AAPT Transitions

As with many things the new millennium brings significant changes to the AAPT. The last year of the decade, century, millennium was indeed one of growth and maturation for our organization. We experienced one of our most successful workshop conferences, grew in international membership, established stronger and more cooperative links with the APA, developed an expanding sense of purpose for our organization, saw a change in leadership, and, most importantly, deepened our love of teaching philosophy.

At this time, I would like to thank retiring Board members Jim Campbell, Phil Hamlin, Martin Benjamin, and Joe Givvin. Each has worked tirelessly for the AAPT and we owe our successes in part to their efforts and dedication. I would also like to welcome new Board members Daryl Close, Steve Bickham, Donna Engelmann, and Sara Goering. Daryl joins the Board as the new Vice-President and President-elect while Donna, Steve, and Sara join as the new At-large members. Daryl has been active in the AAPT since 1982, conducting many workshops, co-editing the AAPT News from 1986-1998, and serving for twelve years on the Executive Board. He holds a joint appointment in Computer Science and Philosophy at Heidelberg College, and is coauthor, with Nicholas Meier, of Morality in Criminal Justice (Wadsworth, 1995). Daryl brings to the board an unrivalled enthusiasm for collegiality and the art of teaching.

Other changes have taken place in the structure of the Board. I move on to the grandfatherly position of Past-President and Arnold Wilson takes up Presidential leadership. Arnie has moved into the position with great enthusiasm, filling in for me while I spent four months as a Visiting Professor in Russia. Arnie is the founder of Teaching Philosophy, serving as editor of the journal for twenty years. He helped plan the first AAPT workshop-conference, has presented workshops at ten of our workshop-conferences, delivered the keynote address at the 1990 meeting, has served on the Executive Board twice, and most recently served as program co-chair. Arnie always has had a strong commitment to teaching, serving both the APA and the World Congress as a member of their respective committees on teaching. He was Guest of Honor at the First Indian National Conference on Teaching Philosophy. As part of his new duties, Arnie will represent the AAPT as an ex officio member of the APA Committee on Teaching.

We also experienced a change in the position of Executive Director. Betsy Decyk has been appointed to a five year term as the new Executive Director of the AAPT. She will also continue to serve for now as the Newsletter Editor. Betsy was the unanimous choice of the Board to lead us during the next five years. Those of you familiar with the AAPT understand that Betsy has been at the center of most our activities for the past ten years. She presents at least two workshops at each biennial meeting, and has served the Board in every capacity, except that of Treasurer. Betsy has been active in representing the AAPT at the various Division meetings of the APA, serving as our liaison to the Central Division for many years. Betsy teaches in both the Department of Philosophy.
and the Department of Psychology at California State University, Long Beach. She has been honored by the AAPT and APA for her outstanding teaching, has received awards for her teaching in both psychology and philosophy at CSULB, and was named Outstanding Faculty Woman by the CSULB chapter of the California Women in Higher Education in 1993. In addition, she is trained as a mediator and enjoys volunteering as a community mediator for Dispute Resolution Services, a branch of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. Added to all these honors, Betsy is a founding member of the Professional Enhancement Network at CSULB. The PEN Project, as it is known, is a flexible program of mentoring/peer coaching partnerships to improve teaching.

I would like to personally thank Nancy Hancock for her six years of leadership as Executive Director. Nancy carefully kept the Board and the organisation focused on our mission. She introduced us to much needed planning and review procedures. Nancy’s expertise will remain with us as she continues to serve the Board and the membership as Past Executive Director. She is helping to plan our next activities and ensuring a smooth transition to new leadership; her advice remains invaluable to the Board as we move into a new century. Thank you, Nancy for your professional leadership, your scholarship, your collegiality and your friendship.

Many of you may be aware of the fact the Association’s website has moved from Mansfield University to a new home at http://aapt-online.dhs.org/aapt.html and is kept active under the expert hand of John Wager. John has improved our look and added many new features to our web pages. The AAPT discussion list also has a new home and a new name. It can now be found at AAPT@LISTSERV.UC.EDU. Arnie Wilson will moderate the list in addition to his many duties as President.

The AAPT in conjunction with the APA will sponsor workshops on teaching at the APA Pacific, Central and Eastern Division meetings this year. We have developed new international ties and will continue to do so. This affords us the opportunity to dialogue with our colleagues and friends in Europe, Africa and Asia (and perhaps some day, South and Central America) as well as with those in North America.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for your support over the last several years. I look forward to continued activity with my friends in teaching, those who continually struggle to lead new generations from the cave.

Within days of announcing the AAPT’s intent to offer a memorial prize in honor of our deceased member and friend, Mark Lennsen (AAPT News 22:1), the AAPT has raised $160. This money was donated at the Alverno Conference in Milwaukee in exchange for a shuttle ride to the airport.

Mark Lennsen was an active member of the AAPT, the longtime co-editor with Daryl Close of the AAPT News, and a dedicated, caring professor at Ohio Northern University.

It is expected that the Lennsen prize, consisting of a $100 cash award, will be given for the best teaching essay during the prize period. The AAPT Board estimated that a restricted fund of $1,000 at 5% interest would support the biennial award. The amount raised in Milwaukee could be seen as providing for almost two years of the prize, or as a start toward an endowment-like fund which, with $840 more, could support the prize indefinitely.

“The fund needed money and people needed a reasonably priced ride to the airport,” reasoned Gary Talsky, who donated the time, van and gas for the project. “It was a win-win situation. Besides, Mark helped welcome me to this organization and continuing the welcoming tradition can also be his legacy.”


Other donations to the Lennsen Memorial Prize Fund or the AAPT are always welcome. Please contact either the Treasurer or the Executive Director.
I have been invited here to speak to you as Director of a new UK organisation called the Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Center of the Learning and Teaching Support Network—or PRS-LTSN, for short. I shall start with a sketch of the recent history of British higher education, since many of you may be unaware of the circumstances which form the background to the setting up of the PRS-LTSN. If you are already familiar with the UK system, you can skip to the section on “Centralised Quality Assurance Systems.” I then discuss the distinction between generic and subject-specific staff development, and explain the role of the PRS-LTSN in promoting discussion of subject-specific educational issues. Finally, I summarise the methods we intend to use in order to foster a culture of the scholarship of teaching.

The Origins of UK Universities

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Scotland had five universities, England had two, Ireland had one, and Wales had none at all. Of these, the two English universities of Oxford and Cambridge had long since ceased to be seats of learning in any meaningful sense, and had become little more than finishing schools for the younger sons of the rich. Only Anglicans could enrol, and the teaching staff had to be ordained priests, and to remain celibate. The government made repeated attempts to reform them; but it was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that they began to regain their status as scholarly institutions of international renown.

As for philosophy—the academic discipline closest to our hearts—it had effectively disappeared from the English university curriculum by the end of the seventeenth century. It only re-emerged nearly two centuries later—at Oxford through the study of ancient Greek philosophy, and at Cambridge through the study of scientific method and of human nature, or ‘moral science’ as it was called. Although British philosophy flourished during the intervening period, it was no thanks to the English universities (however, it should be noted that the position was very different in Scotland and Ireland).

Ultimately of far more significance than the slow reform of Oxford and Cambridge was the creation, in 1836, of the University of London, out of University College (founded in 1826), King’s College (founded in 1829), and a number of other colleges. It offered syllabuses deemed appropriate for the capital city of the world’s most industrialised economy and largest empire. Not only did it have no religious bar, but it had no residential requirement either. Anyone who presented themselves for examination and paid a fee could be awarded a degree.

Concern about the poor state of English post-school education, in comparison with that of competitor nations, was by no means confined to the capital. Throughout the century, increasing numbers of colleges were founded by local authorities, business guilds, and wealthy benefactors, primarily to provide a skilled workforce, and to conduct research into modern industrial technology. Then, as now, there was relentless upward pressure from within the more successful colleges to turn themselves into universities. The only way they could move towards this higher status was by adding more traditional, non-vocational disciplines to their subject base (not least subjects like philosophy), and by submitting their students for examination by the University of London. Eventually, between 1903 and 1909, seven colleges finally achieved full and independent university status, and could grant their own degrees (Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bristol).

University Funding

However, the colleges’ academic achievements were not matched by financial success. Although they charged fees, fee income could never cover more than a small proportion of their costs, because most of their potential students were too poor to pay more than a token amount. Many of them were on the verge of bankruptcy, and in 1889 the Government made the momentous decision to set up an ad hoc committee to distribute emergency grants to them. In the first year, the total sum distributed was only £15,000, but from then on the amount rapidly increased each year.
At the end of the first world war, there was a dramatic increase in student numbers, and the Government decided to set up a new system to regularise the funding of the universities. Unlike some more recent governments, it was highly sensitive to the need for academic autonomy to be preserved. Ministers and civil servants genuinely believed that academics knew best how to run academic affairs. They wanted a system which would ensure that increased central funding would not mean increased governmental control. So they established a body called the University Grants Committee (UGC), with its own office and secretariat, and consisting mainly of retired professors. The central idea was that the Treasury would give the UGC a block grant covering a five-year period (so that it could plan ahead), and the UGC would be entirely responsible for how the money was distributed, and for reporting annually on how well it had been spent. The UGC also had the task of advising the Government on the amount which needed to be spent in order to fulfil national needs.

The UGC remained in existence, with largely unchanged terms of reference, from 1919 until 1988—the best part of a century. Until its final years, it was largely successful in protecting the universities from government interference, and its legacy has been a highly diverse pattern of provision. During this period it oversaw a massive expansion in the number of students and universities, many of them being created from scratch with UGC funding in the 1960s. It soon drew the ancient universities into its ambit, and by the 1970s, the whole university system was almost entirely dependent on public funding, apart from research contracts from charities and commercial sponsors.

From the student point of view, the situation was equally rosy. Fees, which were in any case only nominal, were paid by the Government through local authorities, and there were generous (though means-tested) grants to cover living expenses for all students who gained a place.

The continuing elevation of colleges to university status created a vacuum, which was filled by the foundation of new technical colleges by local authorities. In 1964, the Government gave 30 technical colleges the title of Polytechnic, and created a body called the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), with the power to award degrees of the same status and standard as university degrees to polytechnic students. It is fair to say that the CNAA learnt over backwards to ensure parity of esteem, and it instituted validation procedures which were far more rigorous than the quality assurance mechanisms of existing universities.

This golden age of almost unlimited funding, continuous expansion, and lack of state interference came to an end after the economic crisis of the early 1970s. The system was simply too expensive. For the rest of its existence, the UGC presided over cuts in funding, reductions in student numbers, a decline in the real value of staff salaries and student grants, and the closure of whole departments (including half a dozen philosophy departments).

In 1988, the UGC was replaced by a body called the Universities Funding Council (UFC), which was dominated by employers, and had a brief to increase efficiency and accountability, and to ensure that university education was more relevant to the needs of employers. In 1992 there was a much more radical shake-up, in which the polytechnics and some other institutions were granted independent university status, and responsibility for funding was divided between four separate councils—one each for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. This is the system which still exists. The only significant change under the new Labour government is that maintenance grants have been replaced by loans, and a proportion of the block grant has been replaced by a standard fee. The re-introduction of the fee has not increased income to the universities (it has merely added the cost of collecting it), and the Government is resolutely opposed to allowing universities to charge differential fees in order to increase their income. The only exception is fees charged to non-European students, which are high enough to subsidise the cost of teaching our own students.

To summarise, we now have a system in which universities are almost wholly dependent on central Government for the cost of teaching students. The cost to the student is the same, whichever institution they attend; the funding per student is broadly the same for every institution; and (with the exception of some senior professors in near-market disciplines) staff salaries are on centrally determined pay scales.

Centralised Quality Assurance Systems

Parallel to these developments, there has been increased central control over output. The first innovation was the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). When the university and polytechnic sectors were merged, it was noted that the funding per student was much higher for university than for polytechnic students. The universities argued that this was because university teaching took place in the context of a much higher level of research activity—indeed, that it was essential to genuinely university-level education that teaching should be informed by research. Their bluff was called, and the funding councils decided that funding for teaching and funding for research would be separated, and that research funding would be on a competitive basis. There is now a four-yearly assessment of the quality and quantity of research output of every department in every institution, and changes in the ratings make a major difference to income.

The original intention was that there would be a similar procedure for teaching; but the funding councils have not worked out any sensible system for penalising departments whose teaching is below standard. The main cause of low standards is usually lack of resources, and reducing resources still further makes matters worse rather than better. Teaching assessment differs from the Research Assessment Exercise in that there is a six-year cycle in which different subject groups are assessed. Philosophy departments will be assessed during the coming year in England and Northern Ireland,
though they have already been assessed in Scotland and Wales. The criteria change from one year to the next, and the responsibility for assessment has now been transferred from the funding councils to a new agency, jointly owned by the funding councils and the universities, called the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The only sanction the QAA has is to recommend withdrawal of funding from failing programs, and this sanction has virtually never been applied.

The outcome of the above developments is that departments have naturally concentrated their efforts on increasing their research income, at the expense of improving the quality and efficiency of teaching. The funding councils are wise to the fact, and this is where we come in.

**Staff Development**

The paradox has long been noted that, whereas we, as university teachers, certificate others for entry into their professions—law, medicine, school teaching and so on—we ourselves do not undergo training or certification for entry into our own profession of university teacher. *Quis docebit ipso doctores?*

For many years, UK universities have had Staff Development Units (SDUs), with a wide brief covering all employees. As well as providing induction courses for new members of academic staff, they have been responsible for training all other categories of staff, introducing appraisal systems, raising awareness of equal opportunities issues and employment legislation, and a host of other things. Although some of the trainers have an academic background, they tend to belong to a culture of staff development which embraces all spheres of employment. Training academics to teach is only one aspect of their work.

When I was first appointed, induction courses were very perfunctory, and they lasted only a day or two. Within the last few years, many of the larger universities have provided much more ambitious courses, which are taken over a year or more, and are certificated by the institution. For example, at my own university, new academic staff are encouraged (though not usually compelled) to follow a course which takes up one afternoon a week over a year, and results in a Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

At the national level, a major review of higher education (known as the ‘Dearing Review’, after the name of its Chair) recently recommended that eventually all university teachers should be required to be members of a professional body in order to practice—just as is already the case with physicians, engineers, accountants and so on. Initial membership would require successful completion of an accredited training course, and renewal of membership would depend on evidence of continuing professional development.

We are still some way from compulsion, and in typical British fashion, we are starting with a system of professional self-regulation. The HE funding councils have provided pump-priming funds to set up a body called the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT). Eventually it will be self-supporting through individual membership fees (currently about $110 a year), and it will be governed by an elected Council. During the set-up period there is an accelerated mode of entry for experienced teachers who can give evidence of innovation and self-development. It held its first annual conference in July 2000, and the first issue of its journal was published at the same time.

**The Generic vs. the Subject-Specific**

Now, all these developments may sound very sensible and progressive, but there is one major snag. This is to do with the distinction between generic and subject-specific staff development.

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**AAPT/APA-CENTRAL WORKSHOP ON TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

**Report from Gary Talsky**

April 21, 2000 marked the fifth year the AAPT teamed with the APA to present a workshop on Teaching Philosophy at the Central Division meetings. Approximately thirty people gathered to hear interesting and informative sessions on several topics: Stephen Finn involved the group experientially in *Lexicon: a Game for Introductory Courses*. Betsy Decyk demonstrated *The Drama of Ideas: Teaching the History of Modern Philosophy Using a Theater Metaphor*. Stephen Esquith and his graduate assistant explored *Service Learning in a General Introductory Course*. The morning concluded with Donna Engelman, assisted by a few of her students, offering reflections and visions on *Teaching As If Your Students Will Practice Philosophy*. Helping to coordinate the event was AAPT Central Liaison Debra Penna-Fredericks.

For the second year running, the AAPT also sponsored an evening reception table to offer a place for our members and other interested people to gather and thereby help make our organization visible. (It doesn’t hurt that our name comes up first in the alphabetical listings!)

The AAPT is always open to your suggestions for creative and impressive presenters for these divisional workshops. Please contact any member of the AAPT Board.
Staff Development Units and the Institute for Learning and Teaching are well equipped to raise standards and improve skills on generic issues. Some such issues are so general as to be common to all professions: for example, time management, leadership, chairing meetings, making presentations, IT skills, equal opportunities awareness, and so on. Others are largely peculiar to university teachers, but still common to teachers in any discipline: for example, knowing how students learn, giving a lecture, using audio-visual aids, running a seminar, commenting on written work, designing courses, deploying varied modes of assessment, and so on.

The trouble is that Staff Development Units are not equipped to deal with subject-specific issues. This is partly because there are very few trainees from any given subject area each year, and partly because staff developers do not have the necessary subject expertise. However, there is also a serious ideological issue at stake.

At least in the UK, and especially in the humanities, academics have generally been deeply hostile to staff development. While they might grudgingly admit the usefulness of knowing how to use an OHP, or to project their voices, they usually consider staff development events to be a waste of valuable time, and irrelevant to their perceived needs. I might also add that many feel sickened by the jargon of 'staff developmentese', and they simply switch off. In so far as they acknowledge that their teaching could be better, the sort of questions that concern them are subject-specific, such as:

- How can I get innumerate first-year students to overcome their fear of logical symbols?
- How can I write and apply explicit assessment criteria for how well a student has argued philosophically?
- How can I get students to read and understand the text of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and test whether they have done so?
- How do I generate dispassionate discussion of theological issues in a class which includes fundamentalist believers in a number of faiths?

These are not the kind of questions which can be dealt with in generic courses designed as much for scientists and engineers as for philosophers.

I say that the issue of the generic versus the subject-specific is an ideological one. This is because a substantial body of academics believe they have nothing important to learn from generic staff development; whereas an equally substantial body of staff developers believe that everything of importance is generic. According to the latter view, there are objective facts about how students learn, and established techniques for bringing about learning—facts and techniques about which most academics are deplorably ignorant. Once academics have been trained, the application of standard techniques to different disciplines is a matter of detail. An analogy might be that, if you have been trained as a dog surgeon, it makes little difference whether you are presented with a sick husky or a sick poodle.

In my view, both these extreme positions are wrong. There clearly are many aspects of good teaching which are common to all disciplines, and are teachable by staff development generalists. Equally obviously, there are many aspects of good teaching which are highly specific, and which can be taught only by experienced subject experts. However, there is a grey area as to what is generic and what is specific; and it is far from clear where the balance lies between the two. The main reason why it is unclear is because so little work has been done to develop the skills of teaching staff on subject-specific issues. This is a remarkable phenomenon when you consider that courses for training schoolteachers have always had a strong disciplinary component. If in higher education there were two complementary development programs with roughly equal resources, it might then be possible to evaluate their relative effectiveness in improving the quality of teaching.

### The Learning and Teaching Support Network

To their credit, the British funding councils have taken these considerations on board. For a number of years they funded a range of subject-specific programs. I shall not go into the details here, but they included projects on the use of computers in teaching, and projects which focussed on areas of concern arising from teaching quality assessments. In 1999 they reviewed these programs, and decided that they lacked sufficient coherence and funding to be fully effective. Their solution was to replace them with a Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), funded to the tune of $10.5 million a year for at least 5 years.

The LTSN came into being on 1st January 2000. It is run by a Program Executive under the aegis of the Institute for Learning and Teaching, both of which are based at York. It is divided into 24 Subject Centres, covering all the disciplines studied at UK universities in cognate groupings, and based at universities in different parts of the country. Their

### Submissions to AAPT News

*AAPT News* is published in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. Deadlines for submissions are January 1, May 1, and September 1.

Submissions may be sent as e-mail binary attachment files to *bdecyk@csulb.edu*. Most major PC word processor file formats are fine, but WordPerfect 5.1 and later, Microsoft Word for Windows, or Microsoft Word for Macintosh 6.0 are preferred. Hard copies may be FAXed to (562) 985-7135 (attn: Decyk) or mailed to me at:

Department of Philosophy  
California State University, Long Beach  
1250 Bellflower Boulevard  
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408  
If you need help, call me at (562) 985-4346.

— Betty Decyk
main purpose is to encourage research into subject-specific educational issues, and to disseminate good practice as widely as possible. There is also a Generic Learning and Teaching Center at York, which will co-ordinate the activities of the individual subject centres, and advise on generic issues.

The Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Center

The Philosophical and Religious Studies Subject Center, or PRS-LTSN, is based in the School of Philosophy at the University of Leeds, with a satellite at the University of Wales, Lampeter. It currently has funding of over £400,000 a year. Most of the money is spent on buying out the time of experienced academic staff, since the very essence of the network is that it is run by academics for academics.

The subjects we cover are philosophy, history and philosophy of science, theology, and religious studies. One of our first tasks is to create a database of all teaching staff in UK higher education who consider themselves to be primarily practitioners of one of these five disciplines. For a number of reasons, this is not an easy task:

First, published staff lists are invariably out of date by the time they appear in print, and they usually omit casual staff, who would benefit most from our services.

Second, the departmental structures of individual institutions often do not correspond to the above subject categories.

Third, many individuals are located outside their natural ‘home’ department (for example, a philosopher teaching medical ethics in a school of medicine, or working in a department of continuing education).

Fourth, there are many grey areas, such as whether a historian of ancient philosophy is a philosopher or a classicist, or whether a philosopher of education is a philosopher or an educationalist.

Fifth, recent European legislation on data protection makes it difficult for us to hold or exchange information about individuals without their express permission.

So far we have a list of over 2000 names covering the five subject areas. We are about to issue a questionnaire which should bring in much more and up-to-date information, and it would not surprise me if we ended up with as many as 3000 names. Merely maintaining the database will be a major task.

The Aims of the Subject Center

But what is the PRS-LTSN aiming to achieve? It would be nice if we could build on pre-existing structures for sharing good practice and innovation in the teaching of philosophy. Unfortunately there are none such in the UK—unlike the USA, where your AAPT and the journal *Teaching Philosophy* have a long and successful history. In the UK there is no such association, and no such journal. If anyone wanted to publish an article on teaching philosophy in the UK context, there is nowhere obvious to place it, apart from generic journals which hardly any philosophers read. If they wanted to meet face-to-face with teachers from other institutions to discuss shared problems, they would not know who was likely to be interested. There is a vacuum waiting to be filled; but we have no idea whether our Center will release a huge head of pressure, or whether it will at first appeal only to a small band of enthusiasts.

It is odd that teachers of philosophy should be so keen to publicise their successes in research, and yet so secretive about their successes in teaching, which takes up most of their time. I do not believe that the majority of philosophers consider their teaching techniques to be trade secrets—although a competitive attitude might have been fuelled by the numerical scores awarded under teaching quality assessment, and competition for students in the national market. A more likely reason is that departments have a major financial motive to maximise their scores under the Research Assessment Exercise, and individuals are promoted mainly on the basis of their research output, rather than because of their excellence as teachers.

The mission of our Center is to bring about a change in academic culture, so that it becomes as natural to discuss and publish about teaching issues, as it already is to discuss and publish about research.

How the Subject Center Will Operate

Our mode of operation will mainly be through a website, although we shall also organise national and regional conferences and workshops, and make consultancy visits to individual departments on request. If there is sufficient demand, we shall publish a regular newsletter; but such things are expensive to print and distribute, and I suspect that most of them go straight into a filing cabinet or trash can.

The way we shall use the website is this. On the basis of answers to a questionnaire, we shall allocate respondents to a wide range of threaded discussion lists on specific issues, and invite contributions. Each discussion list will have a Chair, and when its members agree that a particular document is in a publishable state, it will be promoted to the public website. Moribund discussion lists will be closed, and new ones set up as different topics emerge, thus feeding an increasing number of documents into the website. The outcome will be an ever-expanding, easily searchable, electronic encyclopaedia of good practice and innovation in the teaching of philosophy and the other disciplines.

Although the contents of the website will increasingly consist of materials generated through the discussion lists, we are also conducting literature and website searches for relevant materials which have already been published. Our initial impression is that there is relatively little out there which comes under our brief, namely subject-specific material on HE teaching methods in the UK. Most of the UK material is generic, and much that has been published in the USA (largely thanks to the AAPT) is not easily transferable to the UK context.
Nevertheless, there are some useful materials, and we would like to make them more widely available. Merely providing a bibliography is not much use, since few university libraries have the relevant items (for example, I believe that only one in the whole of the UK subscribes to *Teaching Philosophy*). Where we can obtain copyright permissions, we shall place digital versions on our website; otherwise we shall have to content ourselves with reviews.

**Subject-Specific Issues**

So what sort of issues will be discussed? Here we need to distinguish between the Subject Center as a whole, the five disciplines, and their many sub-disciplines. If we first take the Subject Center as a whole, then subject-specific issues in the strict sense would be issues which are both common and exclusive to just these disciplines. I am almost certain that there are no issues which concern all philosophers, historians and philosophers of science, theologians, and teachers of religious studies, and no-one else. However, we can define ‘subject-specific’ more loosely and pragmatically as an issue which is of concern to most teachers of these disciplines, and of little or no concern to teachers of most other disciplines. Taken in this looser sense, we have identified a number of subject-specific issues for the Subject Center as a whole. These include:

- enabling students to acquire and apply highly abstract concepts;
- developing student autonomy in reading difficult primary texts;
- making effective use of information technology in disciplines which are largely text- and discussion-based;
- fostering student-led discussion of abstract material;
- assessing student performance where there are no clear right or wrong answers;
- re-educating students who believe they are expected merely to absorb and reproduce what they have been taught or have read;
- improving the employability of graduates of non-vocational disciplines;
- making courses with a strongly western and Christian bias more accessible to ethnic minority students.

I think everyone would agree that these issues are highly relevant to the teaching of all the disciplines covered by the Subject Center, but of much less relevance to most other disciplines taught in universities.

If we drill down further, there are issues which are specific to one or more of the disciplines covered by the Center, but not to the others. For example, a large proportion of students of history and philosophy of science have a science or engineering background. Teaching them what is essentially a humanities discipline raises all sorts of problems which are not normally faced by philosophers or theologians. There are no doubt many other such relatively general issues which are specific to just one of the disciplines.

At the lowest level, there are innumerable issues which are specific to a sub-discipline, such as logic, the history of philosophy and its different periods, pre-modern science, the philosophy of 20th-century physics, textual criticism of the Bible, Hebrew and New Testament Greek, different religious faiths, and so on. The list is potentially endless, and we shall set up networks only where our questionnaire shows there is sufficient demand. Some of these areas may have as much in common with other Subject Centres as with our own—obvious examples are mathematical logic, ancient philosophy, language teaching, and textual criticism. We shall cooperate closely with these other Subject Centres, so as to ensure that specialists with similar interests work together.

**Relations with Other Organisations**

Finally, we need to address the question of how the PRS-LTSN can help to promote the cause of philosophical education world-wide. As far as I am aware, the only two going concerns at present are the AAPT, and the Association Internationale des Professeurs de Philosophie (AIPPh), which, despite the ‘Internationale’, is mainly European in orientation. There is considerable scope for the PRS-LTSN to act as a bridgehead between America and Europe.

Like the AAPT, the AIPPh is funded from the subscriptions of individual members, and neither organisation has anything like the resources of the PRS-LTSN. However, the PRS-LTSN is funded by the British taxpayer, and it cannot spend money on international initiatives, unless these can be proved to be of benefit to UK higher education. On the other hand, our strategy of concentrating on discussion lists and a website means that anyone can join in. It doesn’t cost us a penny if philosophers from all over the world hit our website, and any marginal costs in managing enlarged discussion lists will be more than compensated for by the materials contributed.

Again, all conferences and workshops will be advertised on the website, and any overseas philosophers will be welcome to attend. Until such time as we have to become self-financing (which may be never), any registration fees will be on a cost-only basis.

To conclude, the PRS-LTSN is in its early days yet, but it is well funded. We are going to hold a launch conference for UK departmental delegates in September, and our website will go live within a matter of weeks. There will not be much on it at first, but it should become a major resource over the next year or so. Although we are a UK body, we shall maintain an international outlook. We look forward to close cooperation with associations such as yours, and we hope that, together, we can stimulate a truly international dialogue on the teaching of philosophy.
JOIN US!

For the sixth consecutive year, the APA and the AAPT will co-sponsor a teaching workshop at the Central Division Meetings of the APA. The session will be Friday, May 4th, 1:45 - 4:45pm in room Greenway C. The Central Division Meeting this spring is at the Hyatt Regency, 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN.

SESSION TITLE: Side Doors: Alternative Ways to Enter Philosophical Discussions

CHAIR: Betsy Newell Decyk, CSU Long Beach

PART I: Validity, Analogy and The Holy Grail: Using Film to Teach Critical Thinking

SPEAKERS: Dean A. Kowalski, Loras College, and Tom Riley, Clarke College

PART II: Using Literature to Enrich the Teaching of Philosophy

SPEAKER: Sara Goering, CSU Long Beach

The AAPT will also have a table at the reception. Come join us!

AAPT-L IS DEAD! LONG LIVE AAPT!

That is, the AAPT-L list, which for several years has been available as a forum for philosophers to discuss issues related to the teaching of philosophy, has moved (with a shorter tag) to the Listserv base at University of Cincinnati.

The new name: AAPT

The new address: AAPT@LISTSERV.UC.EDU

It is now a private list so that only members of the list may post messages, and all requests to join must be approved by one of the “owners” (Arnold Wilson, Betsy Decyk, Nancy Hancock). The list will continue to be a place for philosophers to discuss the teaching of philosophy.

To subscribe, send to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.UC.EDU the following message: SUBSCRIBE AAPT yourname (e.g., SUBSCRIBE AAPT John Q. Public) OR, send a request to join Arnold Wilson, Betsy Decyk or Nancy Hancock.

(Those who were members of the old AAPT_L list have automatically been transferred to the new.)

LOOK FOR US!

The AAPT has a new website mastered by John Wager. You can find it at: http://aapt-online.dhs.org

There are pictures from the AAPT summer 2000 conference at Alverno College. News of the AAPT 2002 conference will be posted there, as well as the request for workshop proposals when it is ready. One can also find the AAPT Constitution. Other areas of the website, such as a members’ directory, are being developed.

CONGRATULATIONS, BOB!

At the AAPT 2000 conference Robert Timko was honored by the AAPT for his service and leadership. His name was inadvertently omitted from the list of honorees in the last AAPT News, but we certainly recognize his many contributions to the organization. (Thank You!)

QUESTIONS: A NEW NEWSLETTER

The American Philosophical Association’s Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy is pleased to announce the creation of a national newsletter illustrating young people engaged in philosophy. The pilot issue of the newsletter, Questions, will appear in early 2001 and will be organized around the theme of children’s rights. It will include transcripts of philosophical discussions about children’s rights from K-12 classrooms around the country, photographs from some of these classes, and essays, drawings, stories, and poems created by young people on the subject of children’s rights. We welcome the involvement of additional philosophers and teachers who are working with K-12 students.

At this time, the editorial board for Questions is composed of Jana Mohr Lone, David Shapiro, Betsy Newell Decyk, Rosalind Ladd, Michael Pritchard, Hugh Taft-Morales, and Wendy Turgeon. Funding for the pilot issue has been provided by the American Philosophical Association. For more information please contact Jana Mohr Lone at jinohrlone@hotmail.com or call her at (206) 221-6297.

AAPT LOGO CONTEST

The American Association of Philosophy Teachers is looking for a new Logo!

Grand Prize:
1 year subscription to Teaching Philosophy
1 year subscription to Atltia
1 year membership in AAPT

Send submissions to: Dr. Nancy S. Hancock, E.D.
Soc/Anth/Phil
Northern Kentucky University
Highland Heights, KY 41099
hancockn@nku.edu

Postmark Deadline: September 1, 2001

Format for submission: Two camera-ready copies; one 3.5” PC disk in jpeg or gif format

Logos will be judged by members of the Board of Officers. The winner will be announced in the Spring issue of AAPT News. All submissions become the property of the American Association of Philosophy Teachers.
Inspired by John Perry’s *A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*, Amy Russell—the minister intern at Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church—and I designed a service around the topic of immortality. What follows is the short dialogue I wrote for the service. Maybe some of you will find it useful in nonprofessional settings, and I’d be happy to receive comments to improve it. I hope to use it as a prompt for philosophical discussion at bookstores, public libraries, and perhaps other venues.

Joanne and Patrice, close friends for a number of years, run into each other in a hospital waiting room.

Joanne: Hi, Patrice! I didn’t expect to see you here! What’s up?

Patrice: Well, I wish I could tell you I’m just visiting a friend. But, you know those bad headaches I’ve been having lately?

Joanne: Yeah. Did the doctor say they’re migraines like we thought? Is there a medicine that can help you with them?

Patrice: I don’t know yet. I’m still waiting for some test results.

Joanne: Why don’t I wait with you? You could probably use someone to talk to about what’s going through your mind right now.

Patrice: Yeah. Last year when Tom passed away so suddenly, I really spent a lot of time thinking about my own mortality. I came to accept the fact that all living things die sometime, and humans are no exception. I just hope it’s not so soon for me.

Joanne: Sure, humans die. But we’re not like other living things.

Patrice: What do you mean?

Joanne: Well, for one thing, humans have immortal souls.

Patrice: I’m not so sure. What do you mean by “soul”?

Joanne: Oh, come on, now. You know. Your spirit or self. Call it what you want. It’s essentially what is you. Your body may die, but your soul you will continue living forever.

Patrice: I don’t think humans are that different from other living things. But even if they are, what makes you so sure humans have a soul?

Joanne: Well, I know you don’t believe in the Bible like I do, so I won’t bother pointing out that it says we have souls. But there’s plenty of other evidence to be had. For one thing, we’re self-aware and other living things aren’t.

Patrice: Certainly not plants, probably not single-celled organisms and the like, and maybe not fish or insects and so on. But surely you have to admit that at the very least many non-human mammals are self-aware. They can think, be creative, learn, remember, even lie and play politics—things they couldn’t do if they weren’t self-aware. Remember that PBS show “If Dolphins Could Talk”? It showed how dolphins could learn language and abstract concepts, be creative, even work together creatively. And there have been studies of Bonobo chimps that show they can and do lie when it’s in their self-interest. Surely they couldn’t do that if they had no concept of self—if they weren’t self-aware. And what about cats and dogs? Don’t you think your cat Elliott is self-aware?

Joanne: I guess so. He’s certainly creative when he’s trying to get me out of bed in the morning! And I’ve seen him try to pin the tipped-over garbage can on Luke, my dog, when I saw Elliott do it! But there are other reasons I believe we have souls.

Patrice: Like what? Have you ever seen a soul? Have you ever in any way experienced one with any of your senses?

Joanne: Well, no... Wait. I spoke too fast. I have experienced my own soul.

Patrice: That’s nice. But I haven’t experienced a soul. I’m trying to find a reason to believe I have one. Goddess knows it would be a comfort right now.

Joanne: You seem so set on demanding empirical evidence for the existence of even your own soul. Don’t you just feel it? Consider this: when you get angry or sad, or when you remember the wonderful time we had in the Bahamas last March, don’t you just feel it?

Patrice: When I get angry, what I feel is my face get hot and my heart beat faster. What I feel when I’m sad is a lump in my throat and tears build up in my eyes. And when I remember the Bahamas... Mmmm... I feel calm, relaxed... But those are all physical sensations. I still don’t see why I should think that there’s anything more to it, let alone that there’s an immortal, but of course imperceivable, soul behind it.

Joanne: (Pause) Do you believe that gravity really exists?

Patrice: Huh? Of course!

Joanne: Why?

Patrice: What do you mean, “Why”? Everyone does!

Joanne: Well, yeah. But you seem to demand empirical evidence before you believe something is real. What empirical evidence do you have that gravity is real?
Patrice: The fact that things fall to the ground, that the planets move in elliptical orbits around the sun, that the moon orbits the earth... You know all this!

Joanne: Sure. Sure. But, what you've seen isn't gravity itself. You've seen all the things that we've come to accept as signs that gravity is at work. Have you ever seen gravity itself?

Patrice: Well, no, but...

Joanne: Then why do you believe it exists?

Patrice: That's a tough one. I guess... I guess it's because it's only by accepting that gravity exists that we can explain so many things that happen. That's a fundamental principle of scientific knowledge, you know. Only posit those entities which are necessary to explain known phenomena...or something along those lines.

Joanne: The soul is the same as gravity. I believe in the soul because I think that the only way to explain certain things about humans and, I'll grant you, some other animals is to assume they have souls.

Patrice: I'm not sure I agree with you. After all, they've made remarkable progress in the field of artificial intelligence. Some day soon we're going to be able to build a robot that is "conscious" in the sense we've been talking about. It'll learn, remember, create, and have emotions that run the whole gamut. But, it won't have a soul. Or, if it does, that'll just prove that a soul is a physical thing B it can be built. And that means it couldn't possibly be immortal.

Joanne: Ok. So you don't believe in souls. What do you think happens when we die?

Patrice: The same thing that happens to all other living things that die. I'll disintegrate. I will cease to exist except in the sense that the molecules B or the tiniest things that make up anything that exists. I think they call them quarks or whatever B those pieces will continue to exist. They'll be absorbed into other things. They'll spread out over the planet and maybe the solar system. That's it. That's the end. No more me.

Joanne: That's so sad...

Patrice: Not really. It's part of life. It actually makes me feel like I belong. I mean, I'm not some caged soul trapped in the physical world and just waiting to escape. I am what I am in the fullest sense possible. I belong just where I am. I'm not an outsider but an intimate part of nature and everything around me. And that means I will die, but life will go on.

### AAPT MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS: 1996–2000

#### TABLE 1: MEMBERSHIPS BY CATEGORY

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**NOTE:** Statistics for 1996, 1998, and 2000 include all who became members when registering for the conference.

* Conference in Norfolk, VA

** Conference in Mansfield, PA

*** Conference in Milwaukee, WI

**NOTE:** All student members were from the United States.
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHILOSOPHY TEACHERS

14th International Workshop-Conference on Teaching Philosophy

will be held

July 31—August 4, 2002

at Thomas More College
Crestview Hills, KY (Cincinnati Metro area)

Meeting information, Request for Presentations, Program and Registration Forms will be posted as available at the AAPT Website: http://aapt-online.dhs.org, or through the AAPT Listserv: AAPT@LISTSERV.UC.EDU

For information by mail, write to:
Betsy Newell Decyk
Executive Director, AAPT
Philosophy Department
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Membership Application

All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year. The expiration date of your membership will be listed on the address label for each newsletter. If you have any questions about the status of your membership, contact the Executive Director at bdeycy@csulb.edu or write to Betsy Decyk, Executive Director AAPT, Philosophy Dept., California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840-2408.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND RATES

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Lifetime memberships are also available for $500, which may be paid in installments over the period of one year.

Complete the form below, and send with your check or money-order to:

Betsy Decyk, Executive Director
American Association of Philosophy Teachers
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, CA 90840-2408

Name: ________________________________
Institutional Affiliation (if any): ________________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
City: _____________________________ State/Province: __________________ Country: __________________
Zip (+4): __________________ Phone (W): ____________________________ (H): __________________
E-mail: ____________________________

Is this a renewal __ or a new membership __ __ ?

Please check membership type: __Regular __Student __Emeritus __Part-Time/Adjunct

May we list you as a member on the AAPT Website? __yes __no

May we put your E-mail address on the AAPT Website in a “members-only” directory? __yes __no

May we send your E-mail address to other members of the AAPT? __yes __no

Would you like to add a description of your teaching interests to the website? If so, use the space below:
___________________________________________________________

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: $ __________