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Special Issue on the International Philosophy Olympiad

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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 practicing teachers across the world.

Call for Papers
www.philosophie.ch/jdph

- Volume 5 1/2021 -

We are issuing an open call for contributions. If you would like your article, country report or book review to be published in the next issue (March 2021; Volume 5, Number 1/2021), please follow the instructions on the website. Your text should reach one of the editors no later than 25th of January 2021 (but manuscripts are also welcome at any time).

- Volume 5 2/2021 -

The following issue, which will be published in October 2021, will focus on a special topic: Philosophy Teaching and Digital Transformation. We welcome submissions on this broad topic, in particular answers to questions such as: How can (and should) philosophy be taught online? What are the advantages of online teaching? Is it possible to completely substitute the important features of philosophy classes by electronic communication or learning software? Please send your text to one of the editors no later than 15th of July 2021.

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers!

Please find on the following pages the first special issue of this Journal. Its focus is the International Philosophy Olympiad (IPO), an international essay competition for high school students that has taken place every year since 1993. Miha Andrič had the idea for a special issue on this topic in May 2019 and brought it up to the editors. The idea was to offer a platform for the discussion about fundamental aspects of the IPO and thereby to stimulate such discussion and to bring it to a higher level. The aspects we envisioned ranged from the purposes, aims, and culture of such an international event to questions about gender and fairness and about the format of the competition, the essay as a form of philosophical writing, as well as the teaching of writing and the evaluation of essays. In our views, these topics are also of interest for the research on the teaching and learning of philosophy in general.

We launched a call for papers in June 2019. The first submission we received was the one by Marc Foglia on the concept of the essay at the IPO. This is also the first article you will find in this special issue. Marc Foglia questions the idea that the essay is a neutral form for a philosophical competition and argues that the expectations as to what constitutes a good essay at the IPO are not yet sufficiently explicit. The paper was discussed in a Zoom meeting at the e-IPO 2020. It inspired several colleagues to write articles which in some ways are replies to the challenges posed by Marc Foglia, but each of them also represents an independent contribution.

Gad Prudovsky develops an answer to the challenge posed by Foglia to explain what the criterion of "relevance" means. He shows how it is possible to engage students in a philosophical conversation and thereby in a collaborative learning process by presenting a detailed plan for teaching Descartes' *Meditations*.

Marjan Šimenc investigates Foglia's claim that the essay is not a neutral form of writing. He argues that the essay is not a neutral form precisely because it requires the contestants to adhere to strict rules. He then seeks to develop a more complex definition of the philosophical essay.

Jonas Pfister discusses the evaluation criteria and the grading of essays at the IPO. He argues that the criteria should be specified, their status clarified, and a method of grading developed. In the appendix of the article, you'll find his proposal on how to use the specified criteria in evaluating philosophical essays at the IPO.

Yeri Hong investigates the process of how to teach essay writing for the IPO. She starts with the assumption that the writing of an essay for the IPO is importantly about expressing one's inner voice. Her suggestions for teaching methods are based on Peter Elbow's theory of writing. She explains how one can teach students to think creatively and critically about a philosophical topic, and she presents methods for writing in English as a second language.

Each of the contributions was read and evaluated by two reviewers in a double-blind process (in the case of the article by Jonas Pfister, Philipp Richter organized the review process). We would like to thank all of the reviewers, many of which are part of the IPO community, for their very valuable help. Thank you very much!

This issue also includes one country report. Steven Burik, Matthew Hammerton, and Sovan Patra describe the situation of philosophy in the educational system in Singapore. Although philosophy is not an official school subject in Singapore, there are spaces, as the authors explain, where the promotion of philosophical thinking is taking place.

At the end of this issue, you will find a special format: Short Questions, Short Answers. We asked some of the long-standing members of the International Committee of the IPO to answer some questions about the relation of the IPO to the teaching of philosophy. The answers come from Shinji Kajitani (Tokyo, Japan), Gad Prudovsky (Jerusalem, Israel), Thor Steinar Grødal (Oslo, Norway), and Ji-Aeh Lee (Seoul, South Korea).

Finally, we would like to thank Kira Lewandowski (Bochum) for proofreading the whole manuscript of this issue.

We wish you good reading!

December 2020
The Editors