

The Web Wanderer

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Visio-Naivity

This volume of *Analytic Teaching* contains the fifth in our series of reviews of websites that promote philosophical inquiry. The sites reviewed in this column have one thing in common - they are designed to encourage and promote the activity of philosophy amongst students of all ages. While principally designed for use in schools, many of these sites provide wonderful resources that can also be used to initiate philosophical inquiry between parents and children or between groups of friends.

<http://home12.inet.tele.dk/fil/>

Per Jespersen runs a school and educational consultancy and Reading Line for children with reading difficulties from his home in Denmark. The school has 10 children from 5th through 10th grade and focuses on the development of the whole person. Prior to the establishment of the school he taught in the regular Danish school system. Three years ago Per created Visio-Naivity on the web - a space to share stories and (most recently) for dialogue. Many of the stories and manual materials Per has placed on this website have been developed collaboratively with children. The site is the winner of several web-site awards, including the Teacher's Corner award of excellence for educational web sites and an award by The Philosophers' Web Magazine. The website contains several useful links to other philosophical and educational web sites around the world. Visio-Naivity can also be accessed through the resources link on (the now re-vamped) ww.p4c.net site

Visio-Naivity offers a variety of material to encourage philosophical inquiry with children in several European languages (English, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian). On opening the site, there is a brief introduction from Per Jespersen followed by an invitation to explore the material on the site. This is done easily by selecting from the main menu that runs down the left hand side of the page.

The first four categories on the main menu provide background to Philosophy or Children in the Danish context (including a list of Danish publications on engaging children in philosophical inquiry). There are also several introductory articles by Per - one offers insight into Philosophy for Children in Denmark while the other begins with emphasizing the importance of recognizing children's patterns of thinking then continues with a text («The Flowers») and Teacher's Manual which models the kind of questions and activity that the story might trigger in the classroom. Both articles have previously been published in *Analytic Teaching*.

The second section of the menu consists of a list of 10 sets of resources for philosophical inquiry: short stories and essays, texts for young children, 'deep essays', the David tales, and a variety of essays in Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish. The short stories, texts, deep essays and David Tales are written by Per, sometimes in collaboration with one of his students. Several of these are worth special note. Within this section, each of the headings on the main menu take you to the same table from which you can easily select the items you are seeking. On entering into these further groupings (for instance, the grouping of items headed by 'Short Stories'), all the possibilities within that selection appear at the top of the page you have selected. This means that once you have selected your area of interest, you can search through that section without returning to the main menu.

The Deep Essays and other materials suitable for use within a teachers' Community of Inquiry

The six 'Deep Essays' were written by Andreas Thelander Bertelsen and Per Jespersen and are being published in Eucador this year. They were written when Andreas was 12 years old. They explore such themes as wonder, words, chatness, unexplainity and... oinkyness (this is my favorite - I will let you explore the meaning of this one on your own). Per Jespersen has written manuals for each of these essays and there is a link to the manuals from the page containing the essay. These essays represent a collage of literary styles, moving somewhat fluidly between fantasy, recorded dialogue (between Per and Andreas), stream of consciousness observations, philosophical reflection and questions. Many of them incorporate a discussion of the nature and purpose of schooling. Importantly, their form and subject matter make them not only suited to inquiry with children, but also ideal materials to be read and discussed within a community of inquiry of teachers. Further essays on Per's site - essays on redemptive pedagogics, genuine thinking, the nature of dialogue, and the connections between truth, experience, language and wonder - also provide ideal material for reflection and discussion amongst teachers. These are listed under 'P4C Essays'. Also in the category of materials that suit discussion amidst a teacher's community of inquiry are four essays by John Colbeck that explore questions around such themes as the nature of thinking and children's rights in education. He has kindly has given permission to Per to post these essays on Visio-Naivity.

The David Tales

Amongst the materials to be used with children, the 8 David Tales form a unique set. These stories are illustrated with children's drawings and revolve around a shoe-shine boy called David. The stories build upon one another, exploring metaphysical, ontological and religious themes (interpreting the term 'religious' widely). They are quite special. Alongside the David Tales and Deep Essays are collections of short stories - one collection for young children presented on the screen in large script, and another for older students. Two of the stories for young children were written collaboratively with children involved with the Reading Line (Jon Bach Jensen and Lasse Rasmussen).

Visio-Naivity also contains introductory materials and essays on Philosophy for Children in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. I'm afraid language limitations (my own!) stop me from being able to comment on the resources that appear in languages other than English. The links to Norway are particularly important for Per, as he works collaboratively with Ariane Schjelderup and Oyvind Olsholt in Norway (Philosophy for Children and Youth - for further information go to <http://www.buf.no>). A parting note should point to the film about Philosophy for Children that is advertised on Visio-Naivity - go to the heading on the menu «You and I». This film is available in English and Danish.

Altogether, this web site reflects one person's love for children, his commitment to their education, and awareness of the possibilities that lie within each child. It is well worth exploring.

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