



The Philosophy in Schools Association of New South Wales
Britta Jensen (President), Sandy Lynch (Vice President),
Dan Smith (Treasurer), Alicia Hiew (Secretary)

2020 FAPSA AGM Report

This report highlights the training and initiatives in the past year, including Workshops, Work with schools, NSW Initiatives, NSW Philosothon, Presentations and Publications.

Workshops

FAPSA Introductory Certificate Workshops (two days)

In the past year, we have run two FAPSA Introductory Certificate workshops at the University of Notre Dame: in August and November 2019.

Our 2020 introductory workshops to date have been postponed due to Covid.

FAPSA Advanced Practice Workshops (three individual days)

We are excited to announce having delivered the first FAPSA AP workshop in 2019, with a focus on Ethics. This one-day course has been endorsed by NESAs, meaning NSW teachers will earn hours toward maintenance of their accreditation (at Proficient level) by undertaking this course of Professional Development. Advanced Practice Courses in metaphysics and epistemology have been planned for 2020, though our workshop schedule has been disrupted by Covid-19. At the time of writing we hope to be able to deliver both planned AP workshops in the second half of 2020.

NSW Facilitation workshop

Greg, Sandy and Britta developed and ran a new PinSNSW training workshop specifically to equip teachers to formally assess Community of Inquiry, as used by the NSW Philosothon. Experienced secondary teachers undertook a benchmarking process during which they compared their judgements of COIs with judgements of experienced judges using the established NSW rubric. We thank our judging panel for assisting with this training.

Work with NSW schools and colleges

Britta continues to teach philosophy / ethics at NSGHS. NSGHS hosted the third annual "Ethics Symposium" which involved inviting academics to review a showcase of student work.

Greg Henshaw organised a third annual community philosophy event at Stanton Library: the Socratic Cup, a COI between NSGHS students and members of the library's philosophy club.

Greg also maintains a list of schools who offer the NSGHS-created Stage 5 and Stage 6 course in Philosophy. At present 35 NSW schools are endorsed to teach the Stage 6 course.

Teachers at Leichhardt Public School, under the guidance of Dan Smith, continue to provide weekly philosophy lessons to all students K-6. Leichhardt PS is one of two Sydney Public primary schools to offer philosophy.

Alicia incorporates philosophy as a method of inquiry in her key learning area, English and is invited to coordinate and teach a stage 5 Philosophy elective course.

Britta continues to provide mentorship around curriculum and pedagogy with the Philosophy course at the International Grammar School. In 2019 all IGS students in years 7-8 had weekly Philosophy

lessons, and in 2020 the course has been extended to all students in years 7-9. In 2020, the IGS program is being rolled out in Years 5-6, as well, under the direction of Colin Bird, Head of the Junior School.

NSW Initiatives & Engagement

The Association is committed to making provision for more opportunities for students to engage with philosophy and philosophical thinking, both within classrooms and in an extra-curricular capacity. Below we detail select initiatives from the last year.

Catalyst Lab - Dan Smith, Deputy Principal of Leichhardt Public School and Treasurer of Philosophy in schools NSW, in conjunction with the NSW Department of Education Catalyst Lab Innovation Project, is working toward establishing an external philosophy event for Primary School students across the Sydney region to engage in philosophical discussions to embed critical thinking and ethical reasoning as a pervasive pedagogy so that students have the skills necessary to make informed decisions in an Artificial Intelligence world.

Event Administration and Communication - The Association is delighted to formally recognise the work of Greg Henshaw in naming him responsible for this important domain. He is currently Co-ordinator of the NSW Philosothon and has taken charge of revamping the PinSNSW website, which is now available here: <https://web2.northsydgi-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/pinsnsw/>

PinSNSW Essay Competition - Together with financial support from the Royal Society of the Southern Highlands, in 2019 we launched the NSW Philosophy Essay competition. The goal was to offer students of philosophy another way to showcase their skills in a format outside COI. The 2019 awards were presented by Mike Jonas of the Royal Society of the Southern Highlands at the NSW Philosothon at NSGHS. This competition will run for three years and then be reviewed. Many thanks to collegiality and support from the Royal Society of the Southern Highlands, to Phil Cam who initiated the link between our two organisations, and to our first two Philosopher Judges: Phil Cam (2019) and Matthew del Nevo (2020).

UND - The Association has worked with Deans of Education and Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame toward a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the relationship between the Association and the university. This relationship will be mutually beneficial. At present, the request is with the legal team.

Ramsay Centre - Britta and Sandy, together with Philosophers Jeremy Bell and Tim Smartt, provided continued consultation to the Ramsay Centre on their summer school initiative. In January 2020, the summer school ran for the second time. We delivered a programme of COI circles on three topics (Free will, Aesthetics, Ethics). The event was a success, and it is anticipated that it will run again in 2021.

Curriculum Review - Britta and Sandy submitted a lengthy response to the NSW Curriculum review on behalf of PinS. [The document can be found here.](#)

NSW Philosothon

For the third year, the NSW Association (together with a local organiser) has overseen the NSW Philosothon. The 2019 event was organised in Term 4 by Greg Henshaw and held at NSGHS. Importantly, this is the first time a public school has hosted the NSW Philosothon. Previously, the NSW Philosothon was hosted exclusively by Independent schools.

In order to accommodate growing interest, and in order to make provision for more schools to engage in more COI circles, we trialled a tiered system of rounds as follows: Round 1 in T2, Round 2 in T3 and the Final Round in T4. This process was labour intensive: not least because we insisted on new levels of rigour in judges' training, and double marking of all COIs. One benefit of this model is that it is more pedagogical, and because of the rich individualised (verbal and written) feedback; the student experience has been more meaningful than in past years.

We will continue to refine and improve the NSW Philosothon and forge links between competitive COI and the practice of using COI in classrooms.

Conference presentations, workshops & interviews

Henshaw, G. (2019, July). 'How to more accurately and transparently assess Philosophical Inquiry,' Presentation at FAPSA mini-conference on Philosophy in Schools, UND, Sydney.

Jensen, B. (2020, January). 'Philosophy and inquiry in schools.' Introductory session at the Ramsay Centre Summer School, Sydney.

Jensen, B., Edwards, J., and J. Timillero. (2019, July) 'Planning and implementing philosophy lessons in 21st Century classrooms'. Presentation at FAPSA mini-conference on Philosophy in Schools, UND, Sydney.

Smith, D. (2019, July) 'Engaging thinking in the primary classroom.'. Presentation at FAPSA mini-conference on Philosophy in Schools, UND, Sydney.

In addition, four of our members (Henshaw, G., Hiew, A., Jensen, B, & Smith, D.) each submitted an abstract for this year's VAPS conference in Melbourne (2020, July), and all four abstracts were accepted. However, the conference was cancelled due to Covid-19.

Publications

Cam, P. 2020. *Philosophical Inquiry: Combining the Tools of Philosophy with Inquiry-based Teaching and Learning*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Lynch, Sandra. 2019. "Relativism, Tolerance and Morality" in *Today's Tyrants: Responding to Dyson Heydon*. Edited by Damien Freeman. Sydney: The Kapunda Press.

Lynch, Sandra. (Forthcoming, 2020). "Mission Impossible? Education and Formation in a Pluralistic Society" in *Faith and Reason: Applications to Contemporary Problems*. Edited by Nigel Zimmermann & Sandra Lynch. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock.

Matthew del Nevo (as chief editor of *Beauty and Tradition* (St Pauls)): a chapter entitled "Tragic Beauty."

Phillips, Jane, Lynch, Sandra and Fazekas, Belinda. 2020. "Ethical and legal issues in research" in *Nursing and Midwifery Research: methods and appraisal for evidence-based practice*. Sixth Ed. Edited by Dean Whitehead, Caleb Ferguson et al. Chatswood, NSW: Elsevier.

Britta Jensen



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