Doing Philosophy Online

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My aim here is to write out of the experience of "doing philosophy" with graduate students online through an educational web site template called WebCt. WebCt provides me with the ability to custom design a learning environment in which we can read, think, write and share our experiences, sometimes at great physical distance. Writing is the medium of communication for every aspect of my online courses.

The specific online course I will describe in this paper is ED 501: Philosophy, Education and Ethics. ED 501 is a core requirement in the Graduate Studies Program in Education at Plymouth State College. At the time of this writing, I am teaching two online sections of this course, each with twenty-five students. I have students in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Honduras and in various areas of the U.S.

In the online environment that I've designed, "doing philosophy" is a kind of conduct and that conduct is expressed as writing that we share in various ways. John Dewey wrote in *Democracy and Education*, "To be the recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience." Dewey claims that "social life is identical with communication" and that "all communication is educative" (1985, p. 8). Although he certainly had in mind face-to-face communication, we accomplish this fact of social life in ED 501 through writing within the online environment. Writing as communication is a form of educative conduct.

In a typical semester, ED 501 includes the following writing components:

• personal biographical statements which are made public to the class through posting on the website bulletin board

• an e-mail dialog with the instructor which is essentially private, but may be shared with the class as a final project

• responses posted on the website bulletin board to core questions and topics about a specific reading

• an assigned chapter of a book taught to the class through expository interpretation and writing on the website bulletin board

• rounds of critical response from members of the class to this teaching assignment, all posted on the website bulletin board

• a written presentation on a chapter of a book which relates particular topics and themes to the writer's interests and experience, again, posted to a bulletin board forum

• free writing and open forum debate on topics of interest or concern about schooling and educating in a special bulletin board forum

• final exams which might include editing the semester long e-mail dialog into a presentation for the class, or a type of *precis* writing to topics proposed by the instructor, or short essays on self-selected passages from the readings—all posted to the website bulletin board

• anonymous student course evaluations shared with the entire class

This paper will describe and give examples of these kinds of writing and how they encompass both the form and content of ED 501. But first let me describe the students who register for Philosophy, Education and Ethics.

Most students enrolled in ED 501 are earning M.Ed. degrees in various concentrations such as athletic training, educational leadership, integrated arts, counseling, elementary and secondary education. Many already are practicing professionals in these fields. Often students are returning to earn the M.Ed. to meet various certification standards or to open up alternative career possibilities. Some have not been in a classroom as a student since their undergraduate days. Most have not taken a philosophy course ever or are hesitant to admit that they have. Many are deeply apprehensive about being required to take a course with the words "philosophy" and "ethics" in the course title.

The general level of student preparedness in writing varies greatly. Students are intelligently concerned about this, usually fearing that the writing in the course will demand what I call "monological" expression (somewhat the normative mode of writing in traditional philosophy). But "doing philosophy" in ED 501 turns out to be dialogical in one manifestation (e-mail dialogs) and deeply pluralistic in others (bulletin board postings). The variety of writing proposed seems to allow most students to find a comfortable writing niche and then work from it toward developing other kinds of competency in written expression.

Finding out with whom I am working, what our dispositions are

toward educating, and what we bring to the scene of instruction is the primary task of my teaching. For Socrates this happened through verbal dialog with people on the street. For those of us in ED 501, it means a digital dialog conducted in cyberspace. I try to create an online environment in which I am an equal inquirer into the various topics that we consider. I do not present myself as an expert in writing, philosophy, ethics, education, schooling or the use of a computer. But as a personal, public and professional inquirer, I do feel that I have a longstanding commitment to the reconstruction of a thoughtful, conduct-based practice of educating. This means getting away from "schooled" responses and into the realm of authentic, human communication and community.

Let me turn now to the various kinds of writing that we do in ED 501. It's tempting to call them "writing strategies" for a journal on writing, but that would be to misrepresent the work we do, which simply aims at the conduct of written communication centered around the topics of the course. We learn by doing. We learn through our shared experiences.

At the beginning of each semester I gather a public profile from each student in the class. These are posted on the ED 501 WebCt bulletin board in a forum called "Public Profiles." I provide my profile first by way of introduction. Here is an abbreviated version of that profile:

> You'll find out a lot about me from reading my responses on the bulletin board and through the e-mail dialogs. But a few facts? Sure.
>
> Grew up in New Jersey. Working class family. Working class town. Took piano lessons from the time I was five. Went deeply into debt to attend college where I majored in music. Graduated in five years—got married in the 5th year—we celebrated 30 years together this past October. Hope that doesn't make it seem easy.
>
> Immediately after graduating I got a job working for the City University of New York on Staten Island. My first year of employment, I made more money per year than my father did at the end of his life the same year. It's not a matter of "pride" but one of perspective.
>
> All the while I continued to make music whenever and wherever

I could. Kind of the common thread of my life.

I started a masters program in music but didn't like it. Shortly afterward I entered the doctoral program at Rutgers University (the State University of New Jersey) and over the course of eleven years I obtained my masters and then my doctorate in the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education.

About the time I finished my degree in 1992, my wife and I became increasingly unhappy with the state of affairs at CUNY. One day, at about year twenty-five in the CUNY system, we suddenly seemed to hear ourselves "complaining" and within the space of six months we both quit work and moved to New Hampshire. The first year we made less than fifteen percent of what we had the year before and were distinctly under the federal poverty line for income. It's a cliche, but we made ourselves happy.

This profile weaves together personal, public and professional aspects of who I am in narrative form. The tone and level of detail the full version provides are indications to my students that my "education" is rooted in my biographical continuity as a social, human being. I feel that it legitimizes a degree of self-disclosure in the first writing that students do for the class, which is to post their own profiles on the bulletin board next to mine.

Students consistently express surprise at the varied life experiences and backgrounds that are posted in the profile forum. Many are fascinated by finding themes that emerge from the complete reading of this forum. Not everyone writes in such detail and we respect everyone's level of comfort with self-disclosure. But in every instance, I find these postings to be a marked improvement over face-to-face classes in which everyone tells their name and major on the first day, nervously. The first writing is an endless resource in the course. It allows us to enter into the dialog process grounded in a sense of who we are.

I hope it doesn't seem overly didactic to write that even though the first writing in this graduate course is distinctly "non-academic," it is of the greatest importance. Again, working with an observation of Dewey: "Education is not preparation for life. It is life itself" (1971, p. 50). To me this means that our efforts to educate begin best if they flow out of our "life itself."

We then segue directly into a consideration of what is philosophy? What is ethics? What is education? And how might they be related? I do this via e-mail. When possible, I gather students' impressions of these things in a non-evaluative way. Then I write back asking questions about their understandings and suggesting, where it seems useful, ways of thinking that have been already mentioned abstractly in the online syllabus. This helps to condition our approach to whatever it is that we are reading for the semester. By the end of this informal process, I generally know where each student stands in relation to the materials of the course.

Here are excerpts from how I recently began the e-mail dialog process with each student in the class. An introductory paragraph addressed to each student prefaced what is printed below. Each preface was written with an awareness of and connection to the student's public profile as it had been posted on the bulletin board.

E-Mail Dialog Instructions
This will be the first installment of our e-mail dialog. It offers us a one-on-one opportunity to discuss issues related to the ideas and thoughts in the readings and to give you practice in expressing your thinking in writing. The e-mail dialog meets the writing requirement for ED 501 and should be rigorously spell-checked, grammatical and gender neutral. Part of the dialog will involve my giving you feedback about these things...

Our dialog is essentially private, but good insights should be shared and I will ask to post them in the WebCT site when you are brilliant and insightful and teach me things. Anything that I write to you is yours and may be used as yours if you find it useful.

When you write back to me, I will try my best to respond in a reasonable time. Usually I can do this, but there are points in any semester which become intense and the volume of e-mail can be too much. Watch the main forum of the bulletin board for postings about the e-mail flow.

I usually organize the dialog by inserting comments into the material you send to me, like a written dialog, sometimes using different colors and dates to differentiate materials...

The Actual Dialog Starter

The course is called Philosophy, Ethics and Education. I'm curious about what you think the connection between these three words might be?   This might involve considering your definitions of these three words and then offering an hypothetical statement about their relationship. I would enjoy responding to these hypotheses with some of my own.

As you are reading Nussbaum, you already have encountered her version of a connection, especially between philosophy and education. Could it be that "doing her brand of philosophy" is what "education" is?

In this regard "ethics" is a specific study or field within philosophy. If philosophy has to do with thinking, then is ethics thinking within a specific subject area? If education is the way we grow and learn, then perhaps this is an ethical endeavor?...

As you might expect, the responses to the above questions are greatly varied. I get dictionary definitions, definitions from other courses, somewhat original thought, and thought that at times I can tell comes from students consulting with previous ED 501 students! I consider the latter somewhat preferable to the dictionary approach.

This is the beginning of our e-mail dialog, which is how the formal writing requirement for the course is fulfilled. A continuous e-mail dialog is maintained throughout the course that integrates all aspects of the course in an asynchronous conversation. In all e-mail communication, I give a clear sense that I expect spell-checked documents and a sustained effort toward clarity of expression and purpose. Our object is not to write in the normative tradition of e-mail writing, but to use it as a tool for refining our writing.   Writing to students in this way helps me be clearer about my own subject matter and thoughts, and I feel that I learn from each dialog.   However, not every student feels comfortable with the process. Here is an example from a dialog with Kim Wilson:

Kim: Boy, sometimes it is really hard to communicate through written word. I have tried to start this note at least 4 different times. Anyway, with that in mind here goes. I am having a diffi-

cult time reading your expectations. I guess more specifically I am struggling with what to write about in our dialogues. My guess based on the nature of the course is that the dialogues will be driven by me and my needs. That I should take ownership of the experience and because we are often not given this opportunity, often I am struggling with "my new found freedom" (am I close?).

Allan: You've hit the nail on the head.

Kim: I am wondering, should I continue to respond to the question posed: the relationship between philosophy, ethics and education? Can I mention different pieces in the text that are standing out to me and maybe we could "talk" or "do philosophy" with them?

Allan: The latter is always welcome........the first part......will take care of itself by the end of the course.........you'll know something then, that you didn't at the beginning........but it won't be from us "writing it" and especially it won't happen from me "telling you". However, if you want to work it out in writing.....that's fine too.

Kim: Are you and I supposed to be debating?

Allan: I do debate with some people. Spar and box with some.....and with others, the process is more comparative, reflective....people advance observations, experiences, ideas.....and then we together relate them to themes in the readings.......

Here is an excerpt of a dialog written early in a semester. Margaret Martin and I are establishing a working definition for a core concept in the course:

Margaret: You ask, "What is an experience?" In my opinion, an experience is anything that we do, or is done to us. It is everything that happens in our lives. Right now, I am experiencing writing to you, although this type of writing is much different

from what I might experience if I were writing a letter to a friend about last weekend's get-together, not only in content, but in the cognitive processes that go into it. So, everybody's experiences are unique, even in the same given situation each of us experiences it differently. We all approach situations differently and take away from those situations a different and unique experience.

Allan: What is common to human beings is that they do "experience." Then, there are parts of that experiencing which we might call "experiences." These are qualitatively different for many different reasons. It's good to look at them. The writing that you describe above might be significant, valued, memorable, for more than just cognitive reasons. If we believe that experiences are important in learning, then we need to understand all we can about what differentiates some from others. This can at times not only involve interest and motivation, but elements in the environment which enhance the quality of the experiencing. We could work on this type of general description (of learning experiences) if you like.

In our writing we do not expect that every question or topic raised will be addressed. I let students self-direct the dialogs. If a dialog strays in a sustained way, I suggest how to get it back on track. I don't correct grammar. I ask content-based questions. Then the grammar clears up. We write philosophically from an ordinary language orientation. But I work to respect the diversity of ways in which people bring their thoughts and ideas to expression. I learn from this diversity about the true nature of "doing philosophy," and this nature is evolving in part through the process of our writing.

In doing e-mail dialogs, I have studiously avoided being overly descriptive about it as a requirement. I specify little else than what I've indicated above and try to keep each dialog as a form a genuine communication with its own shape and characteristics. The highest possible degree of student volition is essential. If I sense a student is responding "as a requirement" I usually make this the subject of the dialog. I consider the attitude of "meeting requirements" to be one of the most negative parts of the "schooling" syndrome and have no intention of replicating it in the conduct of ED 501.

In my ED 501 E-Mail Archives, I have an interesting dialog that, when printed out, single-spaced, runs to over forty pages. Although I suspect that roughly half the writing is mine, the quality of the other half of that dialog with Sue Fernely is memorable at a year's distance. Here is an excerpt from our dialog:

> Sue: I am examining myself. I do not like all that I see. I have ignored things I believe strongly in because I am afraid to make waves. I have seen children embarrassed and humiliated by adults and said nothing. I pick my battles. I choose very few to fight. Self-examination is not easy.

> Allan: But it's intelligent. It's how we begin to direct growth in productive ways. Wittgenstein wrote: "A confession has to be a part of your new life." This is the practical application of "self-examination."

> Sue: Dewey wrote in Chapter 24, "If there are genuine uncertainties in life, philosophies must reflect that uncertainty." I am uncertain. Perhaps I am on the right path?

> Allan: I would put money on it. And....I would consider, in the short run, the bet a good one, win or lose.

> Sue: My method of teaching is not smooth and natural with the subject matter. (Occasionally it is.) Perhaps I am trying too hard. It seems like too much to be an expert in all subject areas. It seems obvious to me that what Dewey suggests is true. I seem to be thinking out loud. How does one justify what one does, when one stops believing in it?

> Allan: The nature of a philosophical (thoughtful) problem is: "I don't know my way about." The nature of a philosophical (thoughtful) solution is: "How do I go on?" Most pathways are traversed one step at a time....and that brings us full circle to what you wrote above. We try to place that step as much in the right direction as we can, and on the best possible foundation, so as not to fall or trip. With the next step we adjust the error of the one

> before it....and if necessary we pick ourselves up.
>
> I'm thinking here of what Kristin Lombard [another member of the class] wrote to me in our dialog last week: "Our learning is happening on the path along the way to what we believe to be the answers."

Throughout the semester, I merely asked questions, made observations, and gave references and criticism when Sue asked. What I got in return was a rethinking of her personal, professional and public senses of herself as they related to our course of study. In the class meetings that we had, I felt Sue became increasingly empowered to contribute because of the nature of our e-mail work.

I would be less than honest if I did not indicate that sustaining one-on-one dialogs with students is at times overwhelming. It is critical to keep current with your responses. Given the tempo of work in the WebCt site, student questions about issues in their reading have to be answered in a timely way. Help that comes a week later is usually too late. At times the degree of self-reflection that the course and writing process evokes demands immediate attention. In general I write e-mail for several hours each day.

When possible, I alert students to periods when my response rate may be altered. For instance, this semester it is difficult for me to spend a lot of time online Monday through Wednesday. I let students know this and together we work within that. Whenever possible I try to exercise the same sensitivity to student schedules as well.

 I usually respond to materials via the date and time order received. Each student has a different pace and form of expression. Thankfully, not everything is as intense as the excerpts above might seem to indicate. From students who seem to be "skimming," a few relevant questions from inside their "skimming" almost always gets us on track. But it does take time and a concentrated attempt to put yourself into a constructive communicative stance with each student.

The most stressful parts of this process are the initial ones. This, I think, is no different from getting acquainted with the individuals in any new group of people. It's the butterflies before walking into the first class session of the semester, except that in this case you are beginning a sustained and detailed human relationship through correspondence with each

student.

I've found that getting off on the right foot (not putting it in my mouth especially) is the most difficult part of the entire dialog. Later, once I get to know a person and their style of writing, and they become familiar with mine, the dialogs become truly conversational. Just like real life. The incidence of "misunderstanding" is greatest at the beginning when there is an intense focus on how the words we use may represent us in some larger sense. I find that students generally are unaccustomed to having every word they write taken seriously.

I have the habit in writing e-mail dialogs of responding "in time" as I read through what the student has written. This means that within a block of student writing I make comments, suggestions, criticisms or references as I read. I do not read their entire communication and then give an overall response. This I find keeps the dialog, although asynchronous, somewhat spontaneous and keyed into the flow of thoughts and sentences much in the way that I would interpret and respond within a verbal dialog. This concretizes the transaction. I ask students to use the same methodology in their responses. Every e-mail is a close reading. Sometimes I find myself addressing an issue that the student moves to a few paragraphs down. But that is not such a bad dynamic.

Parallel to the e-mail dialog over the course of the semester, students read digital and hardcopy texts according to the syllabus. When possible we provide texts digitally within the WebCt site. In some instances, working collaboratively with colleagues in Information Technology Services, I have created hypertext linked commentary for the digital texts. Such is the case for Plato's dialog *Meno,* and for other readings that, by being what they are, would present difficulties for students reading philosophy for the first time.

The WebCt site contains separate study guides for most of the readings and also contains links to internet resources such as the Center for Dewey Studies, the Perseus Project, and various academic study projects around the world. In one class, a student with an unanswerable question about Martha Nussbaum's book *Cultivating Humanity,* e-mailed "Martha" at the Chicago Law School, and got a generous response, which is now posted in the WebCt site whenever we read that book.

The WebCt site is organized so that each of these readings has a forum. For each chapter of a reading, there are topic/questions in that forum. At the beginning of the semester each student writes responses to

these question/topics, then posts them to the WebCt bulletin board. Recently, the first reading has been Martha Nussbaum's text mentioned above. Student responses provide twenty-five different readings of each chapter and a common experience for everyone in the class. Students also comment and criticize each other's writing and have the opportunity to read others' interpretations before writing their own. Here is one of the questions about the preface of *Cultivating Humanity:*

> Please react to Nussbaum's statement: "But philosophy should not be written in detachment from real life....." (p. ix). How does this idea relate to your beliefs about "what philosophy is"? (p. ix)

A student posted the following response:
> The crux of my initial fear of not succeeding in this course was based on my prior belief that the pursuit of philosophy was a pursuit of idealism and "what could be." I am more comfortable in a setting where a set of experiments could quickly prove a theory either "right" or "wrong." The statement, "But philosophy should not be written in detachment from real life...." (p. ix) came as a relief to me. Perhaps this book would provide tangible insight into the problems educators face rather than an apathetic approach of "If we could only..." or "If funding was only available..." I strongly believe that we as educators should continuously evaluate our efforts making note of those which fail and those which succeed and critically examine our teaching technique questioning our motives as teachers and revising our curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student. To me, that encompasses "real life." (Roberts)

Colleagues have raised concern about this process: "Only the first person's posting is guaranteed to be their own!" But, who is to say how a person learns? What's the problem with creating an environment in which we learn from each other? Why does this thought seem so unusual?

Later, in large works with many chapters, we divide them up and everyone writes and posts a response or explication of their assigned chapter. This has been our method for working on John Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, for example. We then schedule a framework for critical replies and counter-responses to the original postings. This is an online

simulation of the graduate seminar form of teaching.

Here is an example from one of these forums. Joanne Roberts writes out of her experience of reading Maxine Greene's "Artistic-Aesthetic Considerations" in *Landscapes of Learning:*

> "To be aware is to be alive" (Thoreau, p.162) is one of the sentences in this section that connected with me. Greene's in-depth discussion of literary works as well as artistic works awakened a dormant part of my mind. Like so many others, I guess, I too have been in a bit of a rut, a life of routines and responsibilities. These chapters helped me to envision beyond the work I have been doing and life I have been living, and inspired me to incorporate a different perspective into my daily life..."to contemplate the peculiar blue of [my] jeans and to match it against the afternoon sky" (p.195). Reading these chapters prompted me to look up each painting mentioned so that I could better understand what Greene was describing. Vividly I can remember a student in my Science class who loved to draw—it was very disruptive in the class—usually drawing cartoons which were accurate but not appropriate. As I was reading the Greene chapters, this student, who I had many years ago, appeared in my mind and I thought "How could I have used his interest in art in my own classroom? How could I incorporate something he is so interested in into the class?" I now can think of many ways to have handled the situation differently and that, I think, is the beauty of teaching because we are constantly learning, constantly revising, and constantly changing our own definitions and enhancing our abilities to become more effective teachers—more "awake." If anything, this chapter allowed me to remember the joy of modern dance class, the sound of our feet pounding on the wooden auditorium floor, the smell of the art room paints, the pride we felt in chorus when we all were focused on the conductor as she held her hand out for the final note of the concert, the scent of Ponds cold cream which we used to take the dreadful stage make-up off after musicals mixed with the scent of flowers sent backstage, the joy of obtaining my first library card, the rippled texture of the pages on my copy of Charlottes Web (which I still have), the tears shed from The Yearling and A Separate Peace, the laughter from Dorothy

> Parker... these are things that are cut first from the school budget but remain forever in a student's mind and heart. I intend to continue to find ways to use art in my classroom and promote artistic outlets for the students in my class. By the way, how would you describe the color of your blue jeans?

The force of learning from the bulletin board postings is by example. I encounter both graceful and awkward writing, clarity and confusion, care and inattention, creative misreading, anxiety, excitement at discovery, and loads of great questions. I do not "correct" or intervene in what people post.

Although students are required to respond to my question/topics, they are encouraged to propose their own in addition, as mine are sometimes narrowly focussed in a disciplinary reading of the particular text. If students want comments on their postings, they can copy and paste them into our e-mail dialog and I offer thoughts on what they have written.

In most online sections we sponsor an informal discussion forum on the WebCt bulletin board. The first time this feature of ED 501 appeared, it was in response to a posting I had made about my reaction to a flock of baby wild turkeys and their parent crossing the road while I was on my way to the post office. This set off a flood of thoughtful and humorous responses which turned into the forum called "Turkey Talk." Sounds cute? Not really. It was quite intense, although informal, and provided students in the class an additional differentiated layer of expression and interaction. This particular forum really appealed to the creative writers. Part of the intensity and level of thought came in the form of puns. We had fun. After someone made a trip to the largest glacial erratic in the world (Madison, NH), we were treated to a treatise called "A Bolder Boulder is Owed an Ode." This forum was a manifestation of Wittgenstein's observation: "If people did not sometimes do silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done" (Wittgenstein, p. 50e).

Sometime during each online semester I provide students with a series of "final exam" topics. Usually there are three topics for each reading. Students are asked to respond to one from each group of three. I give instructions for writing a version of *precis,* limit the responses to five sentences each, and provide for a final submission after a draft review for content and form. This process is the formal complement of the other various types of writing that have characterized the course. In many

ways, the e-mail dialogs and the bulletin board postings are practice for the final, more formal writing.

All student exam responses are posted to the bulletin board, grouped by question. Here is a response to the final exam prompt, "Consider that Socrates is a teacher of a certain kind. Describe his conduct as a teacher."

> Socrates conducted his teaching in the form of the dialog, that is to say a kind of conversation: an essentially egalitarian structure in which both parties have an active role to play, the end of which is not known in advance.
>
> In these dialogs, which he conducted with a sharp wit and ready sense of humor, Socrates consistently denied knowing anything and avoided outright explanations or providing answers to questions posed to him.
>
> Rather, he himself asked leading questions of his questioners. Using the power of logic and reasoning, he made students examine their so-called knowledge and expressed opinions more closely and helped them break down their presumptions until they arrived at a place of "knowing" less than they did before.
>
> By not allowing himself or his students to be in the role of knowers, he was not practicing or advising false humility but demonstrating that knowing the answers is less important than the desire to know, that the process involved in the dialog, the investigation itself, is more important than the outcome. (Jaster)

At the end of the course, everyone's final exam responses are posted either with or without name identification on the WebCt bulletin board. Students respond to each other's exams before I grade them.

All the kinds of *sharing through writing* that are discussed in this paper combine to make a statement about how we can learn together through the conduct of communication facilitated in an online environment. The sharing dimension removes me from center stage and makes the members of the class their own best resource for learning. This pro-

cess emphasizes issues of self-learning and initiative, pluralism and diversity, and capitalizes upon the development of shared meanings and relationships, which, I think, are ways of building a community of inquirers. Along the way, by writing through these experiences in diverse ways, we get practice at becoming better writers. From an e-mail dialog conducted this semester, this is how Crista Yagjian described her experience:

> This experience for me has been much different than I would have anticipated. There is a kind of sharing that is happening in our class of which I feel quite lucky to be a part. Many of my classmates have contributed such personal stories to connect us to what we are reading (our common experience) ... I have discovered that it has been much easier for me to voice my thoughts and ideas over the computer....this has been a bit surprising. It has become a different kind of experience.
>
> In my reading and writing I find that I am discovering myself as an educator in context of the world as a community to which we all belong........There is also a connectedness that I feel with my classmates—a kind of community that has formed—I don't think I would have believed I could have experienced this kind of learning over the computer— but I have....but I am ......

I have learned from this process too. I've learned that some people must express themselves in a more concrete way and that there are as many ways of "doing philosophy" as there are unique biographies. This is where each class starts, where we *all* start if we care to admit it, and where we all end as well.

Editor's note: The author welcomes response at adibiase@mail.plymouth.edu

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