Encouraging critical thinking in K-12 schools

Are thoughts real? When professor Jana Mohr Lone’s four-year-old son started asking such questions, it prompted her to consider how critical thinking and dialogical skills are taught to young children. Identifying an opportunity, Jana launched the Philosophers in the Schools program in 1996.

“It’s a very different model for teaching and learning,” Jana said. “It’s not teacher-centered; it’s learner-centered. The discussion and questions being explored in class come from the students.”

The program, which has introduced philosophy to more than 3,000 students, prepares University of Washington undergraduate and graduate students to conduct philosophy sessions in public schools, where they work alongside K-12 teachers.

“People don’t always see kids as sophisticated thinkers,” said Dustin Groshong, a UW senior who has been leading sessions at an elementary school. “When you give them that opportunity and respect, it really brings something out in them. They become more confident in expressing their own voice.”

Dustin has spent the last term in an English language learner class where students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. As a result of the philosophical discussions, “the kids are really able to appreciate different perspectives,” he said.

“The feedback we often get from the teachers is that there’s less conflict in the classroom,” Jana added. “The students start to learn how to express their views . . . and understand that you can disagree with someone without having negative feelings.”

Philosophers in the Schools provides valuable experience for university students and future educators while encouraging K-12 students in local public schools to explore—and express—their unique point of view.

“We want the kids to not only share opinions but to understand why they think what they think and to see how someone else might have a different view,” Jana said.

To learn more about the Philosophers in the Schools program, visit philosophyforchildren.org.

Did you know?

INSPIRING PEACE Students and local community members are gathering support for the development of the UW Community Peace Garden, a project inspired by the life and teachings of alumnus Bruce Lee. The garden, which will be located near Drumheller Fountain, celebrates unity, equality and diversity. Learn more at communitypeacegarden.com.
A place to connect

The renovated Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center links students and the community

“What makes this place really special is the level of student engagement that helped create it.”

Sitting in the spacious new lobby of the recently renovated Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center, director Marisa Herrera added, “The University and the students are so committed to diversity that they see it as a priority to create a space like this.”

The center, which was established in 1972, connects students with the campus and the community. Serving around 100 campus organizations, it is “a home away from home for students,” Marisa said. “We see them far beyond their four years here—we see them as they become alumni, as they become parents.”

Forging relationships is one of the center’s primary goals, and they fill that role for prospective as well as current students through a number of outreach programs.

“The community doesn’t always feel like they have an easy way to get into campus,” Marisa commented. “Especially for first-generation students, this is a great place to connect and become a part of the UW.”

The new center—which was designed by alumni Alex Rolluda, ’89, and Sam Cameron, ’75, of Rolluda and Associates—provides a dedicated space for students to interact, learn and thrive. There are collaborative work areas, computers, a wellness room, a leadership “lab” and even a dance studio. The center also includes a theater, located across the street, where social justice films are screened on a weekly basis.

The community and alumni are welcome to attend many of the center’s events, and there are ongoing opportunities to volunteer. Community members can also take a self-guided tour of the Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center, which includes 22 historical murals preserved from the original building.

Learn more at depts.washington.edu/ecc. Watch the “UW|360” episode on the renovated center at UWTV.org by searching for “Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center.”

Did you know?

SCIENCE TALKS AT TOWN HALL SEATTLE

Learn about the latest research in subjects ranging from astronomy to physics. As part of the Engage Science Speaker Series, emerging scientists from the UW share stories about their research at Town Hall Seattle. Visit engage-science.com/speaker-series for details.
What’s happening around the U-District?

University District residents, neighbors, students, businesses and local organizations are working together to make the U-District even more vibrant, innovative and diverse. Check out the U-District Livability Partnership’s strategic plan and learn more about how you can get involved at udistrictlivabilitypartnership.org.

UW Summer Youth programs

Make this a summer of exploration. UW Summer Youth programs offer unique, hands-on enrichment opportunities for elementary, middle and high school students. With a range of courses covering science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) as well as arts and humanities, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Programs include:

• The Secrets of Ancient Civilizations
  (first through fifth graders)

• Extreme Earth: The science behind earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis and more
  (sixth through eighth graders)

• Fashion Design: Create wearable art
  (sixth through eighth graders)

• iPad Hand-Drawn Animation
  (sixth through eighth graders)

• Intensive Screenwriting Workshop: From concept to clapboard
  (ninth through twelfth graders)

• Computer Programming
  (ninth through twelfth graders)

• And much more

Visit summer-camp.uw.edu to explore UW Summer Youth programs and register.

Meet your neighbor
Danny Dawson

For Danny Dawson, a senior who lives in the U-District, the University of Washington campus is a hive of activity—literally.

A biology student, Danny is also the head of the bee committee at the UW Farm, a student-run facility that aims to reconnect the campus and greater community to food sources by growing sustainably produced food.

“I really like the hands-on approach to learning,” Danny said. “Instead of just assuming information as fact from a book, you learn by testing things out.”

Through two internships and his work as the beekeeping coordinator, Danny has studied foraging patterns as well as bee hygiene. He is also involved in ongoing testing for Nosema cerana, a gut disease that can be detrimental to bee colonies.

Danny plans to continue applying his biology education through beekeeping, and he hopes to further educate people on the importance of bees.

“Bees do a lot for us ecologically, but so much of it is behind the scenes … it’s really eye-opening to people when they learn about it,” he said.

Beyond the UW Farm, Danny also volunteers with the UW chapter of Camp Kesem, a summer camp for kids whose parents have been affected by cancer.

Go to students.washington.edu/uwfarm for details and check out beeinterns.blogspot.com to learn more about beekeeping at the UW.
Now–June 2
Sean Scully: Passages/Impressions/Surfaces
This exhibition pairs Sean Scully’s photographic Harris and Lewis Shacks portfolio with October, a large scale oil painting.
**Henry Art Gallery**
[ henryart.org](http://henryart.org)

May 29–June 9
One Act Plays
UW Drama stages one act plays by Tennessee Williams.
Glenn Hughes Penthouse Theatre
[artsci.washington.edu/artsuw](http://artsci.washington.edu/artsuw)

June 12–October 27
Empowering Women – Artisan Cooperatives That Transform Communities
From Africa to Asia to the Americas, female artisans are creating grassroots cooperatives to reach new markets, raise living standards and transform lives. **Empowering Women** provides an intimate view of the work of ten such enterprises in ten countries.
**Burke Museum**
[ burkemuseum.org](http://burkemuseum.org)

June 4
University Choirs: “UW Sings”
The University Singers, Women’s Choir and Men’s Glee Club present their popular year-end concert.
7:30 p.m., Meany Theater
[ music.washington.edu](http://music.washington.edu)

June 10
University Lectures: “Making the West Coast Work”
Paul Atkinson, Common Cause
7:30 p.m., Kane Hall
[publicaffairs.washington.edu](http://publicaffairs.washington.edu)

June 12
UW World Series: Chris Thile
A mandolin player and 2012 recipient of the MacArthur “Genius Grant,” Chris Thile will perform transcribed works by J.S. Bach as well as his own compositions.
7:30 p.m., Meany Hall
[uwworldseries.org](http://uwworldseries.org)

October 1
UW World Series: Chris Thile
A mandolin player and 2012 recipient of the MacArthur “Genius Grant,” Chris Thile will perform transcribed works by J.S. Bach as well as his own compositions.
7:30 p.m., Meany Hall
[uwworldseries.org](http://uwworldseries.org)

October 3–5
UW World Series: AXIS Dance Company
8 p.m., Meany Hall
[uwworldseries.org](http://uwworldseries.org)