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About

The *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* is a peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to research on the teaching and learning of philosophy. It is published online twice a year. The access to all articles is free. Articles may be about any level of education, however the main focus is on high school philosophy. We welcome work with a philosophical or normative approach as well as reports of results from empirical qualitative and quantitative research. The journal also publishes reviews of books, textbooks and other educational material of international interest as well as country reports. These reports present information about ways of teaching philosophy, its institutions and activities in different countries. It is an aim of the journal to promote the dialogue among researchers and practising teachers across the world.

For Authors

If you would like to publish in the *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy*, please follow the instructions on the website (www.philosophie.ch/jdph) and send your article in English as well as an abstract in an electronic document (word, pdf) by email to one of the editors.

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers!

We are happy and proud to present to you the first issue of the *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy*. Such a journal, providing a platform for research on teaching and learning philosophy as well as for exchange among philosophy teachers and scholars across the world, has been on the horizon for many years. More international exchange is a desideratum, since interesting approaches to teaching philosophy have been developed in different countries (e. g. in Germany, France or the Netherlands), but have not (or not fully) been recognized elsewhere. But it was not before summer 2016 that the journal began to take actual shape.

It all started in a restaurant near the campus of the University of Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Helge Kminek had brought up the idea of an international conference and had invited people working in the didactics of philosophy from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Among them were the two of us, Jonas Pfister and Philipp Richter, and other colleagues many of whom are now on the editorial board. In the autumn of the same year, we decided to launch the journal. We contacted professors of philosophy and of didactics of philosophy as well as experienced teachers from different countries, and we are very happy to have ended up with such a fine international team of experts on our editorial board. After calls for papers in January and in March, the first submissions arrived and the review process got under way. And here it is, the first issue of the *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy*. We would like to thank all members of the editorial board for their work and their support. And we would like to thank *philosophie.ch* for hosting us.

In this first issue you will find two research articles. Anne Burkard and Jan Gertken argue for including the moral pluralism of David Ross as a subject for philosophy classes in secondary schools. They, like Ross himself, see it as an important alternative to monistic theories such as Kant's moral theory and classical utilitarianism. Håkan Salwén and Henrik Lokind present the project of a team-taught course in Sweden. Based on the results of a survey among students, they argue for the beneficial effects of such a course design.

In the section "Country Reports", we publish depictions of the situation of philosophical education in particular countries. Such reports may also be centred on smaller regions or on philosophical events of international interest. In this issue, we have a special focus on the federal state of Baden-Württemberg in Germany. Frank Brosow presents a model for the training of ethics teachers at the Ludwigsburg University of Education. Marcel Remme writes about the ethics education according to the new curricula of 2016. The third report, by Frank Murphy, is on the International Philosophy Olympiad. As an appendix to his article you will find a short guide to writing a philosophical essay, which you might find useful for your own philosophy course or seminars.

In the section "Book reviews", Jonas Pfister reviews a French book aimed at introducing young students to the profession of being a philosophy teacher. Andreas Brenneis reviews a German book by Christian Thein on understanding and judgment in philosophy education.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know. In order to submit a research article, book review or country report, please contact us. The next issue is planned for March 2018. To be published in it, your submissions should reach us by the end of November.

Now enjoy reading!

September 2017

The Editors

ROSSIAN MORAL PLURALISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM

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Abstract

In this paper, we outline central features of David Ross's moral pluralism and show why it is an attractive subject for philosophy classes in secondary schools. We argue that Ross's pluralistic theory constitutes an important systematic alternative to monistic theories, such as Kant's moral theory and act utilitarianism, which often dominate ethics courses in secondary schools. Ross's theory also provides students with a much-needed theoretical framework for expressing an independent view which integrates elements from different theories covered in ethics courses. Based on our outline of Ross's version of moral pluralism, we also sketch a unit in which advanced level students are introduced to and discuss central elements of Ross's pluralistic moral theory. The overarching aim is to encourage students to engage with a potential limit of monistic theories and with an alternative normative approach to moral thinking, thereby refining their conceptual tools for expressing and discussing their own moral views.

Keywords: William David Ross; moral pluralism; contributory and overall judgements; prima facie duties and moral reasons; moral conflicts

1. Background: monism and pluralism in philosophy classes

Ethics units in current philosophy textbooks and lesson plans for ethics-related questions from relevant journals cover a considerable spectrum. Topics range from questions about the good life and the foundations of normative ethics to central problems of applied ethics and to the challenge posed by moral scepticism. Unfortunately, in this wide selection of topics there is hardly any material covering moral pluralism.¹ "Moral pluralism", in the sense that we have in

¹ This assessment is mainly based on experiences from the German-speaking context and on a review of recently published textbooks for philosophy courses as well as recent publications in the German journals *Ethik & Unterricht*, *Zeitschrift für Didaktik der Philosophie und Ethik* and *Praxis Philosophie und Ethik*. Neither have we found any teaching material on Ross's ethics in English, e.g. in the international journals *Teaching Philosophy* and *Journal for Philosophy in Schools*. We assume that our findings and suggestions are applicable to other languages and countries in which philosophy is taught in secondary schools, in particular to sixth form students. Cf. Burton et al. 2006 for a similar assessment regarding the lack of teaching material on Rossian moral pluralism more than a decade ago.

mind for the purposes of this paper, refers to alternatives to *monism* about moral principles. According to ethical monism, there is *one* fundamental overarching moral principle which covers the whole range of morally right and wrong actions. Examples for monistic theories are Kant's ethics and the act utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill.² In contrast, moral pluralism claims that there is more than one fundamental moral principle, i.e. more than one moral principle that cannot be derived from any further moral principles.³

We consider the absence of material covering moral pluralism regrettable for two reasons. First, as we will outline below, it means that a philosophically significant and influential position is likely to be missing from most philosophy classes in secondary schools. The second reason is that moral pluralism is a view which is fairly close to everyday moral thinking. Acquaintance with this philosophical theory can therefore help students to understand and express their own moral thinking more clearly. Why that is the case should become clear in the following exposition of the version of moral pluralism developed by the British philosopher William David Ross (1877-1971). Ross is not only a prominent exponent of moral pluralism, his treatise *The Right and the Good* is also a modern philosophical classic and well suited for the classroom setting.

However, Ross's ethical theory is fairly complex. It covers a variety of intertwined issues, with topics ranging from normative ethics and value theory to moral epistemology and metaphysics. In addition, crucial parts of Ross's theory unfortunately lend themselves to misunderstandings, given the vocabulary he uses to express them. These two factors may make it challenging to engage with Ross's view, and they might make it difficult for teachers to select aspects from his texts that are suitable for discussion in class. Given these potential complications, and given that Ross's view is not yet well represented in the context of teaching philosophy in schools, we start off by presenting certain important features of the position in some detail. Our exposition focuses on those aspects of Ross's theory that are, in our view, an important addition to ethics courses in secondary schools and suited for being covered in philosophy classes. These include the central claims of Ross's pluralistic moral theory and his view of moral thinking and reasoning, which we aim to describe as clearly as possible and in terms that make it easy for students to relate them to their own moral thinking.

2. Central features of Rossian pluralism

Central features of Ross's version of moral pluralism, which he mainly develops in the second chapter of *The Right and the Good*, can be summed up as follows (Ross 1930/2002; Wolf 1996; Stratton-Lake 2002; Skelton 2012: sect. 3-4).

² A moral principle is *fundamental* if, and only if, it cannot be derived from any other moral principle. Monist views can hence contain more than one principle, but only one fundamental principle. If, for example, the Categorical Imperative can be used to derive a principle according to which lying is wrong, Kant's moral theory contains more than one moral principle. Even in this case, however, it remains a monist view, since the principle concerning the morality of lying is a consequence of the Categorical Imperative, which in turn is not derived from any more fundamental moral principle, according to Kant.

³ Moral pluralism in this sense should not be confused with *political* pluralism, which is concerned with a plurality of incompatible value systems or world views held by different individuals or groups, and with the question of how governments or societies should respond to them (Mason 2006/2015).

First of all, Ross argues that there are two levels of moral judgement. On the one hand, there is the level of judgements about moral duties (that is, about which acts are right and wrong, all things considered), which play a central role in classic monistic moral theories, such as Kant's deontological ethics or act utilitarianism. Such judgements express an *overall assessment* of the moral status of an action and are used to *conclude* a deliberative process about actions. On the other hand, Ross emphasises that we also need to recognise that there are *contributory* judgements, which concern what Ross labels *prima facie duties*, such as the prima facie duty to keep one's promises. Judgements about prima facie duties specify *morally relevant properties* of acts that contribute to making acts right or wrong and that one needs to take into consideration in moral deliberation. Ross admits that the term "prima facie duty" is not an ideal choice for expressing this idea, as it invites a number of misunderstandings. Contrary to what the term suggests, "prima facie duty" is neither meant to refer to a certain *type of duty*, nor to something that only *appears* to be a duty (Ross 1930/2002: 20). Luckily, Ross's terminological choice does not provide an obstacle to engaging with his view, and contemporary scholars argue that the view can be reconstructed without loss in terms of *moral reasons* (Stratton-Lake 2002: xxxiiif). According to this suggestion, that there is a prima facie duty to perform a certain act just means that there is a moral reason to perform it.⁴ Thus, the idea that one has a prima facie duty to keep one's promises can be helpfully understood as the claim that, from the point of view of morality, something counts in favour of keeping one's promises. Principles about prima facie duties in this sense are to be distinguished from mere heuristics or rules of thumb, which can be found in some versions of utilitarianism in the form of so-called secondary principles (see e.g. Hare 1981).

Second, according to Rossian pluralism there are *several irreducible* morally relevant factors that can be expressed in a number of moral principles about prima facie duties or moral reasons. Examples for these are the prima facie duty not to harm others, the prima facie duty to keep our promises, and the prima facie duty to act to make amends for a previous wrong. Saying that these factors are irreducible means that there is no supreme principle from which all principles about prima facie duties could be deduced.⁵

⁴ We use the term "reason" equivocally in everyday language. In the context of this paper, "a reason for action" does not refer to a *cause* or an *explanation* for this action, nor to the *motivation* of the agent. Instead, it refers to what is usually called a *normative reason*, i.e. something that *speaks for/against* performing or omitting a certain action and that can *justify* an act or omission. For instance, when we try to decide what to do and ask ourselves which reasons we have to do this or that, we do not ask ourselves what causes, explains or motivates our action, but rather, which considerations count for and against the various options we have. On the notion of a normative reason, see Alvarez 2016.

⁵ Note that one can be a pluralist in the sense of postulating more than one fundamental morally relevant principle or property without accepting the overall/contributory distinction. For example, a theory according to which both lying and killing are always morally *wrong* is pluralistic in this sense (if it conceives of both of these principles as basic), but does not specify the moral relevance of these properties in terms of moral *reasons* or mere prima facie duties. By the same token, there could be a monist theory that accepts the overall/contributory distinction, and according to which there is only one reason-giving property. Ross's account has a two-level structure *in combination* with a pluralistic view of morally relevant properties.

Third, contributory principles (or, more precisely, the moral reasons they concern) can, and often do, come into *conflict* with each other in individual cases. Such a moral conflict occurs when, in a particular situation, several moral reasons exist which the agent cannot comply with in equal measure (see below for an example).

Fourth, Ross believes that it is impossible to state plausible higher-order rules or principles for resolving such conflicts, i.e. principles that specify how different (combinations of) reasons are to be weighed or balanced in case they favour incompatible courses of actions.

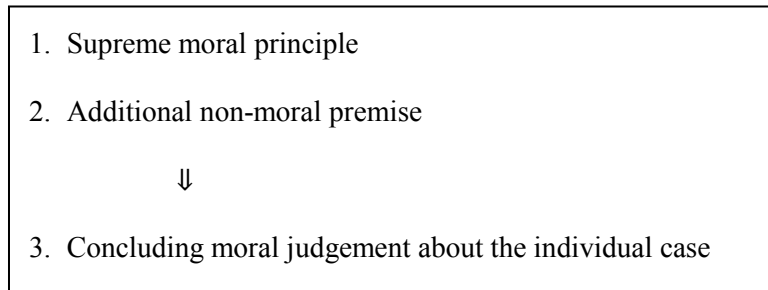
Fifth, according to Ross, we need *Moral Judgement* in cases of conflict in order to decide what is morally right or wrong. In this context, Moral Judgement is to be understood as a *capacity* to competently evaluate an individual case and to weigh competing morally relevant factors present in that case, without relying on rules that specify how different reasons are to be weighed.⁶ Ross does not have a detailed theory of how the capacity of Moral Judgement operates (i.e. an account of which specific abilities it involves and of when it operates well), although he claims that instances of this capacity can lead to justified judgments (Ross 1930/2002: 31).⁷ According to Ross, judgements about right or wrong in particular cases are hence not a question of individual decisions, let alone subjective preferences. He does not believe that all judgements about these matters are equally justified.⁸

The specific nature of Ross's position can best be elucidated by means of a comparison with *overall principles* of classic monistic alternatives, such as (certain versions of) Kant's categorical imperative or the moral principle of classic act utilitarianism. Applying these overall principles results in judgements with which instances of moral deliberation can be brought to a conclusion, that is, in judgements that express what is, *all things considered*, right or wrong, morally required, prohibited or permitted. The application of an overall principle to a given case amounts to *settling the question* of what is the right or wrong thing to do in that case. Furthermore, applying overall principles of classic monistic theories merely requires subsuming the particular case under the respective principle. This means that we can deduce a particular moral judgement from such a moral principle in combination with a suitable non-moral description of the situation (Schmidt 2012: 513f. and 516). No further moral judgement or weighing is required. This can be represented in the following schema.

⁶ Here and in the following, we use capital letters to distinguish this specific capacity from moral judgements, i.e. from mental states with a certain propositional content.

⁷ Some of Ross's remarks suggest that such judgements have a perceptual element, but his remarks are not developed into a full-fledged theory (Ross 1930/2002, 42).

⁸ Two features of Ross's epistemological view that we will not discuss in this paper are the following: First, Ross takes principles about prima facie duties to be *self-evident* and a possible object of knowledge. Second, to judgements about what one morally ought to do, all things considered, Ross ascribes a much weaker epistemic status. Although they can be justified – Ross speaks of “probable opinion” in this connection –, they cannot amount to knowledge (Ross 1930/2002, 29f.). Ross's moral pluralism is independent of these two assumptions, and one might combine a Ross-style moral pluralism with a different epistemological approach. A further aspect of Ross's ethical theory that we will ignore here is his *non-naturalist* and *realist* conception of moral judgements. Ross believes that there are moral properties, which are part of the fabric of the world, and he furthermore takes these properties to be robustly mind-independent (e.g. Ross 1930/2002, 14f., 82 and 84f.; Stratton-Lake 2002, xiv-xvi.) Again, this is a view that is independent of Ross's moral pluralism.



*Illustration 1. Schema for classic moral monism*⁹

Let us further illustrate this schema with two examples for its application.

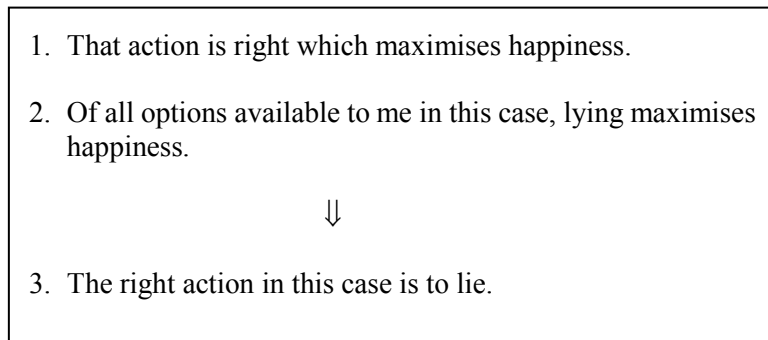
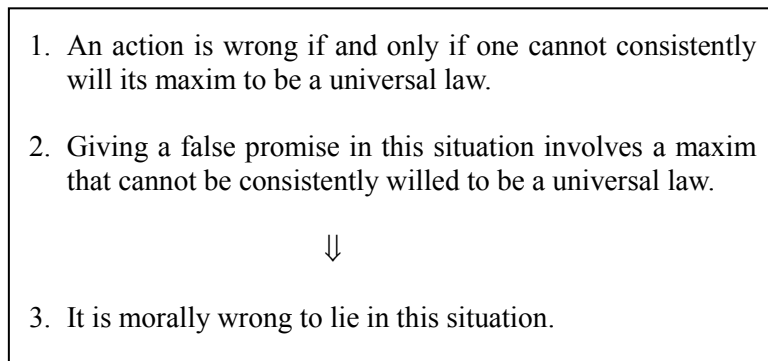


Illustration 2. Application of the schema for classic moral monism to act utilitarianism



*Illustration 3. Application of the schema for classic moral monism to the Categorical Imperative*¹⁰

⁹ See Althoff 2015: 146f. for a similar schema. Althoff's textbook article presents the schema, which is based on Aristotle's practical syllogism, as a general help for structuring a moral justification for an action in a particular situation.

¹⁰ For the sake of simplicity, we restrict ourselves to one of the many formulas of the Categorical Imperative, namely the so-called "universal law" formula. Kant's own formulation is slightly different (and in the grammatical imperative mood), but we take it that the differences are not relevant for the purpose of our illustration (see Suikkanen 2015, 97 for a similar formulation). The schema for monism might not adequately capture the proper application of other formulas of the Categorical Imperative.

Ross's prima facie principles, on the contrary, only allow us to immediately deduce that there are certain moral reasons for or against an action. Hence, those principles mainly specify *input* into our moral deliberation and thereby guide us in our moral deliberation and judgements, whereas they do not allow us to conclude directly what to do (Schmidt 2012: 535f.).

To move from judgements about *reasons* to overall judgements about what *ought* to be done, further moral judgements are necessary. Here we need to distinguish between two different types of cases. In cases of the first type, there are no conflicting moral reasons. In such cases, the right (or wrong) actions are those actions for which (or against which) the relevant reasons speak. Cases of the second type are situations in which reasons are in conflict with each other. On Ross's view, such situations require that we weigh and judge without a rule-governed decision procedure which reasons are strongest, all things considered. This second case can be represented in the following schema.

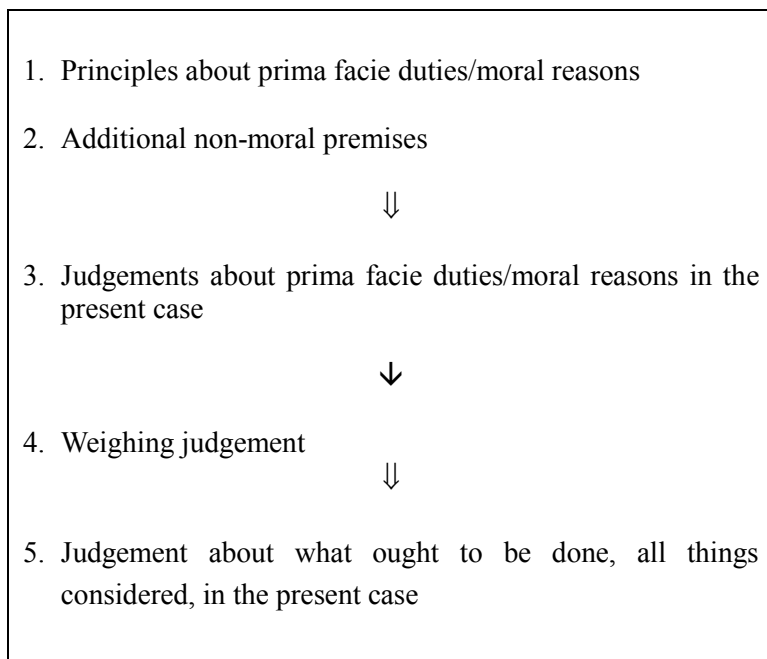


Illustration 4. Schema for Rossian moral pluralism¹¹

Let us also illustrate the application of this schema with an example.

¹¹ The double arrow represents a logical deduction, the simple arrow stands for the application of the capacity for Moral Judgement.

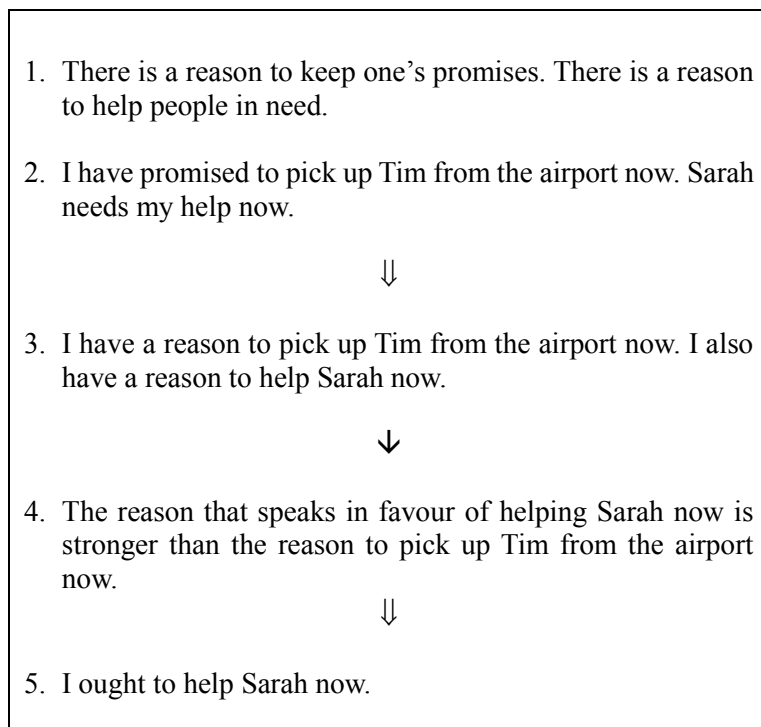


Illustration 5. Application of the schema for Rossian moral pluralism

To sum up, classic monistic theories understand the process of reaching a verdict in an individual case, provided that we have knowledge of the case's non-moral features, as purely subsumptive. That is, in addition to a deductive ability, only the knowledge of the relevant principle and of additional non-moral premises is needed for this process. On Ross's pluralistic account, by contrast, the exercise of Moral Judgement is needed as a necessary additional step in cases of conflicting moral reasons. This capacity manifests itself in *weighing judgements*, which are concerned with the comparative strength of the moral reasons under consideration. Exercising Moral Judgement is necessary on Ross's model, because we cannot come to a verdict about which action is right or wrong without an assessment as to which reason is stronger in the given situation, and because, according to Ross, there are no higher-order weighing principles that we could apply to determine the comparative weight of reasons in a particular situation.

3. Philosophical merits of Rossian moral pluralism

There are various reasons why Ross's moral pluralism is an attractive alternative to monistic conceptions. This is reflected in the fact that Ross-style pluralism is treated as an important theoretical option, not only in debates about foundational ethical questions (Dancy 1993; Audi 2004; Hooker 1996; Schmidt 2012; Gertken 2014), but also in standard textbooks on ethics for undergraduate university courses (Timmons 2013; Shafer-Landau 2014; Suikkanen 2014).

Generally speaking, Ross's two-level model of moral judgement is appealing because the conceptual distinction between reason judgements and judgements about overall rightness and wrongness allows for a plausible description of moral conflicts. In everyday contexts as well as

in textbooks, such conflicts are often referred to as “dilemmas”. However, they are rarely actually understood as *tragic dilemmas*, in which agents act wrongly no matter what they do. On the one hand, it is questionable whether such tragic dilemmas can even be described consistently (Boshammer 2008). On the other hand, we cannot reasonably understand *every* moral conflict as such a tragic dilemma, even if there are some cases that should be understood in that way (Gertken 2014: 175f.). At least in *some* cases of moral conflict we can reasonably judge that there is a right action available to the agent and at the same time insist that the conflict is not merely an *apparent* conflict, which only seems to exist due to the agent’s misleading or incomplete evidence. It is hard to see how theories whose principles are merely formulated on the overall level, such as Kantianism or act utilitarianism, can account for this phenomenon. Although it can be considered a virtue of act utilitarianism that the theory does not allow for tragic dilemmas, it does not allow for non-tragic conflicts either. Depending on one’s favoured interpretation of the Categorical Imperative, Kantian ethics might imply that agents cannot avoid acting wrongly in some cases (since all relevant options open to them would involve maxims that cannot be willed as a universal law), but it is again hard to see how one might be able to accommodate the idea that there are non-tragic moral conflicts within the framework provided by the Categorical Imperative.¹²

In contrast, given the conceptual framework of Ross’s two-level understanding of moral judgements, non-tragic conflicts can plausibly be described as situations in which several moral reasons count in favour of mutually incompatible courses of action. Considering these options, however, can lead to the understanding that, all things considered, the reasons for one of the available actions outweigh the others and that therefore (only) that action is required or at least permissible.¹³ Ross’s model of moral judgements furthermore accounts for the view that at least in some cases of conflict, a feeling of regret is adequate. That is so because those reasons that are outbalanced and count in favour of a different decision than the one that is overall morally required do not thereby lose their normative weight or significance. For instance, even if, all things considered, I should break a promise in order to help someone in need, this does not make the fact that I made a promise normatively irrelevant. This fact can give me a reason to offer an explanation for what I did. Also, it makes regret adequate even in cases in which

¹² That neither act utilitarianism nor Kantianism allow for non-tragic moral conflicts is not due to the fact that these theories are monist. Rather, it is explained by the fact that they are *entirely* formulated on the level of *overall* judgements. As far as the task of accommodating non-tragic moral conflicts is concerned, pluralistic theories with more than one fundamental moral principle would not do any better, as long as these are entirely overall principles. In so far as overall principles conflict, the results will either be inconsistent (the principles imply that one course of action is both right and wrong) or lead to tragic dilemmas (the principles imply that all options open to the agent are morally wrong).

¹³ As noted above, this does not rule out that some conflicts may be tragic dilemmas, i.e. cases in which no right option is available to the agent. Given the Rossian framework, the question of whether tragic dilemmas exist depends, among other things, on substantial issues concerning what moral reasons there are and how they relate to each other – such as the question of whether some moral reasons are *incomparable* with each other with regard to their strength.

remorse would be out of place, since remorse is best understood as an emotion that is an appropriate reaction to cases of *wrongdoing*.¹⁴

Regarding the specific content of Ross's version of moral pluralism, one of his central claims is that there is a plurality of morally relevant factors that matter in their own right and that can come into conflict with each other. This view is supported by the fact that it captures an important part of moral experience, namely the complexity and diversity of moral life and thought, as Ross himself also points out (Ross 1930/2002: 18f.). Although, according to act utilitarianism, for example, it can be *epistemically difficult* (if not impossible) to find out what the right action is in a particular context, monism implies that there is nevertheless *just one* morally relevant factor which needs to be taken into account whenever we ask ourselves what the right thing to do is. The view that there are several morally relevant factors that matter in their own right gains further support from the fact that, for instance, in several areas of applied ethics, pluralistic approaches are highly influential (note especially the central role played by Tom L. Beauchamp's and James F. Childress's *principlism* in current bioethics; Beauchamp/Childress 1979/2013). Ross's version of moral pluralism furthermore provides an attractive middle ground between act utilitarianism and Kantianism insofar as it can treat facts about well-being (or valuable consequences of actions more generally) as morally relevant, without assuming that such considerations are the *only* ones that matter in their own right.

The claim that there are no plausible higher order principles for solving moral conflicts is the most contentious aspect of Ross's specific version of moral pluralism. However, it seems attractive to the extent that it proves difficult to defend plausible candidates for weighing principles which are not vulnerable to counterexamples. Given that despite their initial plausibility, monistic theories often also have highly counterintuitive implications, looking for principles that imply judgements about the rightness and wrongness of all actions might be a fruitless endeavour. This is equally true for more restricted overall principles that are meant to cover cases of conflicting moral reasons.¹⁵

4. Rossian moral pluralism in the philosophy classroom

From a subject-didactic perspective, the main reasons for introducing Rossian moral pluralism to students are the following. First of all, there is the philosophical significance of the view. As we have stated above, pluralistic conceptions play an important role both in current debates concerning the foundations of ethics and in applied ethics. This speaks in favour of discussing such conceptions in the philosophy classroom, especially since Ross's view is also much closer to everyday moral thinking and reasoning than most monistic views, given their high level of abstraction and lack of conceptual space for non-tragic moral conflicts.

¹⁴ For a more detailed account of moral conflicts which elucidates the relation between defeated prima facie duties or moral reasons and regret, see Brink 1994: 220-223. On the distinction between regret and remorse, see McConnell 2014: sect. 6.

¹⁵ Of course, whether such principles do exist is a question that can only be settled by ethical argument, and we do not mean to suggest that there is a definitive case for the non-existence of weighing principles. Our point is merely that claiming that weighing principles exist is a substantial commitment of an ethical theory, and that Ross's denial that such principles can be specified in a plausible way is not a refusal to theorise, but an informed scepticism about the limits of moral principles that deserves to be taken seriously as a theoretical option.

Ross's account is also a fruitful subject matter specifically for philosophy classes which aim to facilitate *problem-oriented learning*, an approach that, roughly speaking, encourages students to philosophise themselves by thinking about philosophical problems (Tiedemann 2012). According to our observations, at least in the German-speaking context, the model of moral deliberation characteristic of a Rossian pluralistic moral theory is often tacitly presupposed by typical teaching methods and contents of such philosophy classes, albeit without being introduced and discussed explicitly as an ethical theory. From ordinary moral and non-moral decisions in their daily lives, students are usually already acquainted with the procedure of making pro and con lists of the advantages and disadvantages of different options, which can be ordered by their importance and used as a basis for an overall judgement about what to do. This method is also commonly used in classroom discussions of specific moral problems, not least because this allows teachers to tie their teaching in with an approach to moral decision-making familiar to their students.

Such a deliberative approach, however, cannot be reconstructed plausibly within the conceptual framework set out by overall ought-principles and valid deductive arguments. In contrast, the deliberative approach is reflected explicitly within the Rossian theory. For conceptual reasons, the ought-principles of monistic theories cannot be weighed or balanced, just as, for instance, valid deductive arguments for or against a thesis cannot be weighed or balanced. In contrast, *reasons* for or against an action are by their very nature entities which have a certain *strength* or *weight* and which allow for the sort of comparisons and rankings involved in weighing procedures. This means that the monistic theories standardly discussed in philosophy classes are hardly compatible with the described manner of deliberation and discussion. Hence there is a striking gap between a common methodological approach in philosophy classes and the theoretical framework offered to students for reflecting this approach. Teaching a unit on Rossian moral pluralism helps to close this gap.

The problem just sketched is aggravated by the fact that philosophy students are regularly expected to reach an independent, well-balanced judgement whilst taking into account the philosophical theories discussed in class. In Germany and Switzerland, this expectation can, for example, be found in the official guidelines for the written *Abitur* (A-level) exams as well as in textbooks and models for lesson planning (see e.g. Giesinger 2004; Kultusministerkonferenz 2006; Franzen 2016: 90f.). Yet if the students have, let us say, been introduced to Kant's moral theory and act utilitarianism in a unit on normative ethics and are subsequently asked in an exam to come to a well-founded judgement regarding some scenario, then what they are lacking is a fitting theoretical element which allows them to develop an independent, coherent view that integrates elements from different monistic theories. Given the presumably widely-shared assessment that both Kant's moral theory as well as act utilitarianism capture *some* aspects of moral thinking adequately, but not others, a pluralistic moral theory, such as the one developed by Ross, offers a helpful theoretical framework for students' attempts to reconcile the different advantages of both Kantianism and act utilitarianism (although, of course, the pluralistic framework would also have to be examined critically in its own right).

5. Sketch of a unit on Ross's moral pluralism

The unit on Ross's moral pluralism for advanced level students (i.e. students between the ages of sixteen and eighteen) that we sketch here consists of five main steps and comprises about eight or nine lessons of 45 to 60 minutes. It follows a unit on monistic theories such as act utilitarianism and Kant's moral theory.

The first lesson should serve to draw the students' attention to the way that monistic theories describe and judge cases of moral conflict, and to ask them to compare this with their own understanding of such cases. They may be asked, for example, to apply a formula of Kant's Categorical Imperative and the utilitarian Greatest Happiness Principle to the following types of conflict cases: a) A has made two promises and would have to break one to keep the other; b) B can help someone in need, but can only do so by breaking a promise; c) Both A and B are in need of help. C can help either A or B, but C cannot help *both* A and B. Students should then be asked whether there is something they think should be said about those cases from the point of view of an ethical theory which *cannot* be said within the context of Kant's ethics or act utilitarianism.

This first step is meant to set the stage for the following discussion of Ross's moral pluralism, and it should not aim to produce a certain philosophical result, such as the assessment that monistic theories lack a plausible understanding of cases of moral conflict or misrepresent them. Since neither the view that there are moral conflicts, nor the view that monistic theories are incapable of accommodating a plausible description of such conflicts is philosophically uncontroversial, one should not expect a uniform reaction among students or try to convince them of any particular view about the monistic treatment of moral conflicts.

Rather, the purpose of discussing the aforementioned cases is to focus on *potential* limits of monistic theories, to engage the students' interest before they are introduced to an alternative view, and to prompt students to reflect on their own moral understanding of moral conflicts. This might lead students to express, in one way or another, the view that monistic theories either deny the possibility of conflicting moral factors or imply that in such cases, an agent acts wrongly no matter what course of action she chooses. (The first option is plausible with regard to the utilitarian approach, whereas both options seem defensible with regard to interpreting the results of applying the Categorical Imperative to potential conflict cases.) However, both of these views already involve a rather sophisticated level of analysis, and it is therefore likely that students will just feel that something potentially significant is missing in the Kantian or utilitarian way of treating moral conflicts, without being able to express clearly what it is that they find missing. What is more, it is also possible that students do not find the monistic treatment of the aforementioned cases to be lacking anything important at all.

Whatever their responses turn out to be, Ross can afterwards be introduced as a philosopher who offers an alternative take on the phenomenon of moral conflict. Depending on which verdicts the students have reached in their own preliminary discussion, they will now either be confronted with a position that *challenges* their views, or they will be offered a theoretical framework that *helps them describe* their own approach more precisely.

In a second step, students read passages from Ross's *The Right and the Good* in which central elements of his view are introduced, among them the concept of a prima facie duty and the two-level model of moral judgement. Ross also expounds his criticism of alternative moral theories

in those passages (Ross 1930/2002: 17-20).¹⁶ In the course of this first encounter with elements of Ross's theory, it is recommendable to explain that the expression "prima facie duty" is best understood in terms of a moral reason for action. It will also be necessary to distinguish the relevant notion of a moral reason from other possible concepts that can be expressed by "reason" (see footnote 4 above), e.g. by reference to everyday practices of conceptualising factors relevant to our decisions as "pros" and "cons", and of balancing such factors in order to reach a decision. Furthermore, Ross's two-level model of moral judgement can be illustrated and contrasted with the classic subsumptive model by means of the two schemas presented above. To deepen their understanding of this contrast, students should then apply the schemas to specific examples. This second step will take up about two lessons.

In a third step, students are asked to apply the newly acquired conceptual framework by coming up with their own lists of prima facie duties or moral reasons. Students should be encouraged to make these lists as long or complex as seems necessary, but at the same time as concise and unified as possible. They could draw up their lists in groups and afterwards present their results for discussion. To help them develop ideas for plausible candidates for moral reasons, students can be advised to use the heuristic of focussing on actual or hypothetical moral conflicts and ask themselves which morally relevant aspects or reasons are at play in those cases. This third step should take up about one lesson.

In a fourth step, for which about two or three lessons should be scheduled, students read further pages from *The Right and the Good*, in which Ross introduces his suggestions for seven prima facie duties and articulates his scepticism about weighing principles and unification (Ross 1930/2002: 20f., 24f. and 41f.). After working with the text, students should compare their own lists with that of Ross and discuss interesting similarities and differences.

The final lessons of the unit are devoted to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of Ross's moral pluralism. In order to prompt a comparison, students are asked to recall central features of the monistic theories that were discussed previously. A specific focus should lie on the theories' different understandings of situations of moral conflict, as outlined above. Here students can be asked to look back at their answers from the first lesson of the unit and consider whether their views have changed, or whether they now have better resources to express certain objections to monistic views more clearly.

If more time is available, it is recommendable to explore the theoretical space between monistic theories such as act utilitarianism and Kantianism on the one hand and Ross's version of pluralism on the other. Although these theories are incompatible with one another, they do not cover the whole range of options open to moral theories. Therefore, there is room for pluralistic theories which are less sceptical about weighing principles than Ross is, or that allow for more unification (i.e. fewer basic contributory principles) than Ross does. Students could hence try to independently develop unifications and weighing principles and thus go beyond Ross's own suggestions, e.g. by addressing questions such as the following:¹⁷ Can we say that

¹⁶ These and the other passages selected here are also available in a German translation: Ross 1930/1976: 253-259 and 268.

¹⁷ Note that the project of *unification* and the project of *specifying weighing principles* are logically independent. A suggestion for deriving all contributory reason principles from one more fundamental principle might not

some reasons always weigh more heavily than others, or find defensible principles which tell us how to weigh different combinations of reasons? (Plausible candidates might not be as hard to come by as Ross thinks. For example, can the fact that an action is necessary to save an innocent person's life really ever be outweighed by the fact that it is an instance of lying?) If we can specify plausible weighing principles, how far do they take us? Can we specify properties shared by all actions *for* which there are moral reasons, or shared by all actions *against* which there are moral reasons? By discussing such questions, students could contemplate possible compromises between Ross and the monistic approaches they are familiar with. This will especially be of interest to students with sympathies for monistic theories, since these students will most likely value the highly systematic character and unity of such approaches.

To conclude the unit, students should be asked to write individual comments on the discussed theoretical spectrum, addressing questions such as the following: What is the most plausible take on the nature of moral conflicts? Is Moral Judgment really necessary for making well-informed and justified decisions about situations of moral conflict? How much unification of morally relevant factors or principles is possible?

When discussing Ross's ethics, students are likely to raise worries about the capacity of Moral Judgment and the possibility of justified moral beliefs which are not deduced from moral principles. Those judgements and beliefs might appear arbitrary or subjective in a problematic way. Such worries are certainly reasonable. However, it is worth noting that similar questions can be asked about the justification of moral *principles* as well, for these principles cannot all be derived from other moral principles. Ross's work can thus be used as a starting point for examining more general epistemological and methodological issues with regard to moral judgments, such as the possible role that *moral intuitions* could play in justifying moral judgements (Bedke 2010; Burkard 2012), the role of analogies and arguments from universalizability or the Rawlsian idea of a reflective equilibrium as an aim of moral inquiry (see Althoff/Franzen 2015: 138-142 for teaching material in German on the latter point; see Daniels 2003/2016 for a comprehensive introduction to the reflective-equilibrium model and Giesinger 2004 for an application of that model to lesson planning).¹⁸

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imply any weighing principles, and specifying weighing principles is consistent with rejecting any attempts to derive the contributory principles from something more basic. On the project of unifying Rossian principles, see McNaughton 1996 and Audi 2004.

¹⁸ Previous versions of this paper were presented at Thomas Schmidt's colloquium at Humboldt University of Berlin and in Benjamin Kiesewetter's colloquium at Hamburg University in May 2017. We have greatly benefited from the discussions on both occasions. We would also like to thank Ingrid Austveg Evans, Benjamin Kiesewetter, Kirsten Meyer, Friederike Wenzel and two anonymous reviewers for this journal as well as the journal's editors for their very helpful written comments on previous drafts.

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TEAM-TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL A SWEDISH EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This paper discusses a team-taught course we designed, executed and evaluated at Tibble Gymnasium, an upper secondary school in Stockholm, Sweden. With the use of a two-teacher system we wanted to overcome typical difficulties philosophical novices face. After discussing the justifications for designing and teaching the course, we continue to detail its structure and content. Next we evaluate the project with reference to data collected from the students and from reference groups. The resulting effects on students as well as teachers are considerable. The students in the project are, according to the data, more satisfied with their learning and earned higher grades than students in the reference group and the teachers have improved their philosophical and pedagogical skills.

Keywords: Team-teaching, teaching informal logic, teaching moral philosophy, teaching existential questions, upper secondary school.

1. Introduction

Novices often find philosophy difficult. The subject matter is rather abstract and the method differs from mathematical as well as from empirical methods. The difficulties are likely to impede learning and to discourage students to develop their philosophical skills. In this paper we will describe how we, with reference to a two-teacher system, were able to meet these difficulties.

There are good reasons to believe that team teaching is beneficial to learning, especially when the subject matter allows for much discussion and argumentation. Our hypothesis was therefore, in outline, that a two-teacher system would reduce the indicated difficulties without compromising the complexity of philosophical problems and theories and at the same make philosophy studies inspiring and eye opening. We have evaluated this hypothesis with reference to quantitative as well as qualitative data.

According to our evaluation the hypothesis is confirmed. The students in the two-teacher system found the teaching more stimulating and engaging as compared to students in two reference groups that have not been team-taught. Our students benefitted from the fact that we as teachers have different areas of expertise. This allows the students to learn more than if they had had only one instructor. The different philosophical competences and perspectives were expressed in class and stimulated the students to develop their own thinking. In a nutshell, the two-teacher system made the learning situation dynamic and engaging. This was also manifested in the grades. The students that took part of the two-teacher system had on average significantly higher grades than students in the reference groups.

The effects on the teachers were also considerable. By learning from each other, the teachers made better philosophers and better teachers. An additional benefit is that the two-teacher system does not put any additional economic strain on the school budget.

In the next section we describe the method used to evaluate our hypothesis and in section 3 we put our teaching in relation to the Swedish upper secondary school curriculum. Thereafter, in section 4, we elaborate the reasons why philosophy students find philosophy troublesome. We relate these reasons to our educational goals and to our hypothesis. In section 5 we describe research implying that team-teaching is beneficial to philosophy learning. In the same section we give a thorough portrayal of the way in which we implemented our two-teacher system. In section 6 we give a detailed account of the philosophy course and its modules as we taught them. In section 7, we present the results and compare attitudes towards philosophy among the students in our project with students' attitudes in the reference groups. In the last section we portray some challenges and further implications relating to team-teaching. Although the Swedish educational system differs from other systems our findings can be generalized to other countries as well as to higher education.

2. Method

There are good reasons to believe that a two-teacher system is an effective means to achieve educational goals. In order to investigate this more thoroughly we designed a project involving 129 upper secondary high school students from Stockholm. The project spanned over two school years. 64 of the students participated in the two-teacher education 2015-2016 and 65 students participated in 2016-2017. At the end of each school year the students voluntarily filled in answers in a survey.

Our survey is based on philosopher Jan Lif's 2007 inquiry. Lif and his colleagues from Gothenburg University made a survey of Swedish upper secondary students' attitudes to philosophy. There is no other nation wide study of such attitudes available.

Lif's study includes twenty propositions, fourteen of which are of no significance to our project. For instance, we left out propositions stating claims about professional philosophers and propositions about philosophy studies at college. To the six propositions that we deemed useful from Lif we added two about the two-teacher system and one about the course curriculum.

The students that delivered the data set described by Lif constitute one reference group, hereafter, Lif's group. It is interesting to compare our data with Lif's since his study is carefully completed and involves many students. What is more, the students in that study have not been team-taught. In addition two other groups at our school have served as references, one in 2015-2016 and one in 2016-2017. These groups have been taught by one of the teachers in the two-teacher project. This teacher has made use of the same curriculum, modules, exercises and tests as in the two-teacher system. The reference groups have also filled in answers to the same survey delivered to the classes involved in our project aside from the one relating to team teaching.

In order to simplify, we have merged the two cohorts of students participating in the project into one, hereafter called the project group. The reference students at our school constitute what we will refer to as the reference group. The total number of students in the reference group is 58.

We have also considered the students' academic achievements. We have compared the average grade of the students in our project with the average grade of the students in the reference group.

The quantitative approaches are complemented by a qualitative approach. With the survey as our point of departure we interviewed the students, one group in 2016 and one group in 2017. Comments from the interviews add new meaning to the data from the surveys.

3. Outline of the Swedish educational system

The Swedish educational system involves different types of education, designed for individuals of different ages, needs and abilities. All youths in Sweden who have completed the nine-year compulsory school have a right to free upper secondary school education.

The upper secondary school consists of 18 programs, each of which lasts for three years. Six of these programs are preparatory for higher education: Business Management and Economics Program, Arts Program, Humanities Program, Natural Science Program, Social Science Program and Technology Program.

Some subjects are common to all six programs and are called foundation subjects. The syllabus contains the aims of the subject as a whole. It also contains a description of the subject's core content. Knowledge requirements are specified for each course included in the subject. It is the government that decides the syllabus for the foundational subjects, based on proposals from the National Agency for Education.

Philosophy is not a foundation subject, but is program specific to the Humanities Program, the Social Science Program and to the law orientation of the Business Management and Economics Program. This means that all students in Sweden who study any of these programs are required to study philosophy. It is the National Agency of Education that decides the subject syllabuses of these courses. Approximately 65 000 of the students in upper secondary school study philosophy.¹

¹ See: <http://siris.skolverket.se/siris/f?p=101:181:0::NO::>

There are two courses within Philosophy called Philosophy 1 and Philosophy 2. The courses are worth 50 credits each (Each higher education preparatory program requires 2500 credits). One 50 credits course involves approximately 40 hours of teaching.

The Swedish National Agency of Education stipulates the aims of the philosophy courses. According to the agency, teaching the subject of philosophy should give students the opportunities to develop the following:

- 1) Knowledge of the main characteristics of different views of reality and different ways of viewing knowledge.
- 2) Knowledge of theoretical views in science and scientific methods.
- 3) Knowledge of ethics, different ethical viewpoints, and normative ethical theories, and also their application.
- 4) Knowledge of existential questions and social philosophy, and also current trends in modern philosophy.
- 5) The ability to identify philosophical issues, and also to analyse, explain and determine a position on classical and contemporary philosophical questions and theories using relevant concepts.
- 6) Knowledge of linguistic philosophy and the ability to clarify nuances of language by means of linguistic concepts, and also the ability to assess arguments and to distinguish and apply logical arguments (The Swedish Agency of Education 2012).

The Agency deems all aims to be equally important. It does not stipulate that an equal amount of time be allotted to the fostering of each aim, nor does it dictate that a specific teaching method be used. It is thus up to the teacher to plan the course in a way that assures that the aims are realized.

Each student gets a grade in the subject. The grade marks the degree to which the student satisfies the given aims. Grades are set from A to F. E-A are passing grades, F is a failing grade. The National Agency of Education has set knowledge requirements for the various grades associated with each aim. When the course is over the teacher makes an overall evaluation of the student's abilities. The evaluation is based upon the degree in which the student has satisfied the six aims. In order to get an A in Philosophy the student must satisfy the knowledge requirements to the highest degree (that is A) relating to each and every of the six aims.

When the students apply to higher education, the grades in the different subjects are transformed into numbers as follows: E = 10; D = 12,5; C = 15; B = 17,5; A = 20. We will make use of this transformation in section 7.

4. Diagnosis, goal and hypothesis

There are surprisingly few inquiries about Swedish students' perceptions of their philosophy education. In 2007 Lif sent a survey to all upper secondary schools that provided the Social Science Program, where Philosophy is a program specific. As stressed by Lif, the reply rate was rather low. Only 1759 replies were given. This number makes up approximately 20% of the students at the program at that time. Yet, according to Lif and his colleagues, the replies are representative for all students at the Social Science Program. In what follows we will assume that this is the case.

In Lif's study 12.5% fully agreed with "Studying Philosophy can help my performance in other subjects, e.g. Swedish, History, Social Studies and Psychology." 17.5% fully agreed with "Studying Philosophy can help me analyze societal issues, e.g. ethical debates, environmental issues, financial politics." 14% fully agreed with "Philosophy deepens the ability to critically analyze argumentative texts." These numbers suggest that students find philosophy to be of limited significance to societal issues, to other scientific disciplines and to critical thinking.

There are several explanations of these unsatisfactory results. Although all novices have been considering philosophical problems before, many of them have been unaware of the fact that when doing so they have been engaging in philosophy. The way in which philosophers think about these problems are new to them. Philosophical theories often refer to our way of thinking. To philosophize is, in a broad sense, to think about thinking, quite often with use of new terminology. This makes the subject rather abstract and constitutes a problem for some students (Booth 2006: 173). Additionally, philosophical questions are often very fundamental and general in character. What is a fact? Can we ever know the facts? Are moral opinions factual, possible to justify in a sense relevant to knowledge, or are they just a matter of taste? The fundamental nature of these and related questions might make philosophy troublesome (See, for instance, Perkins 2006). Moreover, if the very foundation is questioned, are not all answers equally good? But why bother then with which are correct and even if not all answers are equally valid, how can we tell what answers are more rational? Due to the foundational character of philosophical problems there are seldom definitive arguments for philosophical ideas. This is also part of an explanation as to why the ideas are often controversial, even among professional philosophers. This constitutes a problem for students who are eager to know the right answer to a philosophical question. It also constitutes a problem for some students with low self-confidence. "Who am I to have a say on these issues?"

Furthermore, philosophical theories are sometimes met with rather strong emotional reactions. The theories may contradict common-sense knowledge or opinions. Some theories might force the students to reconsider some of their most firmly held beliefs about the meaning of life, personal identity, economic justice, knowledge of the external world and obligations to humans and other animals. Sometimes this causes emotional turmoil and some theories are rejected as a result of this. Other theories, or their advocates, might be met with aggression (Burns 2014).

The philosophical method might also constitute a problem. In other subjects the method used is, in general, empirical. Hypotheses are evaluated with reference to their empirical adequacy and are tested in experiments. By contrast, philosophers often make use of thought experiments (Brown and Fehige 2016). We are asked to consider what a theory implies about imaginary cases and whether the implications coincide with our considered intuitions about the cases. There are many famous thought experiments; Nozick's experience machine, Parfit's teletransportations, and Thomson's violinist to name a few. Thought experiments like these are frequently met with resistance. Novices call the philosophical as well as personal significance of the experiments into question. The experiments are considered too far-fetched (Rini 2016).

For these reasons it is likely that students find philosophy difficult. Yet, difficulties are, in themselves, no impediment to learning. On the contrary, as long as students find the difficulties manageable they actually might enhance learning. If the students are also committed to a solution to the difficulties and if the students find meaning in them the learning effect is even stronger (Hattie 2012: chapter four; Ariely 2016: chapter two).

When planning and thinking our project through, our goal was to elaborate the Philosophy 1 course in a way that fosters all six aims specified by the National Agency of Education that reduce the above indicated difficulties without compromising the complexity of philosophical problems and theories and at the same make philosophy studies inspiring and eye-opening. The hypothesis is that the two-teacher system will assure that this complex goal is satisfied to a high degree.

5. The two-teacher system

In order to realize our complex goal and to test our hypothesis we designed a two-teacher system. We jointly planned the whole course, the different modules and the very content of each and every session. Since both of us would be present at every other seminar we would have excellent opportunities to evaluate the impact of our teaching. This is, as leading educational researchers argue, of utmost importance when it comes to student achievement (Hattie 2012; Timperley 2011).

By referencing to the evaluation we would be able to know what to rehearse and what needed emphasis. We would also be able to detect and correct misunderstandings and we would be able to recognize whether the teaching was on the right level so that we could adjust the level of upcoming seminars.

The teacher not responsible for the seminar should not be a passive bystander. On the contrary, this teacher should have the opportunity to answer and raise questions, thereby acting as a model student. The positive effects of this are documented by Hammer and Giordano (2001), and have been widely confirmed over the years.

What is more, we ourselves, Lokind and Salwén, disagree over some philosophical issues. We wanted our students to note this since disagreements can be used in a constructive way (Cray and Brown 2014). The students could observe an actual philosophical debate among colleagues that offers different perspectives and arguments. Our way of teaching is important in "creating a climate in which ideas can be developed and freely exchanged" (Anderson and

Speck 1998: 673). Additionally, since we sometimes contradict each other, we cannot both be right. This may boost the students' confidence, as they realize that one of the two authorities is wrong. The dynamics would also assure a high degree of attention among the students and encourage them to contribute to philosophical discussions.

At our school we teach Philosophy 1 during one semester. We met our students twice a week and had 30 sessions at our disposal, approximating 40 hours in total. In our project we decided to have 15 joint sessions and 15 individual sessions. At the joint sessions we gathered both classes in a large classroom with both teachers present. This arrangement assures that our way of teaching does not cost the school any extra money.

One teacher has the main responsibility even if the teachers have planned the lesson together. The teachers had split the main responsibility for these sessions as fairly as possible. At the individual sessions the classes were separated and were taught by one teacher. One of the teachers followed one class, the other teacher followed the other class. The joint sessions was somewhat more theoretical and more of a lecture, whereas the separate sessions were more informal allowing for more exercises and group discussions. In this way we were able to vary the teaching and we know that varied teaching is beneficial to learning. What is more, at the theoretical sessions the students will experience teaching they are likely to encounter in higher education.

The reference group had the same educational set up, with one more theoretical session and one more informal. This means that there was no difference in the amount of group exercises or discussions between the reference group and the project group.

As we explain in section 6 below, Philosophy 1 is well suited for three different modules in the following order: "informal logic", "moral philosophy" and "existential questions". It is advisable to end each module with a test. This means that the students should receive formative evaluation on two tests. Of course, formative evaluation should also be given continuously during the course in relation exercises, discussions, questions raised and answered. Formative feedback has a major influence on student learning outcomes (Hattie and Timperley 2007; Hattie 2012).

We were eager to get our students to understand that philosophical theories and thinking can be of great help when it comes to the solution of difficult real-life problems. Our conjecture was that this awareness would motivate the students to learn philosophy as they saw that it is of significance to actual life. With reference to a recurrent concrete moral problem as a focal point in our teaching, we wanted to overcome some obstacles to successful philosophy teaching. In what follows, this problem will be referred to as the Tracy Latimer case.

Tracy Latimer, a 12-year-old victim of cerebral palsy, was killed by her father in 1993. Tracy lived with her family on a prairie farm in Saskatchewan, Canada. On a Saturday morning while his wife and other children were at church, Robert Latimer put Tracy in the cab of his pickup truck and piped in exhaust fumes until she died. At the time of her death, Tracy weighed less than 40 pounds; she was described as "functioning at the mental level of a three-month-old baby." (Rachels 2003: 8)

Philosophical novices are, like most people, interested in moral problems. Since motivation is so closely related to learning, it is advisable to choose a moral problem as a focal point. What is more, the Tracy Latimer case constitutes a real moral problem; it is not a philosophical invention. This assures that our upcoming philosophy teaching is of significance to the students' perceptions of the world and the moral problems the world actually gives rise to.

The Tracy Latimer case involves not only a problem that engages students, it is also a very difficult problem. The combination of challenge and commitment has documented effect on learning (Hattie 2012: chapter 4). Additionally, Cray and Brown stress that a debate style team teaching is suitable when students have developed some sort of personal view and where the topic is relevant to their lives and interests (Cray and Brown 2014: 478). The Tracy Latimer case suits this description very well. It is also well suited to make students realize that different philosophical subdomains relate to each other and to make students realize that philosophy in general relates to other subjects like Psychology and Social Studies.

6. The modules

Before starting the critical thinking module, we introduced the Philosophy 1 course by asking the students what they believed philosophy is about and what kinds of problems are philosophical in nature. We also asked what expectations they had of the course. We wanted to get a clearer picture of the students' level of understanding and perhaps prejudicial opinions about philosophy. These are crucial factors when it comes to successful course design, regardless of what subject is being taught (See, for instance, Barton 2015). In the introduction we also introduced the Tracy Latimer case as a paradigmatic example of a philosophical problem.

Did the father do the right or the wrong thing? When discussing this with the students we were able to establish the meaningfulness of the whole Philosophy 1 course. For instance, we asked them for reasons for their opinions. What arguments did they have? We thereby introduced informal logic. The students also become aware that in order to reason about the moral question they needed to refer to fundamental moral principles. We then explained that Moral philosophy is the second module of the course. With reference to Tracy's severe handicap the students also touched upon profound issues relating to questions about the meaning of life and what it means to be human as opposed to inanimate objects. Questions like these stand in focus in existential thought. "Existential questions" is, we explained, the name of the last module of the course.

6.1 Informal logic

We allotted eight sessions to this module, including an examination session. Within the module the students had the opportunity to develop four out of six aims: 1, 2, 5 and 6 stated in section two above.

In order to satisfy these aims we set out to give the students an elementary understanding of crucial concepts in informal logic and in scientific reasoning as well as the ability to use these concepts when evaluating the strength of various arguments. The students learned the difference

between reconstruction and evaluation of arguments with the use of notions like premise, implicit premise, and conclusion. When reconstructing arguments students learned that linguistic expressions are often ambiguous or vague, but that these difficulties can be overcome with the use of definitions. We allocated four sessions to argument reconstruction and made use of examples not only of everyday reasoning found in newspapers, but also found in scientific reasoning.

Relating to various examples, students then learned that an argument is strong only if the premises are tenable as well as jointly relevant to the conclusion. We explicated ‘tenability’ and ‘relevance’ with reference to further examples and to theoretical ideas connected to knowledge (as true, justified belief) and to scientific method. The students had the opportunity to test and develop their ability to evaluate arguments with reference to numerous examples. The exam consisted of a text wherein an argument is expressed. The students’ task was to reconstruct the argument expressed in the text and evaluate the argument as reconstructed by making use of the relevant concepts.

We evaluated the students’ tests and gave substantial feedback. What was especially well done, what was unclear and what could be done better and in what way? The results were in themselves also a partial evaluation of our teaching. We also discussed the content of the module. The students also had the opportunity to express opinion about the test.

6.2 Moral philosophy

Moral philosophy is easily motivated with reference to the syllabus for Philosophy 1. This is a somewhat boring but, for a philosophy teacher in Sweden, crucial consideration to bear in mind. Four out of six aims are treated within this module, namely aims 3, 4, 5 and 6. Thus, some of the aims in focus in the previous module recur here. This is due to the fact that informal logic and semantic analysis as well as the ability to raise philosophical questions are crucial to all philosophical thinking. What is more, the moral theories we discussed with the students all have highly competent contemporary advocates.

A more poignant motivation is that it is impossible to evaluate the arguments relating to the moral quality of Robert Latimer’s intentional killing of Tracy without reference to fundamental moral principles or theories. What content do the theories have and how tenable are they? In this module we considered utilitarianism, duty based ethics (Kantianism) and Nozick’s theory of rights.

After an introductory session where we stated the considerations above and where we, with reference to the Tracy Latimer case and other examples, distinguished moral issues from psychological, economic and juridical ones, we continued with the moral theories. We allocated two sessions for each theory. In the first session we elaborated on the content of the theory. In the second session the students evaluated arguments for and against the theory with techniques and concepts learned in the previous module. All in all we dedicated nine seminars, including examination, to the Moral philosophy module.

The first theory under consideration was utilitarianism. The reason is that it has initial plausibility (Prima facie, it is hard to dissent from the dictum “Make the world as good as

possible”). Moreover, the other theories can be seen as plausible answers to influential objections to utilitarianism. Utilitarianism implies that it might be right to convict an innocent human being to death (McCloskey 1957). But this flies in the face of our considered moral judgments. Utilitarianism thus allows, the argument goes, too much. With this argument as a point of departure the students understood why a duty-based ethic, like Kantianism, might be called for. You are simply not allowed to convict an innocent human being to death. We then spelled out the gist of that theory, and considered arguments for and against it. Another influential objection to utilitarianism is that it is too demanding. The theory arguably implies that we ought to sacrifice most of our wealth in order to fight famine and life-threatening diseases (Unger 1996). But this, many complain, demands too much of us. If we want to make such sacrifices we are welcome to do so, but we do not have a moral obligation to do so. On the contrary, we are allowed to do whatever we like with our possessions (given certain constraints). This is the very core of right-based theories. We then explained the theory of rights (negatively construed) and evaluated it with reference to the knowledge and abilities developed in the previous module. When it came to examination, feedback and evaluation of the module, we followed the procedure described in section 6.1.

6.3 Existential questions

In the last module we discussed existential and epistemological questions. The aims in focus were 1, 4, 5 and 6. This shows that there is a close connection between this module and the earlier ones. In this module the students also applied their abilities to analyze arguments and theories relating to existential questions. By eliminating vagueness and ambiguity the students realized that questions connecting to the meaning of being can be discussed in a systematic way. We also returned to Tracy Latimer. We allotted eight seminars to this module, including two examination sessions where the students, in smaller groups discussed existential questions. In addition to the oral examination the students submitted a summary.

Many young persons, especially girls, experience anxiety. It is near at hand to assume that this, at least partially, can be explained with reference to the fact that young persons face questions of an existential nature. These questions involve (1) The Self (Who am I?), (2) The relation between the Self and other beings and (3) The relation between the Self and the world, a world that has undergone profound changes the last 20 years, all ranging from globalization to digitalization.

The students had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with philosophical theories that address some of these existential questions. For instance, we discussed the Self on the assumption that there is a fundamental difference between human and non-human beings. But is the assumption correct? If so, wherein does the difference consist? We discussed (2) and (3) based on the assumption that the others have a profound influence on us when it comes to our own identity making. For instance, consciously or not, we identify with others. Yet, equally often we distance ourselves from others. This means that the others are always there, whether we like it or not. This is partly due to the workings of language. To think about oneself is to think with use of language. Since language is a public phenomenon, categorizations,

connotations and denotations not of our own making, are, as it were, forced upon us. This will inevitably affect our sense of ourselves.

In our last seminars we discussed the profound changes in modern society and their influence on our understanding of the Self. For instance, what is the difference between an IRL-self and a digital one?

One important goal of ours was to get the students to understand how all the above-mentioned aspects affects us, not least young people. What is, when it really comes down to it, the meaning of existence?

7. Outcomes

Our hypothesis was that the two-teacher system would reduce difficulties that philosophy novices typically face without compromising the complexity of philosophical problems and theories and at the same make philosophy studies inspiring and eye-opening. This hypothesis is tested in our project and is confirmed by the data.

In this section we will describe some salient outcomes. In doing so, we will distinguish between the impacts on the students from the impacts on the teachers. We describe the impacts on the students first.

7.1. Student feedback

As compared with students in previous Philosophy 1 courses we have taught, the students were more active. The students raised more questions and problematized more philosophical perspectives than previous groups. This opinion of ours might, of course, be influenced by wishful thinking, but it is supported by the results from a survey made as well as the grades set.

The survey

When designing our survey we made use of six propositions from Lif's 2007 nationwide study. In addition to the six propositions used (1-6 below), we added two about the two-teacher system and one about the course curriculum. The students were asked to mark to what extent they agreed with the propositions (Fully agree, somewhat agree, have no opinion, somewhat disagree and fully disagree).

1. Studying Philosophy can help my performance in other subjects, e.g. Swedish, History, Social Studies and Psychology.
2. I think Philosophy is interesting.
3. Studying Philosophy can help me analyze societal issues, e.g. ethical debates, environmental issues, financial politics.
4. Philosophical questions leave me completely unfazed.
5. Philosophy can help me develop my ability to think clearly.
6. Studying Philosophy deepens the ability to critically analyze argumentative texts.
7. The two-teacher system has made classes more fun than classes taught by only one teacher.

8. The two-teacher system has made classes more stimulating than classes taught by only one teacher.
9. The course curriculum (informal logic, moral philosophy and existential questions) has made me realize that philosophical issues are connected.

114 out of 129 students in our project answered the survey.

The same survey was delivered to the students in the reference group. 47 out of 58 students filled in the survey. The difference between the reference group and the group in our project is that the reference group was taught with only one teacher. The reference group had the same recurrent theme, modules and examinations. In what follows, we will describe some striking results (for a full description of the data, see Appendix 1).

Students in the project found philosophy academically more worthwhile than the students in the reference group and more fruitful than the students in Lif's group. 26% of the students in our project fully agreed with "Studying philosophy can help me achieve more in other subjects such as History, Religion, Psychology, Social science and Swedish." In the reference group the percentage was 11 and in Lif's it was 13.

When it comes so societal issues, students in our project have benefitted. 29% fully agreed with "Studying Philosophy can help me analyze societal issues, e. g. ethical debates, environmental issues, financial politics." 27% in the reference group and 18% in Lif's group did.

Only 22% of the students in the project group fully agreed with "Philosophy is interesting." Both reference groups scored higher here. This is surprising, especially since only 1% of the students in the project fully agreed with "Philosophy leaves me completely unfazed." In the reference group 6% fully agreed with that proposition. In Lif's group 3% did.

In the survey directed to the students in our project we formulated three additional propositions, namely: "The two-teacher system has made the lessons more fun than if only one teacher had taught the course.", "The two-teacher system has made classes more stimulating than classes taught by only one teacher" and "The course content: informal logic, moral philosophy and existential questions, has made me realize that philosophical questions are related to each other." 45% fully agreed with the first proposition, 34% with the second and 34% of the students in our group fully agreed with the third. In the reference group 19% fully agreed with the last proposition. This suggests that the two-teacher system in some way makes the students realize that philosophical ideas relate to each other.

The data confirms our hypothesis, but provides, in itself no indication of explanatory mechanisms. Yet, such indications can be found in the interviews. Some students stressed that philosophy is a new subject and that they were unfamiliar with the philosophical way of thinking. As a comment to this, other students added that it is important to "keep up from the start". This suggests that students were of the opinion that the content of the modules build on each other and that philosophical ideas are not compiled of isolated bits of inquiry.

As a comment relating to propositions 1, 3, 5 and 6 students said that philosophy could help one avoiding contradictions and making more distinctive definitions of vague and/or ambiguous

terms, not only of philosophical, but of any kind. One student said she used informal logic when watching a debate from the American presidential election campaign. Another students said that philosophy had made their worldview more critical.

When it comes to propositions 7 and 8, some students commented that the teacher who was not responsible for the seminar in question became like a student, which, in turn, strengthened the personal bonds between the teachers and the students. As one student put it: “Sometimes the teacher is a student.” This contributes to a more equal classroom. According to Jacques Rancière (2011) an unauthoritarian relation between teacher and student also affects the student’s results in a positive direction.

Another psychological idea relates to this. Some students were of the opinion that team teaching was socially preferable since a student who, for one reason or another, found one teacher easier to talk to than the other, could rely on the first as the go-to contact. Several students emphasized that it was good to have two teachers since they explained the same idea or theory in slightly different ways and that the teachers sometimes offered different perspectives. One student praised the two-teacher system and stressed that it resulted in a dialogue teaching style even at the theoretical sessions. This in turn made teaching more of a discussion between equals rather than a lecture. It is fair to assume that two teachers, expressing different opinions before their students, might contribute to an open minded and tolerant classroom environment.

The students interviewed in the project group concluded that we should continue to teach as a pair. Yet, they pointed out that the ability to cooperate is crucial to a successful two-teacher project. It is unlikely, they continued, that a two-teacher project forced upon two teachers who do not work that well together, would achieve a good result.

This data must of course be handled with caution. It involves a small number of students and there are many factors that might complicate the interpretation of the data and, a fortiori the overall evaluation of our project. For instance, are the answers in the survey reliable? Do they really express the students’ opinions? The attitudes expressed in relation to proposition two might indicate that the survey must be handled with some caution. Yet, the answers in the survey are at large congruent with the comments made in the interviews.

However, the mere fact that our teaching differed from other courses taught in our school might be a factor to consider. The presence of two teachers is unusual and the large classroom might add a level of attention to the teaching. The fact that there was an additional teacher present perhaps made the students feel observed. This can explain the signs of attentiveness. The students simply did not want to be looked upon as uninterested or unfocused. What is more, the students in our project were from two different classes and did not know each other particularly well before our project began. Part of an explanation of the attentiveness might therefore be the fact that some of the students did want to make a good impression on the new classmates.

Additionally, the students were aware of the fact that they were part of a study (even if we did not remind them of it). This, which might give rise to a placebo-like response, is also a factor to bear in mind when it comes to an overall evaluation of our hypothesis. For all that, we

conclude that the best explanation of the various signs of engagement is the hypothesis that the students actually were engaged to a high degree and that this, in turn, at least partly is explained by the two-teacher system.

Grades

The grades also suggest that the two-teacher system is auspicious for learning. The median grade in the project group was B and the average grade was 16.03. The median grade in the reference group was C and the average grade was 14.26. This is indeed a big difference. Lif's study does not contain any grade information. Yet, average grade for a Swedish student when graduating from upper secondary school is 14.6.²

As many as 28.9% in the project group got an A and only 0.7% got an F. The corresponding numbers in our reference group was 24% and 5.1%. For further details, see Appendix 2.

7.2 Teacher feedback

It has been rewarding to plan, execute and to evaluate the course together. This is, of course partly due to the fact that we learned that the students, during the course, found the teaching challenging and worthwhile. This rather immediate feedback made us feel confident that the way in which we conducted the sessions was beneficial to learning.

With reference to the Tracy Latimer case we were able to plan the course matching the aims given by the Swedish National Agency of Education. What is more, joint planning responsibility makes teaching somewhat more relaxing. We were, as a pair, responsible for the content and design of the sessions. This meant that it was we as a team who were to be commended or blamed, not just the teacher who happened to hold the sessions.

Our teaching has improved. The importance of continuous feedback from a colleague cannot be overrated. Opinions about the use of the whiteboard, the tempo, the way in which questions are asked and answered are just a few examples of input that are of great significance for improved teaching. With reference to this we were able to change some things during the course, and other things can be changed for the next time we give the course.

We also learned a lot about successful feedback, formative as well as summative. This is due to the two-teacher system. Since we were two teachers in class every other session, we had the opportunity to learn from each other how to give formative feedback during the sessions. We had, for instance, a particular interest in the way in which students received formative feedback.

Our philosophical skills have also been developed. Since we have somewhat different philosophical specialties and interests we have had great opportunity to learn from each other. Furthermore, every now and then students asked rather intriguing questions, the answers to which were far from clear. Since we both heard the questions it was interesting to know how the other teacher understood them and his opinion about the answers. Frequently we had to take

² See:

http://siris.skolverket.se/reports/rwservlet?cmdkey=common¬geo=&report=gy_betyg&p_flik=G&p_programkod=&p_ar=2016&p_lankod=&p_kommunkod=&p_hmantyp=&p_skolkod=

another look at some aspects of various theories or to reread some passages from influential philosophical texts. In this process we realized that there was an additional interpretation of an argument, which made it stronger than it first appeared, or that a certain aspect of a philosophical theory can be understood in yet another way. For instance, we reread and partly reconsidered some of Harman's ideas expressed in his "Inference to the Best Explanation." We also reviewed some aspects of Kant's moral theory when discussing whether or not it implies that we have an obligation to give money to beggars in Sweden. In relation to the last module we reexamined the notion of agency in Sartre's thinking.

8. Challenges and some further implications

A two-teacher system, or more generally team teaching, presupposes that the relation between the teachers involved is professional. This means, among other things, that they share a common understanding of the syllabus, of the way in which teaching is evaluated and of grades set. It also presupposes that the teachers have self-confidence enough and are intuitive enough to deliver and to handle constructive criticism from a colleague.

A typical class in Sweden includes approximately 30 students. This means that a system like ours presupposes that there are classrooms physically large enough to handle a group of approximately 65 persons. Our conjecture is that most upper secondary schools have the proper facilities.

It is more questionable whether educational institutions have enough students to ensure that there are two classes that study the philosophy course and that there are two philosophy teachers. Our design presupposes there are and this in turn assures that our project does not saddle the school with any additional expenses. Obviously, this is crucial since economic considerations are highly significant when it comes to the implementation of educational projects.

Our results are generalizable to other countries at least if the above conditions are met. Whether they can be generalized to higher education is somewhat more problematic. A college that administers two parallel introductory courses in philosophy and have staff enough to ensure that different teachers teach different courses (or modules within the courses) can elaborate a two-teacher system like ours. Otherwise a two-teacher system is likely to result in higher costs.

Even if team teaching is not possible it is still possible for a team of teachers to plan teaching with experienced colleagues. If that is combined with only a minimum of auscultation there is a lot to gain for students as well as for instructors.

We firmly believe that team teaching is beneficial for students as well as teachers. The results from our study suggest this. Our project involved two teachers of the same sex, ethnical background and approximately the same age. It would be interesting to explore the effects of team teaching when the involved teachers represent different sexes, ages and ethnicity. Our

conjecture is that the effects would be even more positive, but that remains to be shown in another study.³

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Appendix 1. Survey: Propositions and chart

1. Studying Philosophy can help my performance in other subjects, e.g. Swedish, History, Social Studies and Psychology.
2. I think Philosophy is interesting.
3. Studying Philosophy can help me analyze societal issues, e.g. ethical debates, environmental issues, financial politics.
4. Philosophical questions leave me completely unfazed.
5. Philosophy can help me develop my ability to think clearly.
6. Studying Philosophy deepens the ability to critically analyze argumentative texts.
7. The two-teacher system has made the lessons more fun than if only one teacher had taught the course.
8. The two-teacher system has made classes more stimulating than classes taught by only one teacher.
9. The course curriculum (informal logic, moral philosophy and existential questions) has made me realize that philosophical issues are connected.

Answers to the survey: Lif's 2007 survey, L, n = 1759. Project group, P, n = 114. Reference group R, n = 58. N.A = non-applicable. All numerals are given in percent.

	Fully agree			Somewhat agree			Have no opinion			Somewhat disagree			Fully disagree		
	L	P	R	L	P	R	L	P	R	L	P	R	L	P	R
1	13	26	11	44	44	59	28	26	19	10	4	2	5	0	9
2	24	22	28	43	52	53	11	11	4	16	14	9	6	1	6
3	18	29	27	46	44	48	25	26	15	8	2	6	3	0	4
4	3	1	6	8	2	4	15	21	26	51	49	41	23	27	19
5	17	20	23	47	53	48	23	17	17	10	10	6	3	0	6
6	14	31	28	43	45	43	32	22	19	8	2	6	3	0	4
7	N.A	45	N.A	N.A	42	N.A	N.A	9	N.A	N.A	3	N.A	N.A	1	N.A
8	N.A	34	N.A	N.A	43	N.A	N.A	16	N.A	N.A	6	N.A	N.A	1	N.A
9	N.A	30	19	N.A	40	58	N.A	30	17	N.A	0	2	N.A	0	4

Appendix 2. Grades

Project group, P: Total number of grades: 129. Average grade = 16,03, median grade = B

Reference group, R: Number of grades: 58. Average grade = 14,26, median grade = C

	A	B	C	D	E	F
P	37 (28,9%)	22 (17,1%)	38 (29,6%)	19 (14,8%)	12 (9,3%)	1 (0,7%)
R	14 (24%)	5 (8,6%)	14 (24,1%)	12 (20,6%)	10 (17,2%)	3 (5,1%)

Country Report: Germany (Baden-Württemberg) – The Ludwigsburg Model of Teacher Training in Ethics

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General information about Education and Universities of Education in Germany

The majority of German pupils attend public schools (and later public universities). After kindergarten (age three to six) school is compulsory for nine or ten years. For the first four years, all children attend elementary school (Grundschule). After 4th grade, in accordance with their parents' wishes as well as their academic ability, the children have three different options of secondary education schools (Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium). The Gymnasium provides an upper secondary level with an 11th, 12th and sometimes 13th grade in order to prepare the pupils for further studies at the universities.

In Germany education is regulated individually by each federal state, so there are differences from federal state to federal state. Baden-Württemberg in the south of Germany maintains six Universities of Education, which concentrate on educational science matters both in research and teaching. They also offer doctoral and post-doctoral degrees and are, therefore on a par with full universities. The largest of the six Universities of Education with approximately 5,500 students and 450 members of staff is located in Ludwigsburg. Although the main focus for the LUE is on elementary school and lower secondary school, the LUE also participates in teacher training for the upper secondary level by being part of a joint "Professional School of Education" (PSE) which is run collectively with universities and colleges in the area of Stuttgart.

Current Situation regarding Philosophy and Ethics in Schools

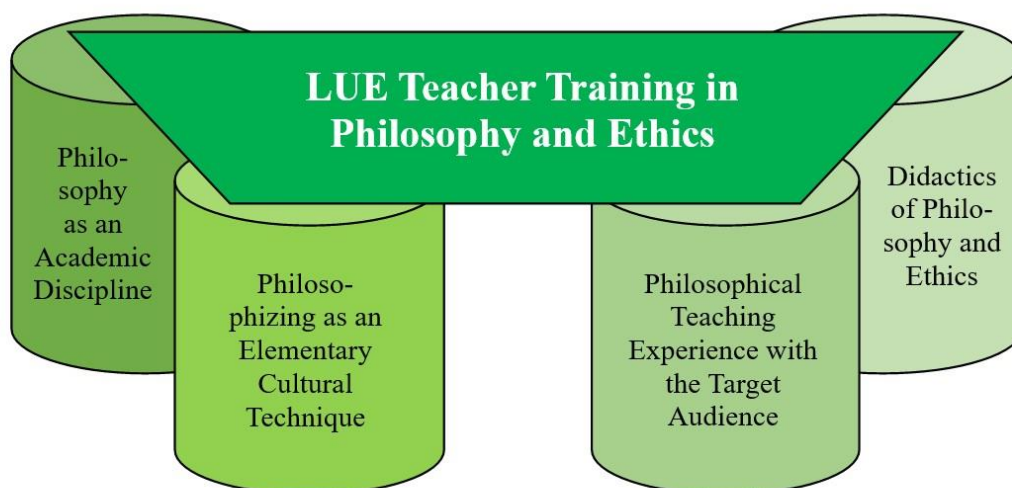
The situation of philosophy and ethics in German schools differs from federal state to federal state (Roesch 2012: 23-24). This report focuses on the federal state of Baden-Württemberg where ethics (Ethik) is taught as an alternative subject to religious education (Religion) at the secondary level only. As a result, the majority of pupils in ethics tend to have a non-Christian background and the ethnic heterogeneity in these classes tends to be significantly higher than in other subjects. Philosophy is compulsory optional at the upper secondary level only. So it is not possible to study those subjects as a future teacher at elementary schools in Baden-Württemberg. Usually ethics is only offered for grades eight and higher. However, some schools also offer philosophy for children at elementary level. This is sometimes encouraged by private foundations like the *Karl Schlecht Stiftung*, which tries to improve the situation of philosophy and ethics in schools especially for children of young age.

Current Situation of Teacher Training in Philosophy and Ethics

In Germany teacher training in philosophy and ethics not only differs from federal state to federal state but also from university to university. Most universities have their own curriculum and the freedom of teaching is valued greatly among German philosophers. As a result, the education of each and every student is to a great extent individually unique with a very low degree of generally shared contents or methods. In addition to that many philosophers at the universities focus on research instead of teaching and especially take no great interest in teacher training which – like didactics of philosophy in general – is still considered by many as a field of activity more suitable for school teachers than for college professors.

Universities of Education are a case of their own. Instead of distinguishing research from teaching they try to combine both fields by doing research regarding the process of teaching and by teaching research and teaching at the same time. Teacher training in philosophy and ethics at the Ludwigsburg University of Education treats training in philosophical research and didactics of philosophy and ethics equally. In order to achieve that goal we developed the “Ludwigsburg Model of Teacher Training in Ethics” which I want to introduce here as *one* example how to train teachers for high quality classes in ethics and philosophy at all levels.¹

We believe that teacher training in ethics and philosophy should rest on four equally important pillars. Universities in general tend to focus on the second, at some locations also on the forth pillar, while teachers at schools tend to neglect those two and focus on the first and the third one instead. At the Ludwigsburg University of Education we try to neglect none of those pillars. Taking into consideration the fact that we do not have any more time or workload for teacher training than other establishments, we undertake research about how to make each pillar more efficient.



1. The first pillar is *philosophizing as a useful activity* in everyday life, or, as Ekkehard Martens puts it, philosophy as an “elementary cultural technique” (elementare Kulturtechnik) next to reading, writing and mathematics (Martens 2016). Even very young children can learn

¹ For the tradition of teacher training in ethics at the LUE see Thyen 2002.

to reflect on philosophical and ethical questions, to shape their experiences in clear thoughts, to question common sense judgements, to think a problem through from all relevant sides, to argue for an opinion with good arguments, to have a productive discussion with others about it and to develop mental self-esteem. One can learn all of that only by doing it regularly. In addition to our philosophical classes we plan to offer optional workshops for our own students as well as for current and future elementary school teachers in order to enable them to professionally supervise children of all ages during the activity of philosophizing.

2. The second pillar is *philosophy as an academic discipline*. Its function is to add depth to the first pillar by emphasizing that philosophy is more than just common sense. If everybody starts from zero there can be no progress in academic philosophy. We have to carefully and systematically take note of what others have thought before and around us. Like studying literature at university usually does not mean writing new novels or poems, studying philosophy does not so much mean producing new theories but mainly doing professional (historical and systematical) research regarding the work of other philosophers in order to understand, critically evaluate and improve their thoughts and theories. We think that all teachers could use some basic knowledge about the most important positions and traditions in both, theoretical and practical philosophy. If they teach ethics or philosophy as their subject they should have detailed knowledge of philosophical areas of their special interest as well. (Dann 2016) For that reason we undertake empirical research regarding those philosophical contents and methods that ought to be part of every teacher training and regularly offer optional classes about those contents for students of all subjects.² In order to guarantee an intense scrutiny of those topics we use blended learning and peer review methods in these courses. In other classes our students have additional options to specialize in certain topics which is and always should be characteristic with regards to philosophical studies.

3. The third pillar is *philosophical teaching experience*. Although the first two pillars are precursory to becoming a good teacher of philosophy or ethics they are by no means sufficient. Students also need a specific set of teaching methods (Wittschier 2012; 2013; 2014) and skills as well as experience with their target audience and with the process of teaching their subject. All our students do an internship at a school for a whole semester and get visited there four times or more by a professor of one of their subjects. In addition to that they take a special course in each of their subjects in which they reflect on practical aspects of teaching. During and after the internship we encourage our students to bring real philosophy to the school classrooms instead of just imitating the given status quo, which in Germany is still defined by teachers who in the majority have never studied ethics or philosophy themselves. In addition to the internships, several of our philosophical classes include a workshop where the students reflect on how to use their specific philosophical knowledge and skills in their future jobs.

4. The fourth and final pillar consists of *didactics of philosophy and ethics*. This pillar is supposed to add depth to the third one just like the second pillar follows on from the first. Didactics of philosophy does not only mean knowing about the methods of teaching philosophy,

² For students with ethics as their subject these courses are compulsory.

but having theories about teaching philosophy and being able to use these theories in order to reflect on the teaching process in an academic way. At the LUE we offer our students two compulsory blended learning classes in which they learn the basics about didactics of philosophy and ethics including interdisciplinary knowledge about related disciplines like psychology, sociology, linguistics and others. Our claim is not only to teach these theories but to also instruct our students to evaluate them as far as possible by using philosophical reflection and the methods of empirical education research both, quantitative and qualitative (Tiedemann 2011). In order to achieve that we do research about which specific skills are needed to teach and learn philosophy and ethics, how to develop and test these skills with different kinds of tasks, how to adapt those tasks to different audiences (including special needs education; Dederich 2013) and in which degree it is possible to use digital learning in all of those areas. Our students participate in this research by taking classes concerning the connection between didactics of philosophy and empirical education research.

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Country Report: Germany (Baden-Württemberg) - Teaching Ethics Based on the New Curricula 2016

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Objective of teaching ethics¹

The new curricula 2016 for teaching ethics in general education (not in vocational education) in Baden-Württemberg being valid from the school year 2017/18 onwards were designed by educational planning commissions on behalf of the state's ministry of education and arts.² In contrast to religious education that is offered from the first year on in primary school, ethics lessons start at the earliest in class 7 of secondary school (Ethikunterricht. Verwaltungsvorschrift 2001).³ There is one specific curriculum for the eight year long grammar school for the classes 7 to 12 (Bildungsplan 2016). The other curriculum is valid for the lower secondary level for classes 7 to 10, addressing students who attend "Haupt-/Werkrealschule", "Realschule" or "Gemeinschaftsschule". In this document there are three different levels: "G" ("basic"), "M" ("intermediate") and "E" ("advanced"). The "E-level" of this curriculum is identical to the grammar school's curriculum, with the exception of class 10 (Bildungsplan SekI 2016).⁴

For every school type and every class level of the general educational system there is one objective of ethics education: All students are enabled "to make ethical and moral judgements considering practical perspectives" (Bildungsplan 2016: 3). Therefore students should be qualified to answer the two key questions of ethics. Firstly, how can I lead a good life? Ethics is meant here in a special sense according to the tradition of ancient philosophers like Aristotle's ethic conception of "good life". Secondly, how should I act in a morally correct way? Answering this classic question of moral philosophy affords the examination with the help of universal ethic principles with reference to the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant (Bildungsplan 2016: 3).

Focusing on the objective "ethical and moral judgements considering practical perspectives", the new curriculum avoids two important didactical short circuits. First, teaching ethics does not end in educating students in knowledge of ethics and moral philosophy. Understanding the philosophers' positions and arguments should help students to deal with central questions of ethics, especially of practical ethics (Bildungsplan 2016: 3). Philosophers hereby function as "partners of dialogue" (Martens 1979: 140) for solving moral problems. Second, teaching ethics does also not intend to direct students to blindly internalize a special

¹ I thank Rena Junginger and Hartmut Leuthold for their support in writing this article in English.

² The author has been an expert advisor for three years as a part of the planning commission for the ethics curriculum of the "Gymnasium".

³ The following statistics show the percentage of students of each school type attending ethics classes in the school year 2013/14: 34.9 % of the "Werkreal-/Hauptschulen", 20.4 % of the "Realschulen", and 19.9 % of the "Gymnasien" (Goergen 2015: 49).

⁴ The "Gemeinschaftsschule", which is specific for the Baden-Württemberg's educational system, offers graduations for all three school types. If needed this school type includes primary school and classes 11 to 13.

ready-made moral conviction and to instruct them in acting in the right way (Bildungsplan 2016: 3). Students should not be manipulated in their autonomous process of judgement.

The special objective of teaching ethics in the new curricula corresponds to the major goals of school education stressed in the ethics curriculum: “to enable students to live a self-determined and responsible life” (Bildungsplan 2016: 3). This refers to the humanistic goal of school education accentuated by the philosopher Julian Nida-Rümelin. (Nida-Rümelin 2016: 225). Therefore the curriculum of teaching ethics is necessarily based on a “humanistic anthropology” (Nida-Rümelin 2016: 246-262). The human being is seen as a person who is able to use his or her free will to work out universal rules for moral decision-making and acting (Bildungsplan 2016: 3-4). Since the 1990ies the concept of “making ethical judgements” has had a long tradition in ethics classes. To be able to make ethical judgements is demanded from graduates, having passed their “Abitur” (comparable to A-levels in Great Britain) according to the “Agreement on Uniform Examination Requirements of the School-Leaving Examination” (EPA Ethik 2006: 5).

Concept of competence

In the new curriculum, a specific concept of competence is used: “Competence refers to abilities and knowledge learnt by students that support them in solving problems. In this process students open up the world and are assisted on their way to maturity.” (Bildungsplan 2016: 4). This pedagogical concept of competence differs fundamentally from the psychology of learning’s concept of competence which is dominant in the German education system. Whereas the latter supports influencing the volitional readiness of individuals, the concept of the new ethics curriculum understands competence only as an instrument for maturity and respects the learners’ free will (cf. Remme 2016).

“Given the scientific-technological, social, and cultural changes and the search for orientation resulting from them” (Bildungsplan 2016: 3-4), students trying to make ethical-moral judgements have to acquire the following:

- a) Knowledge for ethical orientation (“content-related competence”)
- b) Special abilities to make ethical-moral judgements (“process-related competence”).

Competence is classified into content-related and process-related competence in the new curriculum. Process-related competence is based on the methods of philosophy, moral psychology and teaching ethics. It is logically structured according to the process of making ethical and moral judgements. Process-related competence is acquired through dealing with various relevant ethical-moral topics. Four pairs of subject-specific abilities describe the process of ethical-moral decision-making at school: “perception and empathy”, “analysing and interpreting”, “arguing and reflecting”, and “judging and making decisions” (Bildungsplan 2016: 5, 10-12). This model of process-related competence is based on a model in teaching ethics at grammar school developed by expert advisors (Kompetenzorientierter Ethikunterricht 2011). Analysing, interpreting, arguing, reflecting and judging are typical methods philosophers use to gain knowledge (cf. Pfister 2013). These philosophers’ instruments are also relevant for teaching ethics (cf. Pfister 2014). “Perception and empathy” are significant for students in

order to identify a problem as a genuine ethical problem. In ethics lessons “decision making” is important due to the practical perspectives of ethic-moral decisions.

In the new curriculum process-related competence is taught through content-related competence, as e.g., the topic “Poverty and Wealth” for classes 7/8 of the “Gymnasium” shows:

Students are able to

- Realise and describe the forms and causes of poverty and wealth
- Explain and distinguish different concepts of poverty and wealth (e.g., history, culture, religion)
- Describe consequences of poverty and wealth regarding a self-determined life and assess these considering the different concepts of justice
- Name fundamental human rights and explain their relevance for a humane life (e.g., child rights)
- Present and discuss courses of action to secure humane and just living conditions in one’s environment (e.g., consumption, social commitment, fair trade) (Bildungsplan 2016: 18).

Content-related competence depends on the age of students, is differentiated in the three students’ levels, and is built around the relevant topics; these topics take the relations of human beings into account: to myself, fellow humans, nature, and the whole world. While selecting the specific topics for teaching, three central moral values play a major role: freedom/liberty, justice and responsibility (Bildungsplan 2016: 4). These values are prominent in ethical theories of philosophy (cf. Jonas 1979; Nussbaum 1998; Nida-Rümelin 2016). In a political perspective, these three moral values can be situated in the social democratic quartet of values: freedom/liberty, justice, solidarity, and responsibility for the next generation (cf. Gabriel & Nida-Rümelin 2012). Moreover, empirical studies in the field of moral psychology confirm the importance of these values for the moral development of students (cf. Kohlberg 1996).

For these reasons the three moral values are also inherent topics of the new curriculum, e.g., in the classes 7/8: “Freedom and Responsibility”, “Justice” and “Responsibility for Animals” (Bildungsplan 2016: 14-16, 19). In the curriculum for the classes 9/10 you can find for example: “Labour and Self-determination”, “Values and Rules in a Media-based World”, “Ethical-moral Values and Principles of Faith” (Bildungsplan 2016: 24, 27, 29-30). At the higher secondary level students, deal with topics such as “Freedom and Naturalism” and “Justice and Law” (Bildungsplan 2016: 33, 35). Especially at that level students also work out positions of moral philosophy: Aristoteles’ eudemonistic ethics, utilitarianism, Kant’s deontological ethics and Hans Jonas’ ethics of responsibility (Bildungsplan 2016: 36-40).

Didactics of teaching ethics

Three didactical principles of ethical-moral education are specified in the new curriculum: “ethical-moral arguing”, “problem-based learning”, and “inductive learning” (Bildungsplan 2016: 9). Inductive learning with reference to the students’ environment, regarding especially the moral intuitions of the students, is particularly compatible to a didactic of philosophy which understands hermeneutics as a fundamental cultural philosophy (cf. Steenblock 2013). The

principle of problem-based learning is mainstream in the didactics of philosophy in Germany (cf. Sistermann 2016). According to that principle ethics lessons focus on moral problems which students elaborate on and find solutions for by referring to moral values and moral rules or positions and arguments of moral philosophy. Exchanging arguments is an essential element of every major concept of philosophical didactics (cf. Martens ⁴2009; Steenblock ⁷2013; Rohbeck ⁴2015). Moreover, the principle of ethical-moral arguing has constantly been part of the concept for teaching ethics in Baden-Württemberg for several years (cf. Bildungsplan 2004: 61-73). Special methods of teaching ethics depend on the didactic principles of ethical-moral education, namely: analysis of concepts, analysis of arguments, using arguments, thought experiment, dilemma discussion, case analysis and writing philosophical essays (Bildungsplan 2016: 9). They support students in learning content- and process-related competence. Methods of strictly activity-oriented teaching play only a subordinate role in the new curricula (cf. Remme 2008).

Conclusion

Designing a new curriculum for good teaching ethics is a complex process. On the one hand, it cannot be deduced from a single philosophical position or one didactic concept for teaching philosophy. On the other hand, it is not wise to only refer to good teaching practices of certain teachers. In order to create a sophisticated curriculum it is necessary to avoid the practical circle and the problem of deductivism by considering various aspects: guidelines by the ministry of education and arts, didactic concepts for teaching philosophy, reflected positions established in teacher education, successful traditions of ethics teaching, today's (social and educational) conditions of students and teachers, and knowledge of moral psychology. In conclusion, this new ethics curriculum promises to improve the teaching of ethics, the development of moral judgement in students, and to contribute to a "renewed humanism" (Nida-Rümelin 2016: 351-442).

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Country Report: International Philosophy Olympiad: A Writing Challenge for Young Philosophers

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In Plato's *Thaetetus*, Socrates tells his student that "...wonder is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder." This wonder can be either puzzlement or fundamental curiosity about the nature of our world and the meaning of our life in it.

Young people are naturally curious and often express wonder at humanity's place in the world in general and society in particular. The key question is how to nurture and sustain this sense of wonder and then use it as a device to develop systematic and logical philosophical inquiry. The International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO), an annual essay writing competition for secondary school students (high school level), promotes the development of creative, inquisitive and critical thinking and, in a substantial way, contributes to the nurturing of philosophical wonder.

IPO History

The IPO first took place in 1993 as the result of an initiative of the Department of Philosophy at Sofia University, Bulgaria, to bring together a group of philosophers from various countries. The first of these were Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Germany and Romania. The initial Olympiads were immediately recognized by the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and since 2001 have been conducted under the auspices of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie (FISP or the International Federation of Philosophical Societies). Today 45 countries participate, including such recently new members as Kazakhstan and Brazil. The IPO is held in a different country each year in May, usually at one of the host most country's most prestigious universities.

IPO Scope

The IPO is open to any student who is enrolled in high school at the time of the competition. Each participating country can send up to two students with the exception of the host country, which has the option to send up to 10 students. The 2017 IPO, held at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands in May attracted 95 students from 45 countries. Each of these students was a winner of a national philosophy essay writing competition in their respective countries.

The Competition

The IPO competition presents some difficult challenges for young philosophers. IPO contestants have four hours to write an essay responding to one of four philosophy topics provided by the host country and approved by the IPO Steering Board and members of the FISP. An example of a thesis which was used as a topic in a previous IPO is:

"Now morally practical reason pronounces in us its irresistible veto: There is to be no war, neither war between you and me in the state of nature nor war between us as states, which, although they

are internally in a lawful condition, are still externally (in relation to one another) in a lawless condition; for war is not the way in which everyone should seek his rights.” (Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*)

The students’ challenge is to respond to the topic and construct a philosophical essay that argues their position in a logical, clear and convincing fashion. They must write their essays in one of the four languages approved by the IPO—English, French, German, and Spanish—but they cannot write their essays in the official language of their country. The essays are anonymous when graded by the IPO’s International Jury, which is comprised of the delegates from each of the participating countries who either teach philosophy or are independent philosophers. The IPO judges evaluate all the essays according to the following criteria:

- Relevance to the topic
- Philosophical understanding of the topic
- Persuasive power of argumentation
- Coherence
- Originality

Superior essays are forwarded to the IPO’s Steering Board for additional assessment and distribution of the Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals. Honorable Mentions are also awarded to several students whose essays merit recognition.

IPO Objectives

The stated objectives of the IPO are:

- to promote philosophical education at the secondary school level and increase the interest of high school pupils in philosophy;
- to encourage the development of national, regional, and local contests in philosophy among pre-university students worldwide;
- to promote philosophical reflection on science, art, and social life;
- to promote the culture of peace by encouraging intellectual exchanges and securing opportunities for personal contacts between young people from different countries.

IPO Benefits

There are many benefits of participating in an IPO for a young philosopher: the stimulus of creative and critical thinking, the cultivation of the capacity for ethical reflection on many of the problems of the modern world, and the interaction with many prominent philosophy teachers and thinkers from around the globe. Winners of the IPO competition also receive international recognition by UNESCO, FISP, and other international philosophy organizations. But perhaps paramount among these IPO benefit is the opportunity for young philosophers to network and build lasting relationships with other young philosophers from a wide variety of

cultures around the globe. This creates an unparalleled cross-pollination for new ideas and approaches to philosophy.

Nurturing Wonder

The IPO strives to sustain the sense of wonder basic to philosophy. The delegates from the participating countries instill and inspire a love of philosophy in their students. However, in the end, the IPO is an essay writing competition. As such, most students competing in their national contests and the IPO must learn some basic writing skills particular to crafting a logical and convincing argument or hone their skills they have already developed. To assist them in this, the IPO has published a *Guide for Writing a Philosophy Essay* that targets the IPO contestant. Not all students will require or desire to follow the principals and structure outlined in this guide; this is perfectly acceptable. Many approaches to building a philosophical argument are possible and the IPO highly encourages creativity in this regard. The guide provides a starting point for the curious young philosopher who has been stimulated by wonder and is seeking a means to express his or her ideas.

Appendix:

How To Write a Philosophy Essay

A Guide for IPO Contestants

Many guides exist on how to write a good philosophy paper. This guide is tailored to suit contestants competing in the annual IPO essay contest but it uses many of the same strategies employed in guides written by renowned philosophy professors from around the world. It is not intended to be a guarantee for writing an award-winning essay at the IPO. Rather, it outlines one method that can direct your efforts toward writing a sound, logical, persuasive essay.

The process of creating this document started at the IPO 2015 when *The IPO Essay Guide Committee* was formed, consisting of delegates Floris Velema (The Netherlands), Leslie Cameron-Curry (Italy), Michael Koss (Poland), Kedar Soni (India), Dennis de Gruijter (The Netherlands), Eric Gustafsson (Sweden) and myself.

The task of writing this guide would not have been possible without the valued input from these committee members and several other distinguished IPO delegates, namely Jonas Pfister (Switzerland), Ivan Kolev (Bulgaria), Joseph Murphy (USA), Jürg Berthold (Switzerland), Lars Hammer (Sweden) and Salim Miah (Bangladesh). Special thanks go to Katty Arroyo (Costa Rica), Nuran Direk (Turkey), Moris A. Polanco (Guatemala), Thor S. Grødal (Norway) and the International Jury of the IPO for feedback and support.

Lastly, I want to extend a special thank you to Mary Kiernan for her superb editing of my original manuscript. Mary selflessly gave her time and expertise to ensure that my manuscript was organized concisely, flowed logically, looked professional and was grammatically flawless.

We wish all of the IPO contestants the best of luck in this noble endeavor.

Frank Murphy
Associate Delegate,
USA May 2016

I. Introduction – Navigating the International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO) Essay Contest

*A philosophical essay should be an exploratory device, something that starts with a question and takes you on a path towards an answer.*¹

Philosophy is often defined as inquiry, more specifically inquiry into matters of profound interest to humanity—truth, knowledge, reality, meaning, social justice and the mind. Art and literature also look into these questions, but only philosophy examines these subjects directly, logically, and in depth. In the West, philosophical inquiry has predominantly been a verbal activity—taking the form of a dialogue as with Socrates, or in written form as with Plato, Aristotle, and the many philosophers that followed them. In either form, the critical components of any philosophical inquiry have always been to craft a thesis, usually related to one of these subject areas, and persuade a listener or reader to accept one’s thesis through honest, logical, and thorough argumentation.

Your chief task and challenge at the IPO is to write a persuasive essay that responds to one of four philosophical topics. A philosophical topic, such as the one presented to you by the IPO, is usually a statement that may be true or false but is at the least provocative; its purpose is to elicit a reaction. If you agree with the statement, your reaction may be in the form of a supportive argument defending the thesis; if you disagree, you may offer an argument that objects to or criticizes the topic statement. You may find that you have valid arguments both for and against the philosophical statement, and you may evaluate arguments on each side. Whether you agree or disagree, you might also choose to discuss the consequences of your argument or propose an alternative position. You may even choose to discuss a completely different view that can better explain the thesis. No matter what type of response you choose, you want to demonstrate that you understand the topic statement thoroughly. From there, you can proceed to describe your position in depth.

II. About this Guide

The overarching purpose of this guide is to prepare young philosophers, such as you, for the IPO essay-writing contest. It is not intended to be a “how-to-win-at-the-IPO” guide nor should it be interpreted to be the singular methodology for writing a philosophy essay. This guide is meant to provide you with the fundamentals for writing a well-reasoned, well-argued essay presented in a logical but concise structure. Its principles have been inspired by over two dozen guides written by professors of philosophy from around the world. In essence, it is not THE guide, but A guide to writing a sound philosophy essay at your current level. Our goal is to provide you with a short, thorough reference that you can keep by your side as you prepare for the essay-writing competition. It is also our goal that this guide

¹ Massacar, Aaron, “How to Write a Philosophy Paper,” (2010) The Learning Commons, University of Guelph

encourages continued improvement in the quality of IPO essays.

There are four processes that underlie nearly any writing task: **Organize, Analyze, Summarize, and Revise**. This guide will use these four processes as a foundation upon which we will build a framework for you on how to write a philosophy essay in clear, concise, critical, and convincing language. This framework consists of eight simple steps that will guide your writing process. Specifically, we will examine how to:

- Know your audience
- Organize your thoughts
- Structure your essay
- Write a solid introduction
- Argue your position
- Present counter-arguments and rebuttals
- Craft a conclusion
- Edit your essay

This guide also contains **Tips** – some of the do’s and don’ts of writing a sound philosophical essay from our perspective. It will also provide you examples of appropriate and inappropriate ways to structure your essay, build your argument and conclude your paper. Multiple essay-writing sources are available, some of which are referenced here. You should feel free to research on your own, if you’d like. However, we’ve compiled what we believe to be many of the most useful ones – particularly as they relate to you, the writer of a philosophical essay for the IPO competition.

So, let’s get started.

III. Writing the Essay

Step 1: Know your Audience

IPO judges are predominantly teachers or practitioners of philosophy from over 40 countries around the world. The primary goal of the IPO contest is to construct an essay that responds to a philosophical statement. However, IPO judges do not evaluate your essay based on their own agreement or disagreement with your thesis and arguments; rather IPO judges are more interested in the methodology you use to build your case, how well you understand the topic, and the coherence, originality and persuasive power of your argument. Therefore, IPO judges are primarily interested in whether you can respond logically, clearly, and critically to a philosophical topic.



Tip: Don't assume that a response to philosophical topic equates to disagreeing with it. Feel free to agree and then expand on the topic in your own way. Be original in interpretation, not theory!!

Step 2: Organize Your Thoughts

One of the first tasks you have in writing your essay is to organize your thoughts. This will increase the chances that your essay will be more thoughtful and coherent. A well-organized essay, outlined before you begin writing, will bolster your argument and help the IPO judges—or any reader for that matter-- understand what you are saying. It will help you discover any missing elements in your argument. Finally, it will guide you as you write making your essay flow more logically, clearly and coherently.

One of the best ways to organize your thoughts is to create an outline summarizing your response to the topic. It can either be a rough sketch or more extensive depending on the amount of time you have. This outline will serve as the blueprint for your essay and guide your analysis of the topic statement as well as your argument(s).

It's helpful to start your outline with your beginning – your reaction to the topic.



Tip: Draft a brief, one-sentence reaction to the topic. This will form the foundation for your essay's main argument. Everything else in your outline will flow from this statement.

Example: Your initial thesis statement responding to a typical IPO topic statement might look like this: "Aristotle's claim that tragedy is essentially the 'imitation of a noble and complete action' falls short of explaining how there are many other aspects of life that can be tragic."



Tip: Don't labor over your initial thesis statement! Record your initial reaction only. You may not use this exact sentence when you are finished, but it will help you focus your thoughts; you can revise it later.

Remember that the IPO requires you to complete your essay in four hours, so you will not have time to outline your thoughts in great depth. Make a rough sketch of your position (your thesis statement), your analysis of the topic statement, arguments for and against, and your conclusion. This will help focus your thoughts during the short amount of time you have. Record only the key points you want to make using a logical flow. You will flesh out your thoughts in the actual essay.

Example: The following is an example of a logical and thorough outline:

- 1) **Introduction**—draft your position in response to the topic=thesis statement
- 2) **Analysis**—summarize your assessment of the main points of the topic
- 3) **Arguments**—bulletize the main arguments you intend to make in support of your position
- 4) **Counter-arguments**—note briefly at least one possible major response to your argument
- 5) **Summary**—summarize your main position in response to the topic

Step 3: Structure Your Essay

The next step is to decide on a clear structure for your essay. If your essay has a clear and logical structure, your reader or judges will follow your argument more easily and reduce the chances that you will confuse them. It is also beneficial to prepare your reader or the judges with how you will proceed in your argument(s). If you explain, in the essay, the structure your essay will take, and then follow it up with a logical flow, it can sometimes be easier to write your essay under a time constraint.

A clear and logical structure in a philosophy essay can look like the below; note that it likely follows the same flow of your initial outline:

- 1) Introduction
 - a. State your thesis
 - b. Analyze and react to the topic
 - c. Mention briefly the main arguments you intend to make
 - d. Explain any technical or philosophical terms (if relevant)
- 2) First Argument
 - a. Reason your position with details
 - b. Provide evidence, examples, etc. supporting your reasoning
- 3) Counter Argument
 - a. Discuss/acknowledge possible objections to your arguments
 - b. State your reasons for your considering and rejecting
- 4) Second Argument
 - a. Reason your position with details
 - b. Provide evidence, examples, etc supporting your reasoning
- 5) Counter Argument
 - a. Discuss/acknowledge possible objections to your arguments
 - b. State your reasons for your considering and rejecting
- 6) Third Argument (optional)
 - a. Reason your position with details
 - b. Provide evidence, examples, etc. supporting your reasoning
- 7) Counter Argument (optional)
 - a. Discuss/acknowledge possible objections to your arguments
 - b. State your reasons for your considering and rejecting
- 8) Closing Paragraph

- a. Restate your thesis
- b. Flesh out any key points again
- c. Discuss briefly the key implications of your argument (if relevant)



Tip: Prepare the reader. Make it obvious from the start what your thesis is and how you will proceed with explaining and defending it. This will prepare and guide the judges for what your argument is.

Example#1:

I disagree with Ms. Arendt's statement because... I will use the following approach in my argument:

Example #2:

In this essay I will argue that Ms. Arendt..... (then) I will offer three arguments that support my thesis; these are: 1) ...2)...3). ...

Example #3:

I will provide two examples of how I object to the thesis.....

The following is an example of an IPO winning essay, in which the writer lays out the structural plan for his essay:

As the topic is very comprehensive it must be broke down in smaller parts: First I will discuss the topic of animal rights, starting with Peter Singer's patocentric views. Secondly, I will go a step even further and argue for the moral integrity of all life. Finally, using a dialectical attitude, I seek to combine the ecological positions into coherent principles of a bio-centered ethical approach to nature and the integrity of life in general. ²



Tip: Make the structure of your essay obvious to the judges and most importantly—follow it. Don't drift.



Tip: Don't use too many arguments to support your position. You risk diluting your main argument and creating confusion in the mind of the judges. Keep your structure simple and easy to follow.

Step 4. Write Your Introduction

"In its essence, a philosophical essay is a well-reasoned defense of a thesis." ³

² Granhoj, Jeff, http://www.philosophy-olympiad.org/?page_id=696

³ Horban, Peter, "Writing a Philosophy Paper," (1993) Simon Fraser University

Your introduction should contain your analysis of the topic, i.e., your reaction to, or opinion of, the philosophical topic. Do you agree or disagree with the topic? You do **not** need to provide your reasons why in this paragraph; you will flesh those out in your arguments. It is, however, the essence of your thesis that you will defend throughout the rest of your essay.

As noted above, it is useful to indicate the basic structure of your essay in this opening section or in another brief follow-on paragraph, so the judges have a roadmap for the path your argument will take. Additionally, use the introduction to explain any technical terms or definitions you intend to use in support of your thesis and how they relate to your argument. Note that your introduction can be multiple paragraphs, but for a four-to-five page essay that is typical for an IPO essay, it should be no longer than one page.



Tip: Don't finalize this paragraph until the rest of the essay is in its final form. This means you should make sure you allot time at the end to revise your introduction, if necessary, after the rest of your arguments are complete.

When crafting your thesis statement, try to avoid empty, meaningless statements such as “In this essay I will describe how Aristotle’s concept of tragedy is false...” A brief statement that indicates that you have analyzed the topic to some initial degree and will proceed to criticize or defend it is better: “Aristotle’s concept of tragedy only pertains to the most noble of man’s instincts, desires, and social interactions. However, I contend that there are many more profound aspects of human existence that can be tragic.”

Step 5. Argue Your Position

“In philosophy, we don’t look for what to believe, we look for reasons to believe something.”⁴

Your argument is the most critical part of your essay. IPO judges will determine from this section how well you understand the subject, how coherently, thoroughly, and concisely you make your points, and how mindful you are of other points of view.

What is a philosophical argument and how is it different from other essays you may write? The California State University Department of Philosophy defines a philosophical argument as follows:

⁴ Massacar, Aaron, “How to Write a Philosophy Paper,” (2010) The Learning Commons, University of Guelph

An argument is a set of premises or reasons that are presented as support or grounds for believing a conclusion. If a claim is true, then there must be some good reasons for believing it. The goal of a good argument is to present and defend true conclusions. Philosophy is devoted to uncovering and clarifying the reasons that support conclusions and separating them from the claims that allegedly support the conclusion but fail. In philosophy papers we present, explain, and critically evaluate arguments.⁵

One useful technique is to summarize your analysis of the key philosophical points made by the topic statement. In other words, record and discuss such things as: What assumptions is the author or the statement making? What is the intent of the author or the statement? What implications does the statement have?

Example: The following is an excellent example taken from a winning IPO essay that demonstrates how the student analyzed the topic and the assumptions behind the author's claim:

Before we elaborate on the nature of objects, and the implications of Sextus Empiricus' quote, we need to take into account what is his argument in the first place and to review the assumptions behind his argument. In the path of doubting nature, Empiricus firstly seems to accept that things do appear. Thus he overrides the first question of doubt, which is whether the appearance is real, in the first place. Before we build any metaphysics, the question of whether my appearance is real needs to be answered.⁶

Next, it is often useful to re-state your position and whether you agree or disagree with the statement/topic. However, it is not sufficient to just state your opinion; you **MUST** provide your reasons for agreement or disagreement. This will instill confidence in the IPO judges that you have thought through your position carefully. If you agree with the topic, state why and note any points the author may have omitted. If you disagree with the topic, you must spell out your reasons. Ask yourself questions such as these:

1. Does the topic statement rest on false, unjustified or weak assumptions?
2. Does the topic statement have any internal contradictions?
3. Are the topic statement's conclusions faulty?
4. Do the topic statement conclusions lead to unintended consequences that are detrimental to a group or class of people, to society, or to humanity in general?

⁵ Philosophy Department, California State University, "Guidelines for Writing Philosophy Papers," (2004)

⁶ Abinav Suresh Menon, http://www.philosophy-olympiad.org/?page_id=721

Keep in mind that you are defending your opinion on the given topic; you are not presenting a new philosophical theory in your essay. Originality is encouraged, but only in your defense or critique of a philosophical position. IPO judges are looking for essays that interpret or criticize an existing argument in a new but substantiated way. In your arguments: **Be definitive! Be courageous!** Take a stand. IPO judges want to know **your** opinion.



The following are some additional useful tips for constructing a logical, thoughtful and thorough argument:

- Don't intimidate the reader. Be subtle! For example, instead of, "This is my argument that you should accept," say, "My argument is grounded in these two reasons and the following will be my approach in defending it."
- Avoid using too many arguments. Use only one or two of the most compelling arguments; three if you feel quite strongly that all three are needed to defend your main thesis. The risk is that too many arguments will confuse the IPO judges and may detract from the clarity of your main argument.
- Be careful of grandiose allegations, such as "my thesis is critical to society and has interested philosophers for the last 2000 years." Unless you're prepared to prove it, it's important to remember that this is an empty position.
- Confine each argument to a single paragraph. If you are going to present more than one main argument for or against the topic, confine each to its own paragraph. This will prevent you from drifting off topic and watering down your main argument.
- Evaluate the basic assumption(s) of the philosophical position you are attacking or defending. How do these assumptions affect your position?
- State clearly your own assumptions and indicate and give reasons why they are sound.
- Stay on topic! Don't drift from your main argument. This will confuse the judges. Your outline should help you stick to your thesis and arguments.
- Don't attack the author of the topic, or any philosopher, directly; direct your remarks to the substance of his/her ideas.
- Avoid using sweeping, general terms such as *always*, *never*, *all*, and *every*. It is much better to be specific with your facts. Instead of saying, "All modern philosophers tend to be introverts," try "a recent study by the American Philosophy Association indicated that 68% of modern philosophers live alone."

- Don't use a quote unless you can cite it EXACTLY and then explain how it is relevant to your point. However, it is acceptable to paraphrase a philosopher's idea as long as it is accurate and you can show how it pertains to your argument.

Step 6. Consider Counter-Arguments

He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that. His reasons may be good...but if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side...he has no ground for preferring either opinion.⁷

IPO judges do not evaluate your arguments based on whether they agree or disagree with them, but how well you state your case and by how well your essay is written. However, to create a well-rounded philosophical essay you should anticipate objections to your thesis and arguments. Be sure to present and analyze these opposing views. When you present an opposing view, step through your reasons for rejecting it.

It is easier for the reader, and for the judges, to evaluate your essay if you raise any objections to your arguments at the relevant time within the argument. That is, avoid discussing all the points of your argument then discussing the objections and your reply to them. That type of structure might make your essay appear disjointed, confuse the judges, and detract from your overall argument.



You essay will flow more smoothly if you opt for a structure such as:

- Thesis;
- Argument #1;
 - Counter-argument;
 - Reply;
- Argument #2;
 - Counter-argument;
 - Reply;
- Conclusion.

This may give you the impression that there are always two sides to an argument. Sometimes that is the case, but rarely are both equally valid. You need to weigh in with your opinion as to which argument you think is more valid and present reasons why.

⁷ Mill, John Stuart, "On Liberty," (2002) Dover Publications, pg. 43.

Step 7: Summarize

The purpose of your conclusion is to restate your thesis and summarize your arguments in concise terms. However, it should not be a copy of your introduction. Revisit your main points in summary form, and emphasize the arguments you feel most strongly will convince the judges that you have defended your opinion on the topic. The concluding paragraph is also the place where you want to highlight any outstanding or important implications or limitations to your argument.



Tip: Don't Bring up new points or issues in your conclusion.

Examples: The following are excellent examples of summaries written by former IPO contestant winners:

In conclusion: I have argued for a reconstruction of the ecological order, focusing on the ethical integrity of all life, and proposed three basic principles for a biocentric [sic] ethics, which is adaptable with human culture and technology. It relies on the metaphysical axiom that all life has an inherent value in itself, no matter if it a human, an animal or a plant, which should at least be recognized as a moral worth.⁸

Let me summarize this for the reader. Sextus Empiricus doubted whether our perception was consistent with the reality. He thought that it was a matter of doubt (to which a conclusion cannot be easily known or known at that point of time). However, I presented view points that said that it was not possible to compare our perceptions of the appearance of an object with the reality – dualist and relativists. Then, I argued against dualism and relativism to show that it can objectively known whether the perceptions are in consistency with the reality (Note that we have only considered appearances and perceptions and not situations in ethics where objectivists can be argued upon).⁹

Step 8: Revise! Edit! Rework!

During the IPO essay contest, you won't have time to do extensive re-writing. However, if possible, try to budget at least 20 minutes at the end of the allotted four hours to review what you have written.

⁸ Jeff Granhoj,

http://www.philosophy-olympiad.org/?page_id=696

⁹ Nashith Barat Khandwala,

http://www.philosophy-olympiad.org/?page_id=707



Here are some editing tips for writing an IPO-style philosophy essay:

- Review your opening and closing paragraphs to ensure your thesis statement is clear, and that your opening and closing paragraphs support each other.
- Review the structure of your essay to ensure your argument flows logically and clearly. The order of your paragraphs and sentences may change during this type of review. *That's okay!* Many times sentences don't transfer from your head to the page in the right order.
- Review and re-order sentences as appropriate within each argument and counter-argument to ensure your points within each paragraph make clear and logical sense—NOT just to you, but to your readers. Be conscious of the fact that what may make perfectly clear sense to you may not be clear to a reader.
- Ensure each paragraph is clear, coherent and makes one point, not several. Look for inconsistencies. Re-arrange any sentences within paragraphs as necessary.
- Delete any unnecessary words or sentences that do not add to or refine your argument. If you need to add a word or sentence to clarify your argument, try to be brief.
- Confirm that your position is presented without bias and that you have supported your claims with evidence.
- Consider any major errors or omissions in your argument, but **Do NOT** make lengthy additions at this point as this may disrupt the flow of your existing argument and will tie up too much time.
- Run spell check before submitting, however, remember that IPO essays are judged more for their philosophical content and argument than for their grammar or correct spelling. IPO judges usually disregard grammar errors and misspellings unless they are numerous enough to obscure the meaning of your argument.

IV. Final Thoughts

The guidelines in this document are not all-inclusive, but should provide you a framework from which to write an organized, thoughtful, and well-reasoned IPO essay in the time allotted.



Here are some additional tips that will round out your essay and help make a positive impression on the judges:

- When mentioning a philosopher or other person for the first time, use the full name; use the last name thereafter. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms without explaining them.
- Use straightforward language, and try to avoid pompous, flowery, or superfluous words. Keep your sentences simple, clear, and informative. Avoid long sentences as they can mask the true meaning of your argument.
- Avoid English slang words and expressions. Jargon such as “you can’t top his logic with a stick” can get in the way of communicating your ideas.
- Be clear! Say exactly what you mean and in a way that reduces the chance that you will be misunderstood. Clever writing styles are more appropriate for novels. In philosophy, the opposite is true—be direct, clear and say what you mean.
- Avoid lengthy quotations. Since IPO judges are well-read in philosophy, they are more interested in what **you** have to say vice philosophers they are already know. If you do quote a well-known philosopher, be sure to explain how the quote pertains to your argument.
- Choose a gentle, gracious approach in your criticism of an author’s position. Avoid saying “it’s obvious that this person’s position is wrong.” Instead, you could say “There are some key points that could have strengthened the author’s argument.” Then explain what those points are.
- Don’t make broad, sweeping general philosophical statements, such as “Descartes, **who was the father of modern philosophy**, stated that...” Such remarks do not advance your argument.
- Use simple, declarative transitions from one paragraph to another and from one point to another and one section to another. This will help the reader to keep track of where your argument is going. For instance, you can simply state, “I have addressed Mill’s stance on objective reality. Now I will show how this differs from James’ position.”

Have Fun and Good luck!

Acknowledgements and References

This guide represents the collaborative work of the IPO delegates from over 40 countries. Additionally, many of the principles and suggestions in this guide have been inspired by other

guides and tutorials written by distinguished university-level professors and high school teachers of philosophy from around the globe. Although not an all-inclusive list, many of these guides are listed below. Our sincerest thanks go to these leaders of philosophy education for their inspiration.

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Association des Professeurs de Philosophie de l'Enseignement Public: *Professeur de philosophie. Entrer dans le métier, (L'enseignement Philosophique. Numéro Hors-Série), 2016.*

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The *Association des Professeurs de Philosophie de l'Enseignement Public* (APPEP), founded in 1947, is the main association of philosophy teachers in France. Philosophy as a school subject has a high standing in France. It is taught in the last year of high school, with a remarkably high number of teaching hours ranging from three (in the economic branch) to eight (in the literary branch). Teaching is traditionally oriented towards lectures by the teacher and the training of writing a philosophical essay according to closely specified rules (the *dissertation*). Besides representing the interests of philosophy teachers such as the principle of pedagogical liberty, as Nicolas FRANCK mentions in the introduction, the APPEP also organizes conferences on the topic of philosophy education and publishes the journal *L'enseignement philosophique*. The book under review is a special edition of that journal.

The title of the book may be translated as: *Teacher of philosophy. Entering the profession*. Its main aim is to introduce new teachers to their work. It contains fourteen articles, each discussing a particular challenge one may face in the classroom. The first seven focus on the conditions of the profession, the next seven on the contents taught. A final third section is mainly informative, including an article about the journal itself and information about the school programmes and the final exams of high school, the exams of the *Baccalauréat*. I will very briefly present here the topics of the articles of the first two sections.

In the first section, Frédéric WORMS takes a stand against general didactics and in favour of the unity of teaching, research, and action, thus perpetuating the traditional conservative approach of teaching philosophy in France. Simon PERRIER argues against the new school programmes based on competences, claiming that they reduce education to an insignificant pile of pieces of knowledge (*connaissances*).

Pierre HAYAT takes up the important and internationally interesting question of secular neutrality. Secularism (*laïcité*) has a long tradition in France going back at least to the French revolution. It was institutionalised in the 1905 French law of the Separation of the Churches and the State. Since 1946 it has been a constitutional principle that the state is obliged to provide for a free and secular education at all levels. This affects also the teaching of philosophy, and Hayat proposes to examine the question of secular neutrality from three points of view, the public agent, the teacher and the student.

Public agents are prohibited by law to display signs of religious affiliation and to use their position for religious propaganda. Outside of his *fonction*, however, the public agent of course has the same civil rights as any other citizen, including freedom of speech and religion. The obligation of public agents not to propagate a religion may also be seen as a guarantee that they will not be forced to propagate one. Hayat argues that secular neutrality should not be seen as an end in itself but rather as a means to living the values of human rights and of the republic.

From the point of view of the teacher, one may ask what the limits of secular neutrality are. In particular, one may ask whether teachers must remain neutral towards religious fundamentalism. According to Hayat, there is no such obligation, since again neutrality is not an end in itself, but a means. Teachers, having the pedagogical liberty of teaching according to reason, are free to voice their opinions and preferences as long as they do not propagate a particular view. They should follow the principles of impartiality and objectivity, thereby empowering their students to make up their own minds.

Finally, from the point of view of the student, the law of 15 March 2004 is important. It prohibits students to wear ostensible signs of religious affiliation, while discrete signs remain allowed. This law has been criticized of being anti-muslim, but Hayat defends it, claiming that it helps to create a school environment in which each student can learn and develop rationally in the best possible way. The law may also be seen to protect students from prematurely identifying themselves with a particular religious group, and it helps students understand that in the secular state no religious law is above state law.

Alain CHAMPSEIX analyses the concept of teacher authority and discusses obstacles to having teacher authority in the classroom. Patricia VERDEAU presents the main ideas in the various school programmes for philosophy since 1802. She argues for the lasting influence of Victor Cousin, who changed the 1832 programme from a dogmatic approach to one of fostering rational judgement. Cousin, influenced by Hegel, wanted to validate the achievements of reason in the institutions of the state. Based on their personal experience, Adeline DELEZAY and Patrick DUPOUEY give practical advice to novices on work in the classroom, attitude towards students and cooperation with state authorities and with other teachers. They explain, for example, how to establish teacher authority – French educational teaching is traditionally more teacher-oriented than for example in Germany – or how to go about correcting student texts, a considerable workload for French teachers, given the high numbers of up to 35 students per class.

Julien FONOLLOSA explains the difficulties of the so-called contractual teacher (*professeur contractuel*). The normal way to become a teacher in France is to participate in either of two national competitions, one of them called *CAPES*, the other *Agrégation*. The award winners go on an internship of one year, during which they receive teacher formation, are supervised by a mentor (*tuteur*) and are assessed several times. If successful they attain the position of regular teacher (*professeur titulaire*), a position which guarantees a lifelong teaching position (somewhere in the educational system) and a salary. There is, however, another way to become a teacher, one that is paved with much insecurity. As a candidate, one must first deposit an application. In the case of acceptance, one is eligible for appointment to a school. If appointed, one receives a contract of one year (which may be renewed and must be transformed after a number of years into a permanent contract). During the first year, one does not receive any teacher formation – a surprising and deplorable fact resulting in an educational system with two classes of teachers: regular teachers with significant privileges with regard to security, salary and also formation, and contractual teachers without these privileges.

In the second section, Frédéric DUPIN addresses a central didactical question: what is the object of a philosophy course? He argues that the object is not the notions of philosophy but rather the objects of real life. The aim of philosophy is to teach students to deepen their understanding of the world and of themselves. He further argues that the object is given by our common human experience. When we think, for instance, about the difference between remorse (*remords*) and regret (*regret*), we are not simply talking about a semantic difference, but about different human experiences. The philosophy course is neither an enterprise in deductive logic nor an exchange of arguments on anything. Finally, there is an object only for a subject. The object must be, as Dupin rightly highlights, one that "addresses the students". Julien LAMY takes up the question whether the understanding of a problem (*sens du problème*) can be taught. He argues that such understanding is neither a piece of theoretical knowledge nor a technical competence that may be instructed through rules. It is rather a capacity which can only be acquired in practice, like an art. This, however, does not mean that one can acquire it without any theoretical knowledge. Jean-Pierre CARLET presents two topics for a course unit, one on knowledge and one on nature. Clotilde LAMY emphasizes the importance of examples in teaching philosophy. Examples from everyday life may show students that what we do in philosophy lessons is in fact about real life. Classical examples from the literature in turn may serve to dive into a particular topic. Both types of example are excellent starting points for doing philosophy, since they are (in general) easy to grasp and can serve as objects of analysis. Bernard FISCHER argues for the use of exercises throughout the school year in order to help students develop their thinking and writing skills towards the *dissertation*. The exercises may be questions for reflection to be answered in one page, such as for example: what is the difference between feeling oneself and thinking oneself? Or what does it mean to be in the nature of things? Didier BREGEON explains how to read and evaluate a *dissertation* using two examples from students from the technological branch. Finally, recommendations for students on how to write a *dissertation* are offered by Anne SOURIAU.

The book addresses several didactical questions for the teaching of philosophy, offers advice to new teachers and thus introduces them to the profession. The advice includes ideas from more progressive pedagogical views, but is generally kept within the range of traditional pedagogy in France. The book also addresses fundamental questions about what the teaching of philosophy is about. For readers outside of France it presents not only some basic facts about the teaching of philosophy in French high schools (programmes, teacher formation), but also insights into its practice and into the questions teachers face.

Christian Thein: *Verstehen und Urteilen im Philosophieunterricht. Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Philosophiedidaktik und Bildungsphilosophie*, Band 3. Opladen, Berlin, Toronto: Barbara Budrich 2017.

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In his recent book *Verstehen und Urteilen im Philosophieunterricht* (Understanding and Judging in Philosophy Education), Christian Thein aims at a philosophical substantiation of the basic structure of philosophy as an educational enterprise. His starting point is to conceptualize philosophy not as a static conglomerate of ideas but as a process of reflection. But this way of reflection, as Thein puts it, is to a large degree based on the reception, transformation and critique of already existing philosophical schemes.

Thein starts with a general outline of the scope and limits of philosophical didactics. He argues that didactics of philosophy serves three objectives: it is a theory of subject-specific education, it functions as a generic term for all philosophical practices, and it is a mode of reflection concerning the impact philosophy can have. Focusing on philosophy as a subject in primary and secondary education, Thein claims that the purpose is neither the acquisition of general skills nor the accumulation of factual knowledge, but that philosophizing is to be conceptualized as a process of understanding and judging critically while looking into a philosophical topic that stems from experience in the living environment.

The general question arising from this outset is how didactics of philosophy can contribute to a fruitful passage from concrete and tangible experiences made by students to a factual examination of topics, problems and pertinent questions that are at the core of what philosophy is as a discipline. Or simply put: how can one induce irritation and philosophical reflection based on the problems that children and young adults have?

The development of a problematizing and questioning demeanour opens up processes of critical thinking and can provide a basis for the development of a capacity for judgement. This sums up what Thein presents in three propositions about the two main aspects of his approach: 1) education in philosophy has to start from questions: questions are written out philosophical problems that are inherently controversial. 2) The orientation towards problems must have a basis in the lifeworld of the students and must relate to their experiences, which are the starting point for a thorough examination with philosophical means. 3) Because every problem demands some kind of judgement, units in philosophy classes should be designed to foster the capacity for judgement through orientation towards problems. A requirement for the success of this enterprise is that teachers and students likewise maintain a philosophical attitude throughout the series of lessons.

How the lessons can be structured is therefore the main contribution of Thein's book. Before sketching an ideal sequence he locates the didactic concept of judgement in the broader realm of philosophy. He focuses on the tension between preconceptions, common sense and

philosophical judgement and shows how the first mentioned are constitutive to understanding in general and for philosophizing in particular. Employing Aristoteles and Kant as two positions ascribing different significance to judgement, Thein can theoretically argue for a concept that incorporates rather pre-reflective judgements from everyday life and the faculty of judgement as an ideal benchmark. This classical appreciation of judgement is complemented by the approaches of Arendt, Gadamer and Habermas to substantiate the central role of judging for learning philosophy. Special emphasis is laid on the significance of preconceptions – which are understood as the starting point for processes of judging in accordance with hermeneutics. Preconceptions are framed as the basic ideas, theories and hypothesis that students bring into the classroom. And the main task of a philosophy class is to critically examine the respective claims to validity that come along with these preconceptions.

On this theoretical foundation, Thein develops a four-phased model of how judgement can progressively take shape in philosophy education. This model can serve as a very useful blueprint to have in mind when drafting units or lessons.

Introduction is the first phase and aims at acquainting the students with general aspects of a philosophical problem. This getting-to-know has to be derived from the questions, problems and dead ends that students experience themselves, especially from examples coming from their lifeworld. This puts them – as the subjects of education – into the centre of the philosophical action and can contribute to the perception of forming a community of inquiry. To trigger their attention and imagination, Thein proposes exemplification via controversial content. Material like a picture, statistics and so on can define the problem and initiate a first discussion that leads to a guiding question.

The students' preconceptions should be collected and organised in a map that Thein calls the Pre-Conception-Map (“Vor-Urteils-Map”), a primary structured output that the following steps can be based on. This map with arguments and counter-arguments concerning the guiding question and common principles derived from the reasoning presents a network of aspects that is related to the topic in question. The following stages all serve the purpose of reflecting the results that are recorded on the Pre-Conception-Map: they can be tested, revised and substantiated. In the process of formulating statements and hypotheses, the students transform their preconceptions into propositional arguments, rules or principles and locate them in the space of reason (Brandom).

To deepen the understanding of the problem and the first attempts to deal with it, the third phase examines scientific and philosophical material, mainly by working with texts. The students re-formulate their arguments with the help of established positions and see their first attempts in a new light. Thein argues for different types of reading texts, distinguishing primarily between analytical and hermeneutical approaches.

For the conclusion of a unit, Thein suggests to let the students formulate their own argumentative judgements concerning the guiding question. One form this verbalization can take is in an essay or a debate. From Thein's point of view, especially essay-writing is a very good way to achieve cohesive results because it combines the need for argumentation with a relatively large freedom of presentation.

Thein's project is to show that the hermeneutic circle is present in all four stages and leads to productive results: the confrontation of preconceptions with scientific and philosophical material – all dealing with the initial problem that is formulated in the guiding question – aims at developing sound judgements. As the students work out these judgements by themselves with the help and professional support of the teacher, the learning situation focuses on their skills in philosophizing. So what Thein argues for is that learning philosophy is best achieved by doing philosophy. His proposal for a four-phased model with the pre-conception-map at its core is a good foundation of, and guideline for, a form of teaching that focuses on philosophical problems. For those who plan lessons in philosophy it can be quite useful because it collocates a number of ideas on organizing education in a tight and comprehensible way. The roughly 100 pages are a good read for everyone looking for a tightly arranged state-of-the-art overview of the didactics of philosophy.