Douglas College Institutional Repository Report

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My theoretical presentation in Mexico demonstrated Philosophy Sports, a new modality of public participatory philosophy featuring social reasoning (collaborative argument construction), confrontation of divergent perspectives, live dialogue, plus real-time phone voting and measured persuasive effects. This presentation was the first opportunity for the global community of practitioner philosophers to be exposed to, learn, critique and adopt Philosophy Sports as the future of public participatory philosophy.

Public participatory philosophy is both community engagement and experiential learning, two key strategic aims of Douglas College. The standard modality of public participatory philosophy is Cafe Philosophy (e.g. SFU's Philosophers' Cafe), which, however, has recognized defects, specifically a lack of rigour and criticality, unscrutinized personal criteria of truth, and no measure of successful participation. These problems were among those highlighted in my (RSATF-supported) 2014 presentation before the 13th ICPP, which subsequently appeared in print (Picard, 2015). That paper also sketched a theoretical solution based on a theory of social reasoning (Laden 2012). However, implementation details were lacking till very recently.

Philosophy Sports is the next generation of Cafe Philosophy. Philosophy Sports is a series of games of competitive persuasion (publically-engaged experiential learning) that socialize the criterion of truth and the rules of logic as *fair play*. Public events staged in 2017 in the GVA inaugurated Philosophy Sports. The theoretical presentation at the 15th ICPP in Mexico brought this new modality of public participatory philosophy to an international audience of practitioner philosophers. There it was argued that Philosophy Sports overcomes and solves the reported defects of Cafe Philosophy and effectively embodies the norms of social reasoning. These games overcome recognized defects of Cafe Philosophy by requiring a shared (though contestable) criterion of truth, recasting the principles of logic as rules of fair play, and valorizing rethinking.

Competitive games of persuasion provide intensive interactive philosophy experiences that feature social reasoning (collaborative argument construction), confrontation of divergent perspectives, live dialogue, plus real-time phone voting and measured persuasive effects. Participants evaluate supporting claims and overall conclusions by revisable live e-voting, which allows for measurement of effective persuasion. Designed for the post-truth era, these philosophy games aim to revivify public reason and deepen civil discourse in the spirit of fun and fair competition. They represent a radical new way to *play* philosophy and enact democracy.

These games improve arguments through play, and develop players through friendly competition governed by the sporting values of betterment, fun, inclusiveness, respect, and fair play. Contrary to the adversarial model of debate, in which only those who lose learn, in these truth games one wins only by changing one's mind. Only reasonableness is rewarded, undercutting the idiosyncrasy of standard modes of public participatory philosophy.

The first persuasion games were developed for use in public venues to engage communities, but have a clear application in the classroom; they have been adapted for use in all my Douglas College philosophy courses. Whether inside or outside the classroom, competitive persuasion games are inspiring, challenging, and highly relevant educational experiences, representing a significant opportunity for college-community engagement. They are philosophy in practice.

Philosophy Sports embodies internationally recognized norms of fairness. The 15th International Conference on Philosophical Practice is a most timely occasion to share Philosophy Sports with other professionals who facilitate public participation in philosophy, are keenly aware of unphilosophical defects of Cafe Philosophy, and are eager for solutions to take back to their respective countries and put into practice.

References

Laden, Anthony Simon. (2012). *Reasoning: A Social Picture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Picard, Michael. (2015). "But is it Philosophy? Cafe Philosophy and the social coordination of inquiry," pp. 163-181, in *Practicing Philosophy*, A. Fatić & L. Amir (eds.), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015; also presented at 13th International Conference on Philosophical Practice, Belgrade, Serbia. Aug., 2014.