



The Philosophy
Foundation
THINKING CHANGES

Honorary Patrons
Professor A.C. Grayling
Professor Angie Hobbs

Patrons
Robin Ince
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The Eternal Return¹ **(or Returning to Teach Philosophy)**

London, January 18th 2021 – Two former primary school pupils from South East London return to teach philosophy with the charity that taught them over 10 years ago. Both were taught philosophy by The Philosophy Foundation's co-founder Peter Worley in their primary schools and were inspired to go on and study philosophy at University because of these formative philosophy sessions. They both approached the charity in 2020 to become specialist philosophy teachers and go back into primary schools to inspire others.

The Philosophy Foundation (TPF) believes that reasoning skills developed through philosophical enquiry are an indispensable foundation of all aspects of learning, and that Philosophy, like Maths, Music or Physical Education, is intrinsically worth doing and intrinsically engaging.

The body is the only charity in the world that specifically employs Philosophy graduates to do Philosophy with children, training Philosophy graduates to be able to do Philosophy in schools from nursery up to 18 using a specific methodology developed over years of practice and research in the classroom.

One former pupil – Felix Kita-Mears - now a fourth-year philosophy undergraduate at Trinity College Dublin - wrote to TPF asking if he could work for them early last year:

"The sessions I was given had a huge impact on me at the time and really expanded my horizons. I would say the way in which I think has been significantly changed since I began doing philosophy. I would like to be able to offer a similar experience to young people in primary school now."

Felix attended John Ball Primary School in Lewisham, where TPF are still working. Felix was part of an after-school club the charity used to run for free for pupils, which they recorded. Some of these recordings are shown as part of the training course for philosophers to become specialist philosophy teachers, to show children doing philosophy. Felix was told that if he came on the training course he would be faced with his younger self doing philosophy. He was nervous about being embarrassed, but when the time came said, "I had no idea how good we were!"

Soon after lockdown TPF started running their stage 1 training course online for philosophy graduates. Co-founders Peter and Emma ran the first course, where Ben Walker introduced himself as someone who 'had philosophy in primary school with Peter.' Ben had attended Eliot Bank Primary School, Lewisham – the first school to have philosophy with Peter in 2002.

When asked how he feels about former pupils returning to work with TPF Peter says,

¹ **Eternal return** is a concept that the universe and all existence and energy has been recurring, and will continue to recur, in a self-similar form an infinite number of times across infinite time or space.



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"Well it makes me feel old! But a lot of the research done that looks into the impact of philosophy on children can only ever, at best, hope to report finding such as improvements in reading and writing, some reasoning skills, etc. and as encouraging as these findings can be they're statistical, general and probably quite small. But when I meet people like Ben and Felix, and they report to us that they went to University to study philosophy because of the philosophy they did with us, then we get a sense of what the real-world impact is on individuals. This is not just small improvements in certain skills: what you choose to do at University is defining and life changing."

Ben has now completed his training with The Philosophy Foundation and is an accredited specialist philosophy teacher with them, ready to work in schools. Ben is running online sessions for Key Stage 2 pupils during lockdown: <https://www.philosophy-foundation.org/what-s-on>.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY FOUNDATION

The Philosophy Foundation's (TPF) mission is to bring understanding, wisdom and flourishing to the heart of education for children and adults. TPF train philosophy graduates to conduct philosophical enquiry with nursery, primary and secondary school children, older students and adults. Since forming as a social enterprise in 2007 they have worked directly with over 48,000 young people in schools - nursery, primary and secondary - helping them to develop vital cognitive and affective skills that enhance their school work, and their life beyond school. Over 90% of TPF schools have more than the national average of children on free school meals (with 56% of TPF schools having double the national average) and are in areas that serve communities with a wide mix of language and educational needs.

TPF have maintained an average re-contract rate with schools of 91% since 2010 (when they became a charity) - and this year maintained 92% of their schools. This demonstrates the high level of impact and value schools place on their work, as schools pay for it from their own budgets on the whole.

TPF also work in prisons (where a large proportion of the population come from very disadvantaged backgrounds) and community settings with adults and the elderly. They work in some unique settings where education is not straight forward, including: Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital School; Special education needs schools, with looked-after children and with the homeless. In order to support and sustain their charitable work TPF are now running training in philosophical thinking in business.

For more information, please contact Emma Worley MBE, co-CEO, The Philosophy Foundation
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The Philosophy Foundation is a registered charity number 1140338