HISTORY

During the 1960's, there were some stirrings of interest in bringing philosophy into the high school, particularly in the Illinois area, under the leadership of Hugo Thompson. Then the Center for High School Philosophy was formed at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, under the direction of Robert Wellman, and subsequently under the direction of Paul Bosley. There seemed to be a need, however, for an attention-getting, consciousness-raising gesture that at the same time would add some momentum to the movement to introduce students to philosophy while they were still in school. (For this reason, the movement got to call itself the "pre-college philosophy movement," despite the objections of some who disliked identifying the students with the future college-bound population only.)

Also on the horizon was philosophy in the elementary school. To Matthew Lipman, it seemed that bringing attention to secondary school philosophy would also result in attention for the newly developing program in philosophy for younger children. He therefore organized the 1973 Conference on Pre-College Philosophy that was held at Montclair State College. Virtually the only support for the conference was a small grant from the School of Humanities of the college, to pay for the speaker's honorarium. But attendance was good: there were about 150 registrants, and those in attendance appeared to have profited from the experience. Also, the conference did seem to move the process along and to get a number of social change agents thinking about the feasibility of philosophy in the schools.

CONFERENCE ON PRE-COLLEGE PHILOSOPHY, NOVEMBER 8, 1973
Sponsored by the School of Humanities, Montclair State College, Upper Montclair, N.J.

On November 8, 1973 the School of Humanities of Monclair State College will sponsor a Conference on Pre-College Philosophy. This occasion will provide an opportunity for an open exchange of views from many levels of education on the traditional exclusion of philosophy from the pre-college curriculum, the consequences of this exclusion and the possibilities of the integration of philosophy into pre-college curricula of the future.

This Conference plans to bring together representatives from public and private schools as well as colleges. It will be an opportunity for district superintendents, high school principals, curriculum officers and high school teachers to meet with members of college philosophy departments, college administrators, state education officials, labor representatives adn others concerned with the future of education.

This would seem to be a very appropriate moment for such a discussion. We are beginning to recognize that the intellectual drift and restlessness among many pre-college students are rooted in deeply philosophical concerns, yet the pre-college curriculum lacks a philosophical component. On the other hand, students arriving in college tend to look upon philosophy as a new or strange field for which they have not been prepared by the systematic analysis of concepts or the development of speculative ideas. Finally, this may be a very opportune time for all who are concerned with the critical capacities of the American public generally to ask whether everything possible is being done to nurture those capacities from the very outset.

The Keynote Speakers
Morning Session: Dr. James McClellan,
Professor of Philosophy of Education,
School of Education,
State Univ. of N.Y., Albany

Author of Toward an Effective Critique of American Education;
Co-author of Education and the New America

Afternoon Session: Dr. Amitai Etzioni,
Professor of Sociology,
Columbia University, and
Director, Center for Policy Research

Author of The Active Society, Modern Organizations, and Political Unification

Advisory Board
Prof. J. B. Schneewind, Chairman, Committee on Teaching, American Philosophical Association

Prof. P. S. Schievella, Pres., Executive Committee, National Council for Critical Analysis

Prof. Paul Bosley, Director, Center for High School Philosophy, University of Massachusetts

Preliminary Program

9:00 Registration and Coffee

9:30 Morning Plenary Session

Welcome: President David W. D. Dickson, Montclair State College

Introduction of Keynote Speaker: Dean W. B. Fleischman, School of Humanities, Montclair State College

Keynote Speaker: Prof. James McClellan, State Univ. of N.Y., Albany
"Pre-College Philosophy: An Educational Paradox"

10:45 Panel Discussions

I. Pre-College Philosophy: Why Teach It?
Moderator: Prof. P. S. Schievella, Jersey City State College
Panelists: Ms. Marilyn Amdur, Memorial Junior School, Whippany, N.J.
Prof. Lynne Belaief, Staten Island Community College
Mr. Michael Brady, Solebury School, New Hope, Pa.
Prof. Marx Wartofsky, Boston University

II. Pre-College Philosophy: Who Should Teach It?
Moderator: Prof. Joseph Margolis, Temple University
Panelists: Prof. Jerome Eckstein,

State Univ. of N.Y., Albany
Prof. Patrick Hill,
State Univ. of N.Y., Albany
Mr. Leslie Max,
John Dewey High School,
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Prof. Robert G. Olson,
Long Island University

III. Pre-College Philosophy: How Should It Be Taught?
Moderator: Dr. Howard Storm,
Superintendent of Schools,
Leonia, N.J.
Panelists: Prof. Stepan Baumrin,
City Univ. of N.Y.
Prof. Louis Raths,
State Univ. of N.Y., Fredonia
Prof. Karsten Struhl,
Long Island University

12:30 Luncheon

2:00 Afternoon Plenary Session
Introduction of Keynote Speaker: Prof. Matthew Lipman,
Montclair State College
Keynote Speaker: Prof. Amitai Etzioni,
Columbia University
"The Social Impact of Education
Without Philosophy"

3:15 Panel Discussions

IV. How Can the Schools Facilitate Pre-College Philosophy?
Moderator: Mr. Leonard Berman,
Humanities Consultant,
N.J. Dept. of Education
Panelists: Ms. Myrna Danzig,
School of Education,
Monclair State College
Prof. Charls Evans,
City College, N.Y.
Mr. John Halvey,
DeWitt Clinton High School, N.Y.C.
Ms. Ruth Kauffman,
Tatnall School,
Wilmington, Del.
Prof. Peter Caws,
City University of N.Y.

V. How Can the Colleges Facilitate Pre-College Philosophy?
Moderator: Prof. George Brantl,
Montclair State College
Panelists: Prof. William Alston,
Douglass College, Rutgers Univ.
Prof. Paul Bosley,
Univ. of Massachusetts
Prof. Don Harward,
Univ. of Delaware
Ms. Adele Stern,

Vice-Principal for Curriculum,
Paramus High School, N.J.

VI. Administrative Problems Posed by Pre-College Philosophy
Moderator: Prof. Gerald Myers,
City of Univ. of N.Y.
Panelists: Mr. Frank Fiorito,
President, N.J. State Fed. for Teachers
Mr. Marcoantonio Lacatena,
Vice-President, N.J. State Fed. for Teachers
Dr. John Rosser,
Director of Field Services,
N.J. Dept. of Education
Dr. Ward Sinclair,
Director of Certification,
N.J. Dept. of Education

5:00 Wrap-up Session

Panel #1 discussed the question "Why should philosophy be taught at the pre-college level?"
Below are listed a few of the more noteworthy points made by those who participated:

1. Philosophy should be introduced into the pre-college curriculum because it provides students with a method for analyzing concepts and arguments. Since any introduction of philosophy into the pre-college curriculum should aim at the development of such logical and critical skills, it might be expedient to label such courses of study critical analysis rather than philosophy.

2. The study of philosophy amounts to learning how to read, i.e., learning how to analyze a text in such a way as to identify his basic assumptions and hidden presuppositions. Viewed in this way, philosophy clearly has a place in the pre-college curriculum.

3. Students in high school often suffer identity crises which lead to identity closures, i.e., to a rigid adherence to a system of ideas, political commitment or lifestyle. This occurs often because in high school students receive no training in the kind of reflection concerned with value choice and personal commitment. Philosophy is precisely this sort of reflection and its introduction into the high school curriculum might help students facing identity crises to avoid identity closure and to develop an identity and personal commitment which is open to experience and the views of others.

4. But if philosophy can sometimes help students in the throes of an identity crisis, it can also bring on identity crises--it can also be disruptive and disturbing to students who have not previously been exposed to the radical questioning of the assumptions guiding their lives. In fact, the criterion according to which we can judge whether philosophy is being properly taught is its capacity to challenge students in this way. Of course, it would be foolish to emphasize this disturbing aspect of philosophy in trying to introduce it into pre-college curricula.

5. If philosophy should be introduced into pre-college curricula, care should be taken that it should not be a sort of hidden indoctrination into a particular social or political viewpoint. Emphasis on philosophy as liberation suggests a sensitivity-training atmosphere in the classroom--an atmosphere incompatible with the sort of objective, reasoned inquiry which philosophy should be.

6. If philosophy should be introduced into pre-college curricula, philosophers should avoid assuming that their own motivations in pursuing philosophical inquiry are the sort of motivations likely to be found among pre-college students. This error was made in the teaching of the natural sciences in the last decade. In developing philosophy courses at the pre-college level, a careful study should be made of the interests and perspectives of the students to whom philosophy is to be taught at each level. In short, the teaching of philosophy should be tailored to the needs and capacities of the students and not programmed from above by professional philosophers.

Summary of Panel II

This panel attempted to answer the question: Pre-College Philosophy--Who Should Teach It? the panelists' initial response covered a wide range. At the two extremes were Professors Hill and Harward. Hill argued that the logical candidates for teaching pre-college philosophy were those already teaching in the high schools who possessed certain qualities of thoughtfulness, interest and sensitivity. Professor Harward insisted on graduate studies in philosophy before teaching. Professor Harward insisted on graduate studies in philosophy before teaching. Professor Olsen, on the other hand, questioned whether anyone would be allowed to teach philosophy in the revolutionary manner alluded to in the keynote address.

From this initial diversity, both sides of the discussion made significant concessions to the effect that the moderator, Professor Margolis proclaimed a kind of consensus. This unity was one felt observers as well as panelists. Thus we could agree that there are at least two potential pools from which we can draw future high school teachers of philosophy. They are:

a) those already teaching in the high schools, who in addition have an interest in philosophy and a willingness to develop that interest.
b) those now taking graduate studies in philosophy, who have a specific interest in and sensitivity to the high school age group.

All agreed that it would be premature to determine the exact mix to be drawn from these two sources.

Several telling points were made on the way to these conclusions. For example, Professor Lipman made the observation that philosophy has proven especially suited to inner-city programs, where the question of meaning is agonizing and real.

Professor Stefan Baumrin:

1. Ideal age for beginning study of philosophy is adolescence (14-17+).
2. All non-professional college curricula should move to high school.
3. Stress on permanent intellectual value, not collation of data. Thus, based on philosophical classics. Recommended readings for high school: Plato (Crito, Phael Republic); Descartes' Meditations; Hume's Dialogue on Natural Religion; Mill on Liberty; Russell's Problems of Philosophy.
4. During second year of high school rigorous treatment of logic and ethics.
5. Senior year reserved for synthesis.
6. Method: Socratic, but slow. Not informative but formative.
   a) Each argument must evolve for each student.
   b) Grading and exams should be philosophical. No objective exams. Reading, drafting of questions, essays. Grades: honors, pass, fail.
7. Teacher: must be a philosopher.

Discussion

1. Are "we" out to create jobs for philosophers?

2. Question of priorities: should not logic be taught first? Isn't the aim to teach to think? Why the recommended material rather than logic? Resp.: Logic should be done at grade school level; logic is taught in math. Qu: Is logic really being taught?
3. Question: Isn't such a reading list too "special"? Broaden the target area. Such books are not good for students who can't read. Resp.: Inability to read does not interfere with ability to think.

Professor Terrell Bynum:
1. Nature of philosophy: analysis of crucial concepts, meaning of terms.
2. Start in early childhood with use of language. Avoid pseudo-problems.
3. Emphasize philosophy as tool for humans to understand and to interact.
4. Importance of logic (not formal): fallacies, ambiguities, etc.
5. Teacher: whoever can do it well. Philosophers just might be able to be taught to do it well.
6. Socratic method.
7. Use of media very important (examples given).

Discussion
1. Importance of starting where students are. Plato may be too much out of it.
2. Readings are not as important as how they are used.
3. Class size? No one answer. Different activities.
4. Misuse of media? Cannot use media to solve all problems. Be flexible. No "canned" lectures.
5. Keep distinction of philosophy as science and as art. The science is for the philosophers.

Professor Karsten Struhl
1. Philosophy (which is for everyone) must be understand as a way of understanding one's life situation into which one is thrown so that one will not only adjust but may combat and perhaps change the situation.
2. Recognize that students come to school molded by society and institutions. Schools may tend to become instruments for reinforcement of the existing socialization process.
3. Philosophy can be done well prior to college and should be seen as a subversive activity.
4. Brameld's view on ways of teaching were reviewed and applied to philosophy. Essentialism (classic texts); Perennialism (eternal truths); Critical Thinking (progressivism) (tends to elevate method over ends). Struhl: "Negative commitment."
5. How to do this? Demystify authorities. Teach philosophy in terms of substantive issues (avoid formal issues).

Discussion
1. Qu: what is the real difference between college philosophy and pre-college as far as teaching is concerned? (Panel agreed that it can all start earlier than college.)
2. Qu: Beware of adding to contemporary chaos. Begin where students are. Get to their fundamental questions. Resp.: Distinguish types of chaos.
3. Qu: How does one know when a "breakthrough" has been made in philosophy?

Prof. Peter Caws
1. Starting age: 12+. Start with logic, epistemology, metaphysics. Postpone ethics.
2. Don't exploit children in philosophy for whatever purposes.
3. Socrates and his method: good. Are textbooks needed?
4. Philosophy has a function as second-order understanding of what goes on in other disciplines.

5. Teacher: not necessarily a philosophy teacher. Have good teachers distinguish the didactic from the philosophical.
6. Two guiding questions in teaching: (a) The meaning of a proposition proposed for belief; (b) the grounds for belief in same.
7. The function of metaphysics as "imagination" of how world is to be understood and how it may be changed.

Discussion
1. Avoid counter-indoctination.
2. Teachers in high school tend to get "guilt feelings" when they treat philosophical issues. It's not "in the syllabus."
3. Qu: Why postponement of ethics? Resp: Are they ready?

The session was moderated by Dr. Howard Storm.

Workshop IV How Can the Schools Facilitate Pre-College Philosophy?

The panel on facilitating pre-college philosophy was introduced by Mr. Berman, Humanities Consultant to the New Jersey Department of Education. Mr. Berman opened the workshop by asking everyone in the room to write down their won questions relating to the topic; next he suggested that we discuss such questions with our neighbors, then place any questions of general interest before the group as a whole. the questions asked were such as: "Doesn't the English curriculum offer a natural place for introducing philosophy in the high school?", "How can I as an elementary school teacher get raining in philosophy?", "Will there be future programs like the one sponsored last summer by the Rockefeller Foundation for training high school teachers in philosophy?", "Can pre-high school students really get "into" or anything "out of" philosophy?", and "What is it that pre-college teachers would like for their students to get out of the study of philosophy?"

After these questions had been voiced, Mr. Berman turned the discussion over to the panel. The first panelist began with a quasi-historical review of the role of philosophy curricula in education. After he had been speaking for about five minutes, one member of the audience called out "Point of Order!" and suggested that members of the audience might prefer discussing the questions they had compiled to hearing another lecture on philosophy and education. This suggestion was greeted enthusiastically by others in the audience, and the discussion swung around those questions which had been raised at the outset of the workshop.

The discussion which followed was animated, and many views and doubts were traded among the participants. One of the panelists distributed copies of a report describing the approach which the Tatnall School (Wilmington, Delaware) had taken to innovating a philosophy program in its own curriculum. when the workshop broke up at 5:00, there was a feeling among a number of the participants that the discussion had been a useful one: it was helpful to learn of the experiences that others had had in instituting pre-college philosophy instruction, people were interested to discover what views they shared with others, and some were encouraged that at least a beginning had been made in investigating questions of common concern.

Panel V: How Can the Colleges Facilitate Pre-College Philosophy?

Ms. Adele Stern
1. Philosophy is taught in high schools and can be (English; Social Studies).
2. Colleges should get "aggressive"
    a. speakers at high schools
    b. consultants
    c. sponsor lecture bureaus

d. mini-courses
e. assist in curriculum preparation for state department bibliography
f. avoid isolation from the schools
g. encourage double majoring in certification students

Prof. Pat Hill
1. Stonybrook as M.A. in Philosophical Perspectives which affords teachers opportunity to develop in this area. Basic elements: History of Philosophy; development of reading-text skills; Contemporary; moral and social issues.
2. Philosophers in colleges don't know answers. Dialogue needed with high schools.

Discussion
1. Questions concerning certification procedures arose. Situation varies. California and Illinois have certification in philosophy.

Prof. William Alston
1. Summer workshops could be worked out for pre-college teachers.
2. Joint B.A. and M.A. programs.
3. At M.A. level, avoid overly specialized seminars. Get to the fundamental issues grasped fundamentally.

Prof. Paul Bosley
1. Review of data from the Center for High School Philosophy. Description of the Chicago report.
2. Variety of approaches in high school: Humanities, American Lit. or separate courses.
3. Philosophy should be integrative.
4. Description of Summer Institute in high school philosophy at Amherst (5 philosophers, 50 high school teachers, 5 workshops: Mechanics of Critical Thinking; Moral and Political; Psychology; Descartes and Modern Science; Technology and Culture). In-depth work on philosophy in relation to high school. No texts were used.
5. In-service teacher training program.
6. Local cooperative programs between college and high school.
7. Philosophers should get first-hand exposure to the classroom.

Discussion
1. Who can most capably teach pre-college philosophy?
2. How can philosophers "get into" the high schools?
3. Senior elective vs. general component: perhaps it is not those who choose electives who most need philosophy but those who are not going on.
4. Problems of certification were discussed.

Panel VI Administrative Problems Posed by Pre-College Philosophy

Much of the discussion by the panelists was devoted to the question of certification. At present New Jersey has a two step process for the introduction of philosophy courses. Once the course is approved by the Department of Education, it may be taught by any certified teacher. The local administrators may pick the person best qualified to teach the course. Some doubts were expressed concerning this procedure and one panelist suggested that there might be a temptation ot pick the coach if he happened to nee a course.

A member of the audience suggested that mere academic certification of a teacher might not be enough and that administrators should seek for persons of high moral character. This latter requirement was necesaary because of the peculiar nature of philosophy.

Another member of the audience objected to current procedures on the ground that they require a person interested in teaching philosophy to get certified in some other field and to take courses in education and then if he has some time left over to study some philosophy.

One of the panelists noted that there were no national standards for the certification of philosophy teachers. He also noted tat in New Jersey it took only six months to develop a certification program in Military Science.

Panelist Gerald Myers recounted the experience he had at CUNY. The main thing he had learned was that there was resistance at every level to the project of sending graduate students into the secondary schools to teach courses in philosophy. The result of his experience was that the only way philosophy can be introduced is to find secondary school teachers who are interested and to work with them on joint courses.