their rooms, but also had access to the Stewart Room, a common workspace which everyone enjoyed (it's a lovely work environment and a good library). The retreat is relatively unstructured; it allows individuals to work in ways that suit them, while knowing that there's a supportive group on hand.

Having very few conditions attached to the retreat might well be why attendees in the past have found it such a productive couple of days. Of course, there's nothing to stop individuals from arranging semi-formal reading groups, writing workshops, and so on, once the retreat has started. ■

Future retreats will be advertised through email and on the website, where application forms will be available.

Reports

Branch activity

A glimpse through the Events section of the PESGB website will show how much activity is going on in the branches (see page 6 for a full list of branches). Indeed, it might be said that the branches are the backbone of the Society's activities, as the following article illustrates.

A year in the life of PESGB Bedford

Neil Hopkins
neil.hopkins@beds.ac.uk

This year has been another busy and productive year for the Bedford branch. Oli Belas and I (as co-secretaries) have worked hard to attract teachers in the local area who are engaged in research, and undergraduate and postgraduate students with an interest in philosophy of education.

Oli, as unit co-ordinator of the 'Philosophy of Education' unit on the BA Education Studies at the University of Bedfordshire, has been particularly successful in encouraging students to come along to the seminars.

I sit on teacher research groups in Bedford and Huntingdonshire to promote the work of the PESGB for practitioners in relation to classroom practice (and to identify issues and areas of interest for future PESGB Bedford seminars). What has been really heartening is evidence of students and teachers using the seminars to network and explore ideas that they want to take forward in classroom practice.

We have also been effective at using Eventbrite to advertise our events on social media (especially Twitter, email and LinkedIn), to reach those who are interested in what we do. Our Eventbrite site is: www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/pesgb-bedford-6070108391

Branch seminars

We have been really fortunate in having a superb range of speakers in 2019, analysing many aspects of philosophy of education. We aimed to have an interesting mix of valuable research being undertaken by colleagues at the University of Bedfordshire alongside external speakers from the PESGB community who are researching important new work in the field of philosophy of education. ▸ page 24

The 2019 branch seminars were:

- 'Education's love triangle': David Aldridge, Brunel University (February 2019)
- 'Navigating the ethics of a buyer's market in higher education': Claire Skea, University of Edinburgh (March 2019);
- 'Bodies of work': Oli Belas, University of Bedfordshire, and Lewis Stockwell, University of Hertfordshire (May 2019);
- 'Threshold concepts: The right tool for school curriculum design?': Gareth Bates, University of Bedfordshire (June 2019);
- 'Understanding assessment issues and practice': Mary Richardson, UCL Institute of Education (October 2019); and
- 'Philosophical considerations when seeking to educate for sustainable development': John Huckle, independent researcher (November 2019).

Oli and I are in the process of putting together seminars for 2020, and are always open to colleagues in philosophy of education approaching us with potential ideas and themes. ■

"These seminars have been invaluable for me ... as a student it has enabled me to understand the educational landscape in more detail and discuss these with teachers in the field."
An undergraduate student

"PESGB Bedford is a flagship for the University. Without it, the University's presence for teachers interested in research in the region would be significantly diminished."
An experienced teacher

"It is great to see at Bedford international figures of note in the field of philosophy of education."
A university academic

Further information on Neil Hopkins' work can be found on the PESGB website on the link to Author Interviews:
https://www.philosophy-of-education.org/publications/author-interview-neil-hopkins.html

Articles

Inspecting school curriculum intentions: the price of consistency

Andrew Davis
Durham University

In the latest school inspection framework, Ofsted scrutinises *school curriculum intentions*.

Ofsted's Heather Fearn (Inspector Curriculum and Professional Development lead), blogged about 'intent' in July 2019 under the heading, 'Busting the "intent" myth':[1]

... intent is about the 'substance of education': what do you want pupils to know? If your school is not doing so well in reading, mathematics, geography or religious education, then how strong is the curriculum in each of these subjects? Does it contain the right knowledge in the right order? Is the curriculum providing pupils with the building blocks of what they need to know and be able to do to succeed in each subject? ... we're talking about how ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced, how broad and balanced and inclusive the curriculum is.

And here is a quotation from the Inspection Framework itself: "Inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life".[2]

When different inspectors agree, inspections are reliable. Were inspectors to concentrate on data such as test and exam results, high reliability levels would be reasonably easy to achieve. Given the continuing 'high stakes' nature of the process, good levels of reliability are crucial. An inspection outcome can put the very future of a school at risk, so unreliable verdicts cannot be fair.

However, I now show that Ofsted's latest inspection framework threatens inspection reliability and that the way in which Ofsted must be countering this threat, whether overtly or otherwise, brings with it some significant problems of its own. ▸ page 26

1
'Busting the ''intent'' myth', 1 July 2019, https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/author/heather-fearn/

2
Ofsted (May 2019) *The Education Inspection Framework*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf

> An inspection outcome can put the very future of a school at risk, so unreliable verdicts cannot be fair

Fearn's language is riddled with value words, including "how *strong* is the curriculum", "the *right* knowledge", "*ambitious*", "*coherently* planned and sequenced", "*broad and balanced*", "*need to know*". The inspection framework speaks of "cultural capital". And that is surely how it should be. Education is a value-ridden enterprise.

But now we come to a bit of a snag. We don't all agree about these values. Take the term 'broad'. What does this mean in terms of curriculum? Here are some possible interpretations. Academic and practical? That sounds good, but how much of each? What counts as academic anyway? Dead men's literature and contemporary writing by a diverse range of contributors? Again, this sounds sensible, but how much time should each of these have? Is equal time the obvious answer here? How should we select from the vast array of possibilities? Humanities and sciences? High culture and contemporary 'popular' culture?

Of knowledge and cultural capital, the framework says, quoting the National Curriculum: "the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement".

Now, no one should need reminding that "cultural capital" is open to a range of interpretations, many of them deeply contentious. Moreover, not all human "achievements" command universal respect.

Here is one obvious step that Ofsted can take to ensure reliability. Indeed, I cannot see what other policy could possibly work. Somewhere within the training of their inspectors, however subtly embedded, Ofsted will have to stipulate the values that will inform their verdicts.

Otherwise, one inspector's verdict might well differ from another's. But on what authority could they make these stipulations? What could justify their choice of values? Has our democracy somehow given them the right to do this?

For instance, let's think about the "right knowledge" in, say, mathematics and what pupils "need to know". You could probably find a consensus about the "basics" in arithmetic. Though even here, people are divided about the extent to which these simply consist of known number facts, rather than the facts being both known and embedded in a richer understanding of the underlying concepts. Beyond those basics, people question whether everyone really needs to know about calculus, geometry and algebra, and even argue about the kind of justification that would be relevant. Talk of the intrinsic value of maths 'for its own sake' may not appeal to some. So do we only allow functional or instrumental justification for maths curriculum content, in the absence of which the offending content need not be covered? Why would we limit justifications for maths content in this fashion? Do we restrict possible justifications for the content of the music or arts curriculum in the same way?

> "Somewhere within the training of their inspectors, however subtly embedded, Ofsted will have to stipulate the values that will inform their verdicts"

You may think I exaggerate the range of opinions among our fellow citizens about what constitutes a 'quality' curriculum. Yet, even if we do agree about many of the relevant values, I doubt that Ofsted knows what we agree about. I suspect that, instead, they are taking their value cues from the Department for Education. Ofsted must be doing *something* to ensure reliability. Should the DfE's values exclusively inform Ofsted's verdicts on schools' curriculum intentions? If that *is* what is happening, schools are entitled to a clear account of these values.

Ofsted could retort that they are not, in fact, doing what I claim, that they merely monitor their independent inspectors for reliability and that I underestimate the professionalism and expertise of these inspectors.

I can only reply that if inspections under the new regime are reliable, the values underpinning this impressive performance must be coming from somewhere and being transmitted to inspectors. On the face of it, the normative language that pervades framework documents – and the Ofsted blog with which I began – is open to *a legitimate range of interpretations*.

If inspections are reliable, this range must somehow have been set to one side. But how, and with what possible justification? Schools – and the public at large – are owed an explanation. ■

Articles

Strangers in paradise: denoting inclusion from philosophy of education

There were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 1927

Anna Pagès
Ramon Llull University, Spain

The word 'inclusion' has become a kind of magic password that we can easily enter to log in and gain access to educational settings, even though we are never wholly sure what we mean by the word. Meanwhile, the current use of the word 'inclusion' should raise concerns, given our foundational misunderstanding when speaking of inclusion as an *ideal for all* in education.

As far back as *Emile or on Education* (1762), Rousseau pointed out the problem inherent in attaching excessive importance to educational ideals. In the end, ideals can become enshrined as a sort of myth, one that can prevent us from adopting the sort of broader and more inclusive perspective that is needed in order to analyse reality. We might have fallen into this trap with the signifier *inclusion*.

This does not mean that we must eradicate the core idea of inclusion. On the contrary, we are suggesting here that we should rethink the notion of inclusion, introducing what Russell (1905) called 'a denotation'. Russell drew a distinction between things we know thanks to *direct acquaintance with them* and things we only reach *by means of denoting phrases*. Might inclusion fall into the latter camp?

Denoting inclusion from a philosophical point of view would mean introducing some nuances to the dominant theoretical approach in education. A more relevant denotation would be to replace the term 'inclusion' with the notion of school *belonging* (or *sense of belonging*). Inclusion as a practice – from an empirical perspective – is not equivalent to belonging as an understanding of the facts. Philosophy of education can help to shed light on this particular issue, by explaining how children truly forge ties, not with a generalised notion of an ideal school, but with their own ideas of school as a place to belong to.

Today, inclusion should be viewed as a denoting question, rather than as an ideal to be attained. In Russell's terms, it is something we cannot be *totally acquainted with*. We need, then, to interrogate inclusion from the outside, attempting to articulate a different discourse founded in the field of philosophy of education.

The *Index for Inclusion* designed by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (2002), has been applied as a major tool to evaluate and assess different educational institutions, in order to improve inclusive practices. This a most valuable document. The *Index for Inclusion* sets out three dimensions, which are supposed to permeate the school experience:

- producing inclusive policies;
- evolving inclusive practices; and
- creating inclusive cultures.

Creating inclusive cultures

In this denoting exercise, we want to highlight the third dimension: creating inclusive cultures. What is a culture? As Clifford Geertz wrote in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973):

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I *take culture to be those webs*, and the analysis of it to be therefore … *an interpretive one in search of meaning*.
>
> (Geertz, 1973: 5)

“What is school offering as a frame for human understanding?”

Inclusion constitutes a major touchstone in contemporary educational discourse. If we apply the notion of culture as a relevant search for meaning, to the analysis of inclusion, we must denote the word as developing other nuances. At the core of our concerns should be the meaning that every child gives to the act of attending school every day, to the learning activities she shares with others. This is the main reason why those of us in the field of philosophy of education must also turn to hermeneutics as a theory of understanding, as a way of getting inside the inner experience of being at school and discovering the multiplicity of meanings suspended in *webs of significance*.

In this sense, when attending school, all children are *strangers*, because their basic endeavour consists of finding their own way as they build strong ties with the institution and with others (teachers and peers). They also define their relationship with the broader task of learning something in that place. The primary challenge we face today is not so much to understand whether school practices are inclusive (although this is also important in policy terms), but to examine the extent to which the school experience is meaningful. In other words, we must ask: what is school offering as a frame for human understanding? ▸ page 30

Is the school encompassing the multiplicity of significances that every child inevitably must attribute to living and learning there?

I remember a ten-year-old autistic child once saying that he liked going to school very much, because there he could learn things that he already knew. What a fantastic way for this boy to express this neat inversion of the significance of daily school life! Like this boy, every single child might have a different response, not necessarily related to the standardised and officially accepted idea that going to school means the same for everyone. The real meaning of school *belonging* lies in a sudden denotation, a surprise, a previously undiscovered revelation. It's narrative and it's personal.

The major philosopher in hermeneutics, H.G. Gadamer, delved into this question of understanding in his most significant work, *Truth and Method* (1960/1989). Gadamer writes that, through understanding, "insights are acquired and truths known". In this paradise of planned inclusion, where everything is supposed to be absolutely inclusive and therefore perfect, the insight to be acquired might be a dawning realisation of the strangeness represented by the impossibility of finding this perfect fit. The truth to be known might be the unveiling of a hidden detail.

Inclusion would then be a more fully human experience, by virtue of not being an entirely real fact. There is always something at school that escapes our notice: a subtle experience, a small detail in an activity or a conversation from the children's point of view; in short, an outlier that we, as educators, teachers or parents, have not yet identified, because we are blinded by our obsession with the search for inclusion as an educational ideal.

When this ideal of inclusion occupies all the space, it can prevent us from reflecting more deeply. Perhaps philosophy of education can help us, by denoting inclusion and posing it as a distinctive form of knowledge? ■

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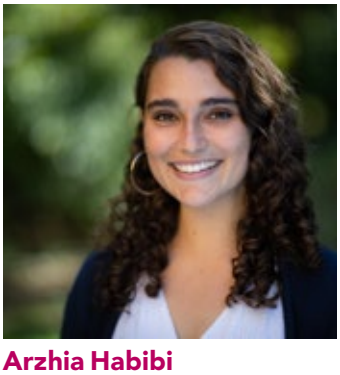
Articles

A think piece for global/world citizenship education



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Where do particularity and universality meet, when we begin to delve into the Pandora's Box of global citizenship education and global citizenship? How do we carve out space in global discourses for rooted particularities in these normative, aspirational and conflicted discourse spaces, which are skewed towards Eurocentrism (Parmenter, 2011)?

Calls to contextualise the debates of global citizenship and global citizenship education are present in literatures in both the English and Chinese languages (Ho, 2018; Liu and Zhang, 2018; Parmenter, 2011; Yan, 2017). Beyond the de-territorialised discussions, then, how are we to know, imagine or experiment with what these perspectives and practices of global citizenship education and global citizenship may be, if we never ground ourselves in human conversations and experiences? ▸ page 32

These questions have been at the heart of my reflections as I have sought to navigate the divides and convergences in both the theoretical and empirical literatures of global citizenship and global citizenship education. As such, I have been on a journey to cultivate PhD research which focuses on these grounded perspectives and practices towards the idea of global citizenship education in a Chinese context, and the ways in which student and academic actors navigate the layers of the local, national and global, when constructing meaning around global citizenship and global citizenship education in higher education.

Chinese discourses of world citizenship education have slightly different contours and formations than the Global North and English language debates. I say 'world citizenship education', as this is the terminology used by the majority of Chinese scholars: '*shijie gongmin jiaoyu*' 世界公民教育.

At first glance, Chinese scholars discussing the topic seem to focus on the purposes of moral education, couching the development of world citizenship education in socialist values for the purpose of nation building, veiled in political rhetoric and state agendas concerning 'harmony'. Yet a closer rapport with the voices embodying, enacting, navigating and questioning these ideas yields something slightly different. Indeed, to subsume all ideas, aspirations and questions regarding the building of an interconnected, unified, just and harmonious world – and one's place within it – into a solely political agenda would neglect to acknowledge the cultural and philosophical intricacies of the Chinese context.

Moreover, recent pilot interviews with Chinese students have opened up a landscape concerning one's local practices and conduct outside the formal classroom setting. Navigating global citizenship in ways which are tangible to them, a couple of students spoke of rapport with ethnic minority classmates and opportunities to interact with diverse faith groups and perspectives. Perhaps these practices are indeed ways in which Chinese students are constructing and evolving a meaning-making process of global citizenship and global citizenship education.

I am reminded of certain Confucian philosophies, in which the concept of '*tianxia*' 天下 ('all under heaven') begins with the cultivation of one's moral qualities, and subsequently shapes the relations with the family, community and with distant strangers.

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All this being said, tensions nonetheless exist when these voices reflect upon the educational experiences in China, which consistently emphasises a love of the country and the system. These individuals are deeply aware of the cultural dynamics that such socialisation processes have produced. Yet when it comes to the 'education' in global citizenship education, contemplation beyond the formal higher education processes that Chinese students are engaged in suggests that extra-curricular activities, relationships and independent explorations are often *more important* than what is learnt in class.

This idea has been discussed by Lawy and Biesta (2006), Reddy (2018), Jiang and Xu (2014) and Zhang and Fagan (2016), all of whom delineate differing sociocultural practices, whether they be participation in student societies, social media activities or relationships, as grounded methods to understand and experience citizenship.

As such, world citizenship for Chinese students can perhaps be considered as twofold. It is firstly relational: experienced through the webs of community, which are international, local and digital. It is secondly situational: dependent upon students' access to monetary and human resources, as well as their opportunities for international mobility.

It is one of the curious paradoxes that the more we speak of universal values without any perceptiveness, sensitivity or openness to differing local perspectives and practices, the less likely we will be able to have any effective form of global citizenship education (Hatley, 2019).

Perhaps the more particular and receptive we can be to what is local – and in this case, the perspectives and practices of those in Chinese higher education – the more we may be able to reshape and reorganise what could be universal. ■

Articles

Brexit is an educational issue

Jack Bicker
UCL Institute of Education

Famously, depending on your outlook, uttering 'May you live in interesting times' can be thought of as offering either a blessing or a curse. Either way, the somewhat tumultuous political discourse that has dominated life in the United Kingdom over the last three years or so does at least, perhaps, guide us towards a new working-definition of 'interesting'.

There were likely many good, and well thought out, reasons to vote to stay in or leave the European Union, and the UK's eventual decision to leave the EU will, I imagine, have very little direct bearing on how we think about education. The cultural phenomenon that is 'Brexit', however, has shaped a national reality, in which important questions about education – and education's role in the ongoing formation of our shared civic and political communities – have come to the fore.

Of course, there are important practical discussions to be had about the extent to which UK public education does, or doesn't, prepare its citizens to critically understand the EU's democratic mechanisms, the EU's representative institutions and decision-making processes, the role of parliament and our judges, or the economic pros and cons of being a leading participant in the world's largest trading bloc. However, now that the final decision has been made, more pressing – I believe – are different kinds of questions regarding how we think about, and discern, our common lives together.

> "Freedom comes from thinking and reasoning beyond the limited vision of the world that forms the backdrop of our everyday and inherited reality"

How, for example, should our education system engage with nationalism and a certain kind of increasingly reified – and therefore exclusionary – national identity? In what ways should both the content and conceptual tools offered by our history curriculum help inform our constructions of Britishness? Should history offer resources to aid our collective imagination towards some point beyond our current horizons of identity? How prepared is the UK's education system to help its citizens navigate the complexities of a not-so-new-anymore digital reality that is itself 'educational', and which has demonstrated its capacity to shape and channel our ability to think, infer and reason politically? What value is there to a curriculum that works to decentre itself, and which seeks to move us away from the non-recognition of our cultural others, and towards an openness of mind through which we are encouraged to acknowledge the full human dignity of people who fall outside the category of 'those who look and sound like us'?

If any of these (indicative) questions sound remote from the Brexit debate, then I encourage you to Google three words: 'Nigel', 'Farage', and 'poster'. You'll likely be offered a photo of the then UKIP Party leader standing proudly in front of an election poster carrying the image of hundreds of refugees and displaced persons about to cross the border between Croatia and Slovenia, which is emblazoned with the tagline 'Breaking Point: the EU has failed us'. There is so much that is morally wrong about the poster, be it the demonisation of refugees, the deliberate dehumanisation of those persons that it depicts, the echo of actual anti-Semitic images used by the Nazis, the exploitation of existing discourses of fear and othering in regard to black and brown bodies … the list goes on.

Indeed, the otherwise morally supple Conservative minister Michael Gove confessed to the BBC that he "shuddered" on first seeing it, and the then chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, Yvette Cooper, suggested that the poster and surrounding discourse had contributed to a rise in instances of racist hate crime. Yet Nigel Farage himself has suggested that this poster played a major role in his winning the referendum. And my intuition is that he's right about this.

The sociologist and philosopher Tia DeNora, writing in 2003, beautifully refers to reification and objectifying modes of thought as occurring when actors 'fit or make sense of the here and now in terms of the there and then'. Similarly, Dewey (1934) warned against 'recurrence [and] complete uniformity' as well as against a kind of 'anaesthetic' in experience that dims curiosity and inquiry. And we don't have to trip too far into classic British philosophy of education literature to read Hirst writing that 'man no longer needs to live in terms of deceptive appearances' when, with the 'right use of reason …' our experiences 'can be given shape and perspective by … knowledge that is ultimately real' (Hirst, 1972).

What these somewhat disparate thinkers offer us, is a vision of freedom that doesn't come from voting for fewer hijab wearers or Polish plumbers, or for a nostalgic return to the reassuring myth of superiority that is firmly rooted in tales of empire – as some leave voters were encouraged to do.

Instead, freedom comes from thinking and reasoning beyond the limited vision of the world that forms the backdrop of our everyday and inherited reality. Freedom arises when we begin to make full use of our capacity – as cognitive agents – to collectively discern, test and evaluate, model and then remodel again the language, concepts and possibilities of our shared existence. Robust, critical, analytical, historically informed, and perhaps dialectical thinking can get us there, and education is a central forum for such a development.

Brexit *is* an educational issue, and we live in very interesting times. ■

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Creative writing

This section of the Newsletter was new last year for PESGB members who write pieces other than in academic register or who engage in other creative pursuits.

If you have an idea for a short story or poem, or have photos or drawings you would like to share, please get in touch through: steph@sasevents.co.uk

Contributions should be linked to philosophy and/or education in some respect, but the parameters of these areas are set relatively broadly, so as to include as much of your creative work as possible.

Law enforcement

by **Meg P. Brembess**

Looking back, I should have just said no.

It was past midnight when he rang. Elena and I were asleep. 'Look,' he began, 'Corrigan's won't do. I need it by mid-December. That gives you two months.'

Kearney was editing papers by leading philosophers, having twisted their arms to write on policing. He'd rejected the Corrigan piece on 'Interrogation', as it had nothing on police procedures but spent 8,000 words debunking the RC confessional.

I dropped everything and made the deadline. It was my first publication. I knew it lacked depth, but was flattered to be alongside Cornelius Bazan, J.T. Gilbert and Tom Beecham. God, it was a struggle. I thought being in the force was tough, but it had nothing on working in K's Department of Police Theory at the Academy in Hendon.

It was then the bad dreams began. I was tied to a chair in the cellars below B---- police station, knowing any minute I'd face another going over by that bastard in a hood with two Dobermans. Six nights in a row.

The letter in the *Telegraph* didn't help. It was from a student at Essex Police College: "The final straw was when they expanded the Library to cover half the parade ground. I'd *not* joined the police to sit in libraries and burrow away on the concept of sameness in identity parades. I am not joking – I wish I were."

Next morning, the college principal was on Radio 4. Policing was a complex activity and recruits had to understand the ethical and sociological bases of their work.

'That's all very well, Dr Penfold, but do you seriously mean to say you can't become an effective police officer unless you can dissect the concept of the fingerprint?'

The fuss in the media died down after a day or two. Then the tabloids came back for more. 'Cogitating coppers – who needs them?', asked the *Star*. 'Get the boys back on the streets. We need professionals, not professors.'

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It was another of his 12.30 am phone calls. 'Look,' he began. 'We've a slot at the Joint Session. You and Chalmers from King's. At Kent, July. You've got six months.'

I couldn't sleep. The annual conference of *Mind and the Aristotelian Society*. The high point of the British philosophical year. Over a thousand participants. And K wanted me – me! – to fly the flag for the philosophy of policing ...

Next morning, he filled me in. 'You're talking on the concept of law enforcement. You can't get more basic than that.'

I spent the next couple of weeks trying to get a handle. Zilch in the philosophical literature. Police manuals had plenty on practicalities, but nothing on the idea itself.

I got nowhere. Law enforcement ... Enforcing the law ... Dealing with infringements of laws ... Making sure laws are obeyed ... I couldn't see which way to turn ... What was I doing, anyhow? What question was I trying to answer? What problem did I want to solve?

The Dobermans were straining on each side of the hooded bastard. The strap holding back the one on the left was frayed. The beast was tugging ...

Next morning, I called in at K's office, in poor shape.

'That's philosophy,' he said, not looking up from his typewriter. 'Creative confusion. It'll come. Just work away.'

'I *have* worked at it.'

'Look,' he said. 'Chalmers is teeing off. Go for the jugular.'

Chalmers sent me his piece at the end of March. I read it over and over again to see its structure. Once I'd found it, I'd know where to stick the knife.

I read it a hundred times. It was full of technical details. Its centrepiece was an example in full formal logic fig about the protection of rare birds. I can't tell you what its point was or what it had to do with law enforcement. The skeleton I'd hoped to find had collapsed into a heap of bones.

It was to be K's big day – the day he'd showcase the philosophy of policing to the philosophical world. At 11.30 am on Saturday July 9 at Darwin College in the University of Kent they'd all see that our subject had no less right than the philosophy of religion or science to a niche in the pantheon.

I had to do something. I picked away at Chalmers's paper, finding an inconsistency here, a conflation there. I devised three hypothetical interpretations of *possible* assumptions, each of which ...

... I'm losing you. The truth is I made what I could out of the broken sticks, old nails and bits of rope that lay around me. When I sent it in, just before the May deadline, I knew it was fifth-rate stuff.

The sleeplessness began again at the end of that month and went on through June. Whenever I at last dropped off, I'd see a lecture hall filling up with two or three hundred people. Cornelius Bazan came in and sat by Tom Beecham. Strawson himself was by the window. I was on the platform, sitting next to Chalmers. I desperately wanted to drink. I reached for the carafe of water. Empty. I woke in terror.

A Saturday morning in late June. I was in the market, queuing for cherries. Coming from the pet stall, a man was carrying bags of sunflower seeds. It was Chalmers. I'd no idea he lived near.

We went for a coffee. I told him about my struggles with his paper.

'You have all my sympathy,' he said, spooning up froth at the bottom of his cup. 'I took it on to help Kearney, but soon saw I'd sod all to say. What *can* you do with a concept like law enforcement, for fuck's sake? It was a non-starter. At least for *me*. But I knew *you'd* know how to get something out of it.'

'*Me*?' I said.

'I made things dense,' he went on. 'If you've nothing to say, first rule is: hide your tracks.'

'You made it *deliberately* obscure?'

'People skim-read,' he said. 'Chance of anyone seeing it for the drivel it is is minute.'

'You expected *me* to reply to a paper that you knew was rubbish? ▸ page 38

'Oh, I knew *you'd* be all right. It's bread and butter stuff for *you*.'

I got to Canterbury late on Friday July 8. I thought I'd have a sleepless night, but for once slept through. Cornelius Bazan was in front of me in the breakfast queue. He was smaller, more hunched up than in my nightmares. As he reached for the toast, he seemed about to say something to me. But he thought better of it.

After breakfast, I skipped the Presidential Address and lay on my bed, trying not to think about the next session. I couldn't face coffee and reached the hall just before the 11.30 start. People were looking around for the odd seat not taken. Cornelius Bazan was in the front row. Chalmers and I sat either side of Kearney as chair.

Four hundred sharp faces looked our way. K kicked off. He said how gratifying it was that the philosophy of policing was making its debut at a Joint Session. The concept of law enforcement was pivotal to the field. Significant new light on it was about to be shed.

We each read our papers and K opened things up to the floor. There was only one question. Chalmers gave a long answer, crammed with symbols. I didn't say a word. ■

A poem with a preface

by **Rose Bron**

I preface this poem with a bit of memory writing. I studied philosophy as an undergraduate at a time and place where philosophy was male and analytic. I didn't realise how these two factors were working to develop a sense of separation between the life of the mind and the life lived.

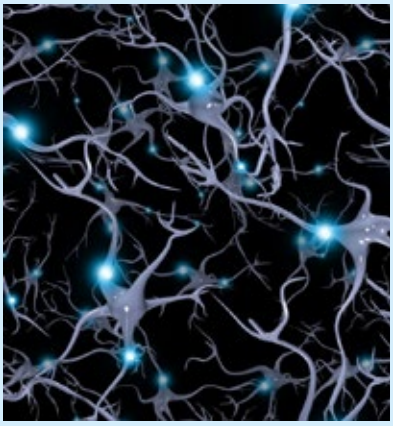
The weekly essays were like doing a crossword or Sudoku, a rational exercise, a case of dashing to the library to get the text before fellow students. In those days, I could dash and climb stairs two at a time. This was before Google Scholar and e-texts, when getting the books off the shelf could make a difference.

We argued about the problems of philosophy – free will and determinism, personal identity, perception. There were some excellent teachers. I summed them up at the time as mainly chaps in tweeds who smoked pipes. We drank sherry at their gatherings – male tutors with male perspectives doing analytic philosophy.

The two factors didn't impinge on my great enjoyment in the studies. Philosophy was wonderful. Where family and friends saw a problem with 'being argumentative', I discovered that philosophers could argue for a living and changed my main subject to philosophy in the first term.

Yet in all this intellectual enjoyment, something was not quite right. The texts, the discussions, the debates, the lectures, these didn't fit somehow with walking under the trees, crunching the leaves underfoot. French courses I took got me reading Sartre, and from there learning about phenomenology and the continental way of doing philosophy. Doing and being.

Don't get me wrong. I don't think there's a right way and a wrong way of doing philosophy – just a way of saying and being …



Solitary Confinement

The Problem of Personal Identity
pondered by gentleman Hume,
safe in the green of a book-lined mind,
is not to be taken seriously.
'Tis a consummation devoutly to be missed,
this thought-short-circuit,
this "it thinks therefore am I,
or is there someone else,
bracketed, becketted,
between the mirrors we don't see?"

The problem of personal identity,
as pondered in towers, in libraries, in studies,
is not to be taken lightly,
with comfort of paper, with pleasure of print,
where viewing the book on the lectern
we don't see mirrors on wall.
But put down the book and glance.
catch the mirrors not pass,
this is the Emergency in Case of Break Glass,
to witness in mirrors of others.
Else nowhere, lost, slid away,
slipped through the surface and drowned.
Safe from deflection of shattered perception,
we are saved in reflection.

PESGB conferences 2019

Undergraduate Summer School 2019

Theme: The aims of education

University of Birmingham, 2–4 September 2019

Jane Gatley
University of Birmingham

The summer school ran from Monday lunchtime to Wednesday lunchtime and included two evening meals as social events. Thirty-one undergraduates signed up for the summer school, and nine postgraduate mentors were accepted (out of 13 applicants). Participants had a wide range of academic backgrounds, but all shared an interest in education.

Our speakers were Michael Reiss, Carrie Winstanley, Kristjan Kristjansson, Ben Kotzee and Amanda Fulford. Michael and Kristjan talked about flourishing as the aim of education; Carrie spoke about thinking as an aim of education; Ben discussed knowledge transmission; and Amanda questioned the value of having aims for higher education.

Lively debate ensued about whether flourishing was clearly defined, whether the idea of flourishing was too broad, or how else the aims of education might be construed. Ben's talk caused a stir, as participants challenged whether knowledge transmission and constructivist pedagogies were incompatible, with many feeling that the two could be coherently combined. Amanda led the group to question how far talk of aims of education was constructive, and suggested that aims were likely to stifle – rather than guide – education.

> "We had difficulty in attracting applications. This is something that the PESGB as a society could work to address"

We were aiming to accept up to 45 undergraduate applicants, but we had difficulty in attracting applications. This is something that the PESGB as a society could work to address. While there are few undergraduate PESGB members, many of its members regularly work with undergraduates, and they could play a greater role in raising the profile of this excellent event.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, as comments made by participants illustrate:

- "Interesting, engaging and thought-provoking."
- "It was relevant to my own studies, and hearing others talk and debate has prompted me to research more."
- "I liked the controversy!"
- "It gave me ideas for my dissertation; [there were] some really well thought ideas and the opportunity for challenging them [was] great ... nice diversity of positions; interesting, engaging and thought-provoking ...". ■

Diana Murdoch opening the Pre-conference workshop

PESGB conferences 2019

Annual Student Pre-conference Workshop 2019

Theme: Transitions in academia: Writing a proposal, working with a supervisor, the REF

New College, Oxford, Friday, 29 March 2019

Lydia Townsend
UCL Institute of Education

Once again in 2019, New College, Oxford played host to the annual PESGB pre-conference workshop for students. Designed to help students make the most of the conference and to have their specific needs addressed, it attracted students at all levels of study. This was my third experience of the workshop, and I was very humbled to be able to experience it again.

The talks began with Diana Murdoch. She talked us through her experience of completing her PhD and the lessons it had taught her for completing research. She was unapologetic in her account and made no attempt to portray a romanticised view of study. Her honesty helped to foster a sense of solidarity among the group. I felt reassured, knowing that I was not the only person who had spent periods of my study struggling to complete basic tasks, or seemingly wasting time on work that I later rejected. Diana's talk took us beyond her personal experience and encouraged us to think about our own approaches to research. She presented the audience with different questions that it is useful to ask oneself whenever we are conducting an academic study. These questions helped us to question the merits and weaknesses of our own research, both academically and personally. ▸ page 42

Richard Pring took to the floor next. His approach was different to Diana's, choosing to speak without PowerPoint but instead from a few notes in his book. He talked of the ideal relationship between supervisor and student. His focus was on the type of attributes a student ought to look for in a supervisor. He emphasised that the supervisor ought to be truly able to critically engage with literature – not just someone who knows how to name-drop prominent authors. His approach emphasised the power that a student has in the relationship, which can be forgotten. His talk highlighted how differently universities approach supervision of students, and this theme continued into the discussions.

“Concerns about getting an academic post or a post-doc were mingled with questions about making the most of your supervisors”

Finally, Richard Smith spoke about the Research Excellence Framework (REF). He took the audience step by step through the REF process. He explained many of the misconceptions that exist about the REF and gave a compelling argument for its use. His focus was to demystify. He talked of his own experience in reading materials submitted for the REF and how fairness is ensured. This talk was greatly received by the audience and was an excellent addition to the programme. While digesting the messages after the talk, it struck me that this talk could do with being repeated to academics and policy-makers across the university sector. Richard Smith's account of the REF was so different from the account I had previously heard, that it has led me to question how much is understood about the REF by university staff.

What was particularly striking about these three speakers was their openness and passion. They made a considerable effort to help all in the room feel at ease and to welcome all those present into the folds of the Society. The speakers encouraged questioning and answered warmly. Each encouraged the students to contact them further, if they needed any help. Throughout the conference, I saw each of them actively seeking conversations with new members and students. To have someone invest in you and your academic career like this, when they have no obvious reason to, is surprising and bolsters your feeling of worth.

After each speaker, the students were invited to discuss the talk among themselves and then question the speakers. This introduced students nicely to the etiquette at PESGB events. It also gave us an opportunity to gather different perspectives on pursing academic study. The questions varied hugely in content, but largely reflected students' concerns about being prepared for what happens after completing graduate study. Concerns about getting an academic post or a post-doc were mingled with questions about making the most of your supervisors.

This workshop was an extremely worthwhile experience. I recommend it for students at any stage of their studies, and I hope that I will be able to attend again in 2020. ■

PESGB conferences 2019

Annual Conference 2019

New College, Oxford, 29–31 March 2019

The 2019 PESGB Annual Conference took place on 29–31 March. Each year, we award a number of bursaries to teachers to attend the conference. Here you can read about the conference experience of the 2019 bursary recipients: Greg McGuinness, Paul Moore-Bridger, Sonny Johnson, Molly Janz and Ciarán Caulfield.

Challenging and rewarding

Greg McGuinness

Why bother? This was one of the questions I faced, sitting in my first PESGB Annual Conference workshop, albeit a pre-conference one. While this was meant as an informative thought experiment that related, I later reassured myself, to writing a research proposal, I couldn't help but feel that it was a slightly pointed question about whether or not I should bother trying to engage with the academic material to be discussed over the weekend.

The moment I stepped onto the New College campus of Oxford University, I was immediately aware that I was somewhere far removed from what I had been in as a teacher not 24 hours before. The classroom was an environment that I was familiar in, with both experience and faith in my teaching ability that allowed me to feel comfortable as a leader in that space. Surrounded by academics, however – many of whom are at the top of the field that I had only begun to partake studies in – I had the jarring realisation that this was now not the case. The phrase 'fish out of water' garnered a refreshed, and uncomfortably intimate, meaning in my head.

However, what else was I meant to expect? In signing up for the conference, I was under no illusion that it was going to be a challenge for me, personally as well as intellectually. Reverting back to the role of student rather than teacher, I was made acutely aware of what knowledge I had (or lacked), and was faced with challenging the conception I had of myself that had been fostered over the past six years. Each day deepened my knowledge and understanding of the many areas of study within philosophy of education, and I found each talk both challenging and rewarding. The ever-flowing wine that was available at the end of each day really helped with this process. ▸ page 44

Pádraig Hogan, Maynooth University, Conference Chair

I did, however, want to push myself and try at least to ask one question per talk I attended. The idea I had was that through participating in these educational spaces, I would feel more confident being in them. This, I thought, was pretty sound logic. There were rules, though, as I had an intense fear of being that one person who proves to the rest of the room that they are indeed stupid questions. Generally, I limited myself to raising a hand only in talks where I didn't recognise the person speaking. This was similarly the case where I felt that the person speaking had written no more than one book. Suffice to say, though, these moments ended up being few and far between.

Of all of the talks that I attended, all of which were fascinating – and all containing at least one doctoral student mentioning Heidegger and the nature of Being – Jan Derry's keynote speech on cognitive load theory seemed particularly effective at highlighting my own ignorance. When describing the concept of systematicity as "the idea that in order to possess one concept, it is necessary to possess many", the only thought that ran through my head was that I had neither.

Although these difficulties were ever present during my time at the conference, I still felt that it was of huge benefit to attend. I learned to say things like, "I think you'll find …" and "there seems to be two separate arguments happening here …", and I was offered invaluable opportunities to reflect on my practice as an educator. These powerful moments allowed me to think about my purpose within a school, what I wanted my teaching to achieve, and how I could contribute effectively to an equitable school environment.

> "These powerful moments allowed me to think about my purpose within a school"

However, on the train back to London after leaving the conference, I was struck with the realisation that these thoughts will only make me question more thoroughly what is being implemented within my school and the reasons given as to why. In management's eyes, this could only lead to me being seen as one terrible employee as a result.

Until next year. ■

Paul Moore-Bridger

Word-spinning and stargazing

They say you should never meet your heroes.

Having spent a hugely enjoyable 2017/18 doing an MSc in the Philosophy of Education at Edinburgh, reading and hearing from the likes of David Hansen, Jan Derry, Joseph Dunne and many more of the keynote speakers and delegates at the 2019 PESGB Annual Conference, the prospect of my own attendance at the gathering filled me with feelings of excitement and trepidation. My master's had helped me reflect on, and get a better understanding of, my 15 years of practice in teaching philosophy and religious education in English and Scottish schools. I had returned to the classroom refreshed, with a much more coherent sense of my professional identity. After a couple of long terms back in the thick of it, I was hoping that the conference would provide similar invigoration.

Questions and comments keep coming

We plunged right in with David Hansen's opening keynote speech on 'The call to teach'. From then on, it was a breathless schedule of talks, symposia and workshops, interspersed with good coffee and sumptuous meals, until Michael Bonnet led us, exhausted and elated, to the cool shade of an imagined beech-grove (we need to 'ecologize' education) by way of a finale. What was it all about? I am not quite sure – but what I took from it all was the importance of philosophy in helping educators to think about how best to conceive and describe their practice. Hansen's talk urged teachers and teacher educators to cultivate and bear witness to the ethical core of teacher professionalism.

Other events I attended re-imagined time, how to live in an equilibrium between past and future, the possibility of engendering epiphanies, the desirability of dwelling a little longer in the metaphorical darkness and the more obviously practical questions of which educational goods should be prioritised by policy-makers, and whether the community of inquiry was an effective method for morally educating children.

Questions kept bubbling up in my mind, and I asked several, although my meaning was frequently some distance from what I had intended (perhaps I was a bit star-struck). Happily, all the speakers were polite to such contributions and very open to further discussion over coffee or in the bar. It seems that one's philosophy of education idols do not have feet of clay. ▸ page 46

Over dinner with fellow teacher scholars (Diana, our friendly mentor and guide having managed to corral us together) we discussed – briefly adopting the manner of those grudging sceptics of philosophy since time immemorial – what possible relevance all this word-spinning and stargazing might have for our concrete, classroom-bound realities. We concluded that if no one was thinking hard about how things might and ought to be, then they were doomed to remain the same.

Inspired by the visions we had been given, we resolved to set up our own school forthwith. Regrettably, over New College after-dinner port some disagreements over ideal performance management structures broke out …

These, and the other myriad quotidian concerns, were soon drowned out as we swelled the ranks of the conference delegates bellowing out songs round a grand piano, troubles forgotten, our united voices raised in (some sort of) harmony to a better educational world. ■

Sonny Johnson

New ideas and perspectives

Writing this piece some weeks after attending the PESGB conference highlights that it is still very much within my thought process.

Having just finished an intensely busy week before the conference, I had not had time to read the articles that corresponded to the scheduled talks. However, I soon found out that simply attending talks that interested me was a great way of accessing new ideas and perspectives which I had not previously experienced. Some of these have already inspired me to find out more (Kant's antinomies of pure reason); others have directly impacted on my planning for lessons (Bonnett's talk on 'Transcendent nature, sustainability, and "ecologizing" education').

> “A great way of accessing new ideas and perspectives”

Personally, the greatest element of the weekend – and why I shall be returning to the conference next year – was the opportunity to meet and converse with other like-minded peers from very different backgrounds, yet all with a passion for education and discussing ideas. In fact, since the conference I am still in contact with some fellow attendees. We plan to maintain a space for continuing the spirit of the conference and therefore developing ourselves as educators through productive discussion. ■

Molly Janz

A rare opportunity to step back and examine practice

On the morning of Friday, 29 March, my Year 9s wrote their final assessment for a scheme of work on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. For nearly all of a double period they were focused and silent, grappling with Antony's funeral speech and the theme of power. Occasionally, a hand would go up. "Could you say that power in the play is parasitic?" "Is it alright if I say that Portia is trying to be masculine, because that's the only way she can be virtuous and stoic, and that's how you become powerful?" It was one of the happiest lessons of the year so far, as I could see almost everyone thinking hard, trying to say exactly what they meant, struggling to express difficult ideas. And I was thrilled by their questions: I could hardly believe I was being asked permission to say such things! Clearly, students were not just repeating what others (including I) had said in class, but were fighting through to something new of their own, using words and concepts we had learned together.

My excitement that I was leaving at lunchtime for the conference in Oxford was expanded by a kind of joy. This, I thought. This kind of thinking, this profound human good, is exactly what I want for them. And it is something that school has the particular power to give.

> "I have rarely felt as affirmed in what I do"

It is a kind of thinking rarely possible for teachers, however. On a daily basis, I think about my lessons, my resources, my classroom management, my relationships with colleagues, but have to fight to carve out time to stand back and think in depth about any aspect of my work. Even in my recent teacher training (and even more so since) I often missed rigorous examination of aims, of ways of thinking, and of structures of thought, or purposeful, deep conversation with colleagues, in which we examine more than a mark scheme, more than 'strategies' or policies.

What a supreme pleasure, therefore, to be surrounded by people whose role it is to think deeply, but who also understand what a classroom is like. David Hansen's opening keynote, in which he spoke about the vocation to teach, and the importance of bearing witness to teachers' work, was unexpectedly moving. I have rarely felt as affirmed in what I do. And this grateful sense of the importance of both what happens in the classroom, of what I do day to day, and of this rare opportunity to step back and examine that practice continued through the weekend. ▸ page 48

Everyone was extraordinarily friendly and open; each talk was followed by a well-chaired discussion, in which contributions were welcomed from everyone. Philosophical conversation continued over lavish meals, on the traditional Saturday morning run, and well into the night (for those so inclined!).

Highlights were undoubtedly the keynotes – Jan Derry's examining of fault lines in cognitive load theory and Michael Bonnett's on nature and ecologizing education, in addition to David Hansen's – and, especially, the spontaneous conversations. Those with fellow teachers stand out particularly. One evening, as Paul Moore-Bridger mentions on page 46, we designed an ideal school (not without disagreement!). Another evening, a recent episode with a recalcitrant Year 11 class of mine became the starting point for a remarkably fruitful consideration of 'teacher anger', and when (controlledly) losing one's temper with a class might actually be the best thing to do.

On Sunday afternoon, I left feeling refreshed (though also exhausted), inspired, and beyond delighted not only that such a community exists, but also that more teachers will have the opportunity of attending future conferences. I will be looking forward to the next one all year. ■

Keynote questions, Holywell Music Room

Ciarán Caulfield

Blue sky thinking

I was delighted to have the opportunity to attend the PESGB's Annual Conference in New College, Oxford, at the end of March 2019. I attended as a 'Teacher Scholar' – enthusiastically ready to talk, listen and learn.

This was my first time attending an academic conference. I suppose everybody brings their own interests and specialisms to these events – which form lenses through which they view and reflect upon the ideas heard. My lens was shaped strongly by my day-job, in which I work as a primary school principal. I was hoping to learn and think deeply about important current and future issues in education.

One such important issue that I have been thinking a lot about recently is environmentalism and the whole idea of "the environment" in education. In light of the increasing evidence for climate change and declining biodiversity, I've been thinking that it's just not enough for schools to deliver occasional environmental lessons or biannually to do a drive on related themes to earn a "Green Flag". I've been thinking that current environmental concerns should be a spur to action, calling on educators to look again at foundational understandings.

Questions and comments are key

Perhaps we could start by asking, from an ethical perspective, what do we actually mean when we speak of "the environment"? In responding to this challenge, I think there is the potential to develop an enriched understanding of our personhood, our shared humanity and our intrinsic interconnectedness with the wider living world. On such topics, the conference did not disappoint!

Two talks in related areas that really resonated with me were the Saturday afternoon workshop with Dr Jeff Stickney and the Sunday morning plenary session with Dr Michael Bonnett. During Dr Stickney's workshop, in beautiful, warm spring sunshine, we visited a large old oak tree in the cloister space of New College. Stepping out of the Cartesian subject-object duality and Platonic essentialism, we looked upon and experienced the tree informed by Wittgenstein's thoughts on action/reaction as avenues to change our thinking. What is the tree? Where does it start and end? Are we in the tree? We passed around pencils and card and were invited to have a new experience of the tree – and ourselves – by drawing it. ▸ page 50

What is a tree?
Where does it start and end?

Drawing by Ciarán Caulfield

Dr Bonnett's presentation in the final plenary session on Sunday morning built on these themes. We were invited to consider nature as a dimension of experience and to reflect upon the epistemological mystery of things in nature – such as a flying insect disappearing in the warm dusk air, or an encounter with a tree or a woodland, or indeed any phenomenological experience of nature. Our culture of scientism and the dominant Western metaphysics of mastery – and I would argue, some prevailing approaches to education – can miss the inherent uniqueness and natural, interdependent integrity evident in such encounters. Noting the limitations and dangers in such mastery approaches, we were encouraged to hear nature's voice more in our educational conversations, and to explore how we could facilitate more ethical experiences of nature for learners. We heard that such experiences should foster the development of a loving recognition of a post-human need for care, understanding and being-together with all other life forms and our planet.

So, as I left New College, Oxford and the PESGB conference on Sunday afternoon, my head was spinning – in a good way! It was really inspiring to spend time with so many interesting people, who have such positive ideas for the potential of education and philosophy to enhance our lives and our futures.

As the plane took off to fly me back to Ireland, I began some "blue sky thinking" of my own. I imagined improvements in how we see, design and use our educational spaces. I imagined a more ethical curriculum. I began to see that the development of a new, environmentally attuned ethic of personhood, interconnected with the wider natural ecosystem, need not be seen as difficult.

Informed by my experiences at the PESGB conference, I can see that educators who move into this space can be inspirational – and their lessons are very, very life affirming. ■

In hall

David Hansen's opening keynote talk – The Call to Teach

The talking goes on

... and on

Future PESGB events

Annual Conference Oxford 2020

Friday, 27 March to Sunday, 29 March 2020
New College, Oxford

The 55th Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain will take place from Friday, 27 March to Sunday, 29 March 2020 at New College, Oxford.

The Annual Conference is held from Friday afternoon until just after lunch on Sunday and is usually attended by around 200 academics, students, teachers and interested professionals from related disciplines. Many members contribute papers, workshops, posters and symposia.

The conference is lively and friendly, and we are always keen to welcome new guests as well as old friends. Papers and discussions cover a wide range of issues within the field of philosophy of education and educational theory, including questions relating to policy and practice. Further details of the conference are available on the PESGB website: www.philosophy-of-education.org

This year's keynote speakers are:

- Gordon Bearn, Lehigh University, USA
- Maarten Simons, KU Leuven, Belgium
- Laura D'Olimpio, University of Birmingham, UK.

We look forward to seeing you in March 2020. ■

At the Saturday party, Oxford Conference, 2019

Teacher Bursaries

Each year, the PESGB awards bursaries to full-time schoolteachers (0.8 FTE or above) wishing to attend its Oxford Annual Conference for the first time.

These bursaries are offered by open competition and are worth up to £300.

Many congratulations to the 2019 recipients and thanks to them too for the valuable contribution they made to the event. Their accounts of the 2019 conference appear on pages 43–50.

Details of how to apply are on the PESGB website and applications are open until 10 February 2020.

Pre-Conference Workshop for Graduate Students

Friday, 27 March 2020, New College, Oxford

Prior to the Annual Conference, the Society hosts a Pre-conference Workshop for graduate students.

This session represents a good opportunity to talk with experienced researchers in the field of philosophy of education and for students and teacher participants to get to know each other before the main conference programme begins.

The 2020 pre-conference has an international theme, 'Philosophy of Education: Contexts and Understanding', in line with the wide-ranging attendance at conference. Pertinent questions are how the discipline is situated in higher education institutions in other jurisdictions, and how philosophy is understood in the discipline of philosophy of education.

The programme begins with lunch at 1.00pm, which is served in the dining hall of New College, but students must register for the pre-conference to take advantage of the lunch, which is included in pre-conference registration. The Pre-conference Workshop ends before the start of the main PESGB Annual Conference.

Attendance is **free** for those registered for the main conference.

Further details will be available on the PESGB website: www.philosophy-of-education.org

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If you need help or have any queries, **Katie McLeod** at the PESGB Office will be pleased to help you:
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