

The Quest for the Courageous Teacher in Plato's *Laches*

Frank Giuseffi

William Woods University

Abstract

Courage is vital for teacher development and the education of learners. While scholars debate and discuss the various definitions, examples, and approaches to courage, educationists can learn from an ancient analysis of courage in Plato's dialogue, *Laches*. After a brief overview of the literature on both courage and the relationship between teaching and courage, this paper explicates the dialogue, highlighting the interlocutors—Laches and Nicias—definitions of courage. While Laches' definition of courage as prudent endurance and Nicias' definition of courage as knowledge may be essential elements in a teacher's courage, both ultimately fail to define courage and participate effectively in Socratic inquiry. While a clear definition of courage is inconclusive, the dialogue nonetheless reveals how Socrates and his commitment to philosophy reflects courage and how Laches's recognition of this reality offers a constructive path for teachers to be courageous.

Introduction

Courage is crucial for teaching. While at face value this is a true and accurate statement, the various definitions, perspectives, and in-

Frank Giuseffi is chair of doctoral studies and an associate professor of education at William Woods University, Fulton, Missouri. Email address: frank.giuseffi@williamwoods.edu

terpretations of courage compel one to ask the following: Where does one find courage in teaching? Does it emerge out of interactions between teacher and student? Is it a precondition to instruction and learning? These and other questions about what courage is in teaching would seem to dissuade one from further investigation or to simply conclude that given the nature of teaching, courage is obviously a critical factor. But terms and phrases in educational circles are often uttered without clear definitions, such as “critical thinking,” “school leadership,” or “student-centered instruction.” It then behooves educationists to intentionally seek a working definition of exactly what courage is before answers to the previous questions are attempted. In so doing, one will be able to specifically recognize it in educational experiences. In this way, educationists and philosophers share with current and future teachers a practical definition of courage, its proper uses, and efficacious implications to learning.

Not surprisingly, a useful beginning to exploring courage is found in Plato’s dialogue, *Laches*. Although I argue the *Laches* has great educational import, I also agree with Buck and Longa (2022) that “The *Laches* unfortunately remains a relatively marginal text within the field of philosophy of education, perhaps because the educational questions that frame the dialogue are often overshadowed by its apparent focus on courage” (p. 199). Although seeking a definition of courage seems to be the subject of the dialogue, what also emerges is an investigation about the teacher’s aptitude to instruct others on virtue and caring for the souls of youth (Bruell, 1999). Based on these apparently dual subjects for discussion, the *Laches* reveals courage and teaching aptitude as related and reflected in the person of Socrates and his philosophical activity (Socratic inquiry).¹ In Socrates and his dialectical method, we find both courage and the mark of a true teacher.

After a brief overview of literature on both the concept of courage and courage in teaching, I explain the interlocutors’ (Laches and Nicias) views of courage, and Socrates’ refutations of those views. Second, I claim that neither Laches nor Nicias offers comprehensive definitions of courage or engage effectively in philosophy, reflecting their incapacity to follow the *logos*, teach virtue or care for the souls of youth. Third, I claim that courage is ironically expounded in Laches’ admiration for those who can discuss wisdom and virtue and align their words to deeds, reflecting, what he terms, a musical and harmonious life. Lastly, I claim this person identified by Laches, is Socrates, the truly musical person, who exemplifies courage and is the paragon of the courageous teacher.

Courage Defined

Competing definitions and perspectives on courage abound (Rate et al., 2007; Waber, 2002). Courage not only occurs in dramatic fashion, as in heroism in the face of battle or rescuing others from danger, but in common and daily experiences (Waber, 2002). The traits and attributes courageous people possess are equally numerous and diverse. Courageous people exhibit vulnerability when faced with challenging and demanding situations (Brown, 2012). In dealing with trying circumstances, Georganda (2025) notes: "Courage provides the strength to make difficult choices, face fears, and live authentically" (p. 309). This indicates that those who act courageously have the qualities of perseverance, steadfastness, integrity, and self-sacrifice (Rate et al., 2007). According to Klein and Napier (2012), courageous people accept change, capitalize on opportunities, and possess the gumption to move forward in life. Walton (1986) includes discernment as an essential trait for courageous action and that those actions are directed toward good and noble objectives. Kidder (2005) discusses the moral elements to courage and indicates that moral courage is the inner strength to act ethically and stand one's ground in the face of negative repercussions. Duckworth (2022) also looks at moral courage as the will to do the morally and ethically right thing. A degree of humility also enters the conversation about courage in that it includes asking for help, receiving direction, and taking accountability (Gladieux, 2023). Gulati (2025) sums up well the fundamental understanding of courage: "It can involve accepting a physical challenge, making yourself emotionally vulnerable, risking social or economic standing for your moral beliefs, or publicly championing new and unorthodox ideas" (p. 43).

Courage in the realm of education has equally been discussed and researched. Parker Palmer's highly regarded *The Courage to Teach*, explained teacher courage as an expression of integrity, authenticity and joining "self and subject and students in the fabric of life" (p.11). Courage is also found in K-12 education specifically when teachers inquire about subject-matter, processes and procedures, and school policies (Kohler-Evans and Dowd-Barnes, 2015). Teachers act courageously and become "an opener of doors" to their students when they encourage students to take risks (Poulos, 2021, p. 148). Heischman (2002) recognizes that acting courageously in schools includes both "gustiness" and "wisdom" (p. 31). The courageous teacher respects students' opinions and creativity, even when they can be unsettling (Wolfensberger, 2008). Wolfensberger (2008) also notes "They [teachers] must dare to be critical, analytical, discriminating, and exacting

to help students grow, learn the value of feedback, and embrace high expectations for themselves and others” (p. 109). As the literature suggests, teachers reveal their courage when they behave with integrity, act boldly, encourage student risk-taking, and respect academic and creative productivity.

Undoubtedly, the literature suggests a continuing interest and fascination with the concept, working definition, and impact courage has on teaching and learning. As reflected in the literature, promising signs are also evident for clear and lucid views of courageous behavior in educational situations. To continue robust discussion on an understanding of courage in teaching, educationists would find the exploration of courage in Plato’s *Laches* equally beneficial in terms of generating further questions on the nature of courage, and by extension teaching. Several scholars have noted the educational implications to the *Laches* (Bruell, 1999; Buck & Longa, 2020; Tessitore, 1994). Indeed, Bruell (1999) comments that Socrates tests Laches and Nicias—the interlocutors in the dialogue—on their ability to educate youths, that is to say, to care for their souls and presents an “understanding of the requirements of a teacher who is to be capable of imparting such an education, or of guiding someone toward it” (p. 57). Buck and Longa (2022) argue that even though the dialogue discusses courage, it asks “What does it mean to educate well?” (p. 200). Tessitore (1994) writes that the question about courage is “occasioned by a question about the proper education of the young” (p. 11). This paper adds to the literature on the *Laches* with particular emphasis on the connections between courage, a teachers’ aptitude to care for youths’ souls, and its implications about teaching within the context of the person of Socrates and Socratic inquiry.

The Laches

The dialogue commences with two concerned fathers—Lysimachus and Melesius—who want their sons—Thucydides and Aristides—to have a better education than they themselves had—a common desire parents have of their children. Lysimachus discovers that armor-fighting (*hoplomachia*) should be the subject their sons should study and master (179e). Given the topic, it is only fitting that Lysimachus approaches Nicias and Laches—Athenian Generals who both served during the Peloponnesian War²—to participate as special counselors and partners in the youths’ education. Both Laches and Nicias know about Socrates. Laches is astounded that Socrates was not asked to participate in the dialogue (180c), for Socrates is “always spending his time in places where the young men engage in any study or noble pur-

suit of the sort you are looking for" (180c). Laches remembers how Socrates marched with him during the retreat from Delium (180de; 181b), which occurred in the eighth year of the Peloponnesian War. According to Laches, if all those fighting behaved like Socrates, the city would not have been destroyed (181d). Nicias remembers how Socrates recommended a music teacher – a man by the name of Damon – for his son to learn from. Given these accolades, Socrates is added to the investigation concerning the efficacy of armor-fighting. In typical intellectual humility and moderation, Socrates obliges but states: "But if I should have something to add to what they say, then will be the time for me to teach and persuade both of you and the others" (181d).

After Laches and Nicias offer their views on armor-fighting, Lysimachus wants to know Socrates' "vote" on the validity of fighting with armor since there are opposing views between Nicias and Laches. Socrates claims, however, that "it is by knowledge that one ought to make decisions, if one is to make them well, and not by majority rule" (184e). This reflects Socrates' concern for the truth of things as opposed to coming to the truth by majority rule. Moreover, armor-fighting, according to Socrates, turns out to be "some small thing" and not "the greatest of all our possessions" (185). Instead, Socrates thinks the larger issue is if the fathers' sons turn out to be noble and worthwhile individuals. To strive to be noble means to understand virtue as the learning objective. Socrates states: "The question whether any one of us is expert in the care of the soul and is capable of caring for it well, and has had good teachers, is the one we ought to investigate" (185e). It then becomes apparent that the dialogue investigates the qualities of a good teacher and what a good education entails. But as a prologue to the forthcoming dialectical exchange with Socrates, Laches makes this important comment to Nicias:

Whenever I hear a man discussing virtue or some kind of wisdom, then, if he really is a man and worthy of the words he utters, I am completely delighted to see the appropriateness and harmony existing between the speaker and his words. And such a man seems to me to be genuinely musical, producing the most beautiful harmony, not on the lyre or some other pleasurable instrument, but actually rendering his own life harmonious by fitting his deeds to his words. (188d)

Laches is more than willing to be examined by Socrates if he, indeed, possesses these attributes. As the discussion has now turned to an education in virtue, Socrates thinks one must first endeavor to find out a part of virtue as opposed to the whole of virtue. Since the dialogue began with military matters, Socrates suggests they examine courage (*andreia*) (190e), an essential trait for soldiers and those learning *hoplomachia*.

Laches claims courage is standing at one's post and fighting. Socrates points out that certain soldiers have successfully fought, namely the Scythians and the Spartans, by retreating and then attacking; thereby broadening the definition of courage to warriors, fighters at sea, the sick, the poor, and those who run state affairs. Courage is also found in people who face pain, fear, desire, and pleasure (191d). As the definition of courage broadens, Socrates asks "What power is it which, because it is the same in pleasure and in pain and in all the other cases in which we were just saying it occurred, is therefore called courage?" (192b). Laches responds that courage is a "sort of endurance [self-control/persistence] (*karteria*) of the soul" (192b). After probing questions from Socrates, Laches admits that courage associated with wisdom or prudence is noble and good. But when courage is accompanied by folly, it loses its nobility. Therefore, the courage Laches endorses includes wisdom or prudence. Socrates convinces Laches to agree that prudent endurance (*phronimos karteria*) coupled with folly would not be a good thing (192d). Through examples, Socrates shows that those who lack the skill of courage and yet perform the action of courage, show the disgraceful and harmful disposition of foolish daring (193d). Socrates recognizes, however, one significant element of Laches' definition – endurance. Socrates states: "Let us hold our ground in the search and let us endure" (194). Laches agrees to continue but is irritated he cannot fully articulate what he knows courage to be (194b). In fact, he states what is often a common occurrence among the interlocutors in Platonic dialogues (Braan, 2019):

I am ready not to give up, Socrates, although I am not really accustomed to arguments of this kind. But an absolute desire for victory has seized me with respect to our conversation, and I am really annoyed at being unable to express what I think in this fashion. I still think I know what courage is, but I can't understand how it has escaped me just now so that I can't pin it down in words and say what it is. (194b)

Laches' aporetic or bewildering moment, which is the cornerstone of Socratic inquiry, indicates the importance of speech or *logos*. "Let us endure" states Socrates; this means endure in dialectics by following the *logos*. Socratic inquiry or dialectic (*dialektiken*) is implemented by way of the *logos* (Sayre, 1995). Within the panorama of classical Greek literature, *logos* has been defined as an account, argument, or speech (Moss, 2014). Platonic *logos* is a developing and vibrant force, one where words and speech follow many paths and directions (Pender, 1999) and offer a reasonable account of a claim or argument (Moss, 2014). During the dialectical inquiry between Socrates and the inter-

locutors, the intelligibility and comprehension of a concept is captured in argument, in the logos (Klein, 1999). According to Trabattini (2016) through the logos, individuals reason dialectically, offering and receiving arguments. In this way, those involved come to know ideas.

The inquiry continues with Socrates asking Nicias about courage. Nicias believes courage is knowledge (*epistemen*) “of the fearful and the hopeful in war and in every other situation” (195a). But to Laches, if courage is, in fact, knowledge of fearful and hopeful things, then artisans, doctors, and farmers would exhibit courage since they know fearful and hopeful things in their specific crafts. For instance, as a doctor, one would know when it is better to live or to die (195bcd). Nicias responds that a doctor’s knowledge and artists’ and farmers’ knowledge, is restricted to just health and disease. If this is the case, then to Laches, Nicias is arguing that seers and diviners are courageous people since they have the power to know whether it is better “to live or to die” (195e). Laches scoffs at this idea and accuses Nicias of refusing to offer a “gentlemanly admission that he is talking nonsense” (196b). Laches, however, wishes to refrain from any more speaking and to let Socrates begin the examination. Socrates agrees, stating: “I have no objection, since the inquiry will be a joint effort on behalf of us both” (196c).

If courage, according to Socrates, consists of the knowledge of fear and hope, very few would possess it. No wild beast would be courageous. Nicias clarifies, arguing only “sensible people are the courageous ones” (197c). These people possess prudence when enacting courage. Wild beasts, on the other hand, act based on rashness, which is not the same as courage. Nicias states:

I think that rashness and courage are not the same thing. My view is that very few have a share of courage and foresight, but that a great many, men and women and children and wild animals, partake in boldness and audacity and rashness and lack of foresight. These cases, which you and the man in the street call courageous, I call rash, whereas the courageous ones are the sensible people I was talking about. (197c)

Laches claims Nicias “decks himself out in words and does it well in his own opinion” (197c). Socrates agrees and accuses Nicias of seeking the wisdom of Damon, someone who spent a great deal of time with Prodicus, who was “best among the sophists” (197d).³ Laches understands Socrates’ comment and indicates that those involved in leadership and affairs of the state should not be those who practice sophistry. While Socrates agrees, he nevertheless wants to return to the discussion about Nicias’ definition of courage.

To both Socrates and Nicias, courage is a part of virtue or one of several parts (198a), such as temperance and justice. Socrates then

redirects the dialogue to fear and hope once again. Socrates posits fearful things produce fear and hopeful things do not. Fear emerges from things projected, not from things that occurred in the past or present since fear is the expectation of a future evil (198b). Nicias agrees with this analysis of fear and that hope comes from either future non-evils or future goods.

This leads to a new discussion about knowledge and its relation to the past, present, and future. Socrates argues there is not one type of knowledge (*epistemen*) by which things of the past are known, or a type by which the present is known, or a third type by which the future is known. Knowledge is the same whether in the past, present, or future (198d). For example, the knowledge of health from medicine does not make a distinction between past, present, or future. The same would apply to farming and generalship (199a). Nicias agrees and concedes that “the same knowledge has understanding of the same things, whether future, present, or past” (199a). This disproves Nicias’ claim that courage is knowledge of only fearful and hopeful things since knowledge comprises the past, present, and future. Socrates states:

Then courage is not knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful only, because it understands not simply future goods and evils, but those of the present and the past and all times, just as is the case with the other kinds of knowledge. (199c)

Nicias described a part of courage, whereas Socrates’ purpose was to search for a comprehensive definition of courage. Socrates now concludes courage is knowledge “of practically all goods and evils put together” (199d). But to Socrates, the person who possessed this knowledge would not lack virtue, temperance, justness, or even holiness. Nicias agrees and realizes this claim describes the entirety of virtue, not a part of it. Therefore, the search for a definition of courage continues (199e). At the same time there is an impasse on courage and both Laches and Nicias, to their credit, realize they should abandon the thought of teaching Lysimachus’ and Melesius’ sons and give the responsibility to Socrates. Socrates does not reject an opportunity to educate the young, however offers this comment:

I say we ought to do, my friends—since this is just between ourselves—is to join in searching for the best possible teacher, first for ourselves—we really need one—and then for the young men, sparing neither money nor anything else. What I don’t advise is that we remain as we are. And if anyone laughs at us because we think it worthwhile to spend our time in school at our age, then I think we should confront him with the saying of Homer, “Modesty is not a good mate for a needy man.” (201ab)

Discussion

Struggles with the Logos

Neither Laches nor Nicias have the capacity to educate youths (Stefou, 2018). They cannot care for their souls, which is to say, teach them virtue. Given how Laches and Nicias deal with courage when engaging with Socrates, it is clear they “lack the natural hardiness or toughness of soul” to grapple with courage (Rabieh, 2006). Laches quickly offers a definition of courage, as uncompromising duty and noble sacrifice (Rabieh, 2006). But then Socrates goes on to define it as endurance (*karteria*), with Socrates’ addition of prudence (*phronimos karteria*). But then with Socrates’ continuing probing questions, Laches agrees that prudent endurance joined with folly would not be a noble pursuit. Socrates concludes the exchange with the claim that persons who lack courage and yet act courageously, exhibit “foolish daring” (193d). Laches, as we have seen, reaches a state of perplexity due to his struggles with philosophizing. A clear definition of courage has somehow escaped Laches (194b). While we may credit Laches with jointly carrying on the dialogue, when Socrates directs the questions to Nicias, Laches still struggles with philosophical activity and following the logos, spending his time accusing Nicias of using sophistical arguments and even outrightly levying attacks on him. Socrates is willing to consider Nicias’ view that courage is a kind of knowledge (Bruell, 1999), but this is short-lived. Nicias’ definition of courage specifically focuses on the know-how of the fearful and hopeful of the future, the past, and the present, but, as Socrates revealed, this defines virtue, not a part of virtue known as courage. It is also clear that Nicias struggles to properly engage in Socratic inquiry. Nicias always has an answer to every question, resists the urge to intentionally explore courage with Socrates, and responds to Laches’ accusations with equal antagonism. Then, in what might be considered a swipe at Laches, Nicias indicates he is willing to educate him since he is “sadly in need of learning” (200c). Lastly, and most importantly, one notices Nicias’ attitude about philosophy in that when he encounters difficulty following the *logos*, he will seek counsel from Damon (Tessitore, 1994).

We then realize both Laches and Nicias struggle following the *logos*. Laches recognizes the *logos* and admits his perplexity, but because he exhibits combativeness and antagonism toward Nicias, sabotages his own future progress as a teacher and someone dedicated to philosophy. Similarly, as someone who employs sophistry, Nicias cannot properly follow the *logos*. Following the *logos* through philosophy improves the interlocutors’ souls while sophistry separates the *logos* from

the self (Futter, 2022). Nicias separates himself from the *logos*, using speech as a mere weapon to win arguments. Neither Laches nor Nicias possess the disposition or love of knowledge essential for philosophy.

But to understand the broader implications about the relationship between teaching, philosophy, and courage in the *Laches*, it is important to refer to Laches' comments prior to the exchange on courage. Socrates ends up being the type of person Laches describes as "genuinely musical, producing the most beautiful harmony" since he fits "his deeds to his words" (188d). Socrates's dialectical method (philosophy) along with his commitment to following the *logos*, is deed since it can motivate the soul to action once it has encountered *aporia* (Dobbs, 1986; Stefou, 2018). By Socrates harmonizing words and deeds, he attempts to move people to action, to live virtuously and convert the soul toward philosophy; this is what it means to be musical. Those who are competent to teach and care for youths' souls share in this conversion (Buck & Longa, 2020). The teacher worthy of caring for the souls of youth and willing to teach them virtue must be a philosopher—one committed to Socratic inquiry and to following the *logos*.

Teacher as Philosopher

But in relation to the dialogue's message on the teacher's aptitude to care for souls, it is important to refer to Socrates' statement earlier: "The question whether any one of us is expert in the care of the soul and is capable of caring for it well, and has had good teachers, is the one we ought to investigate" (185e). What becomes clear is that the "expert in the care of the soul" is the person who possesses the necessary attributes to teach youths about virtue. This person dedicates themselves to the philosophical life. While it is clear Socrates possesses the aptitude to care for the souls of youth and teach them about virtue, it is important to understand that Socrates never claimed to be a teacher (Woodruff, 2011). In *The Apology*, Socrates defends himself against 501 Athenian jury members for disrespecting the Olympian gods due to his philosophical activity stating: "I have never been anyone's teacher" (33a). This comment would seem decisive since *The Apology* is Socrates' defense of his life's mission. *The Meno* is a dialogue that supports Socrates' statement in *The Apology*. In the famous discussion with Meno's boy servant, Socrates helps the servant discover, according to Vlastos (1991), "the side of a square whose area is twice that of a given square is the diagonal of the given square" (p. 118), by merely asking questions. In so doing, Socrates proves his earlier claim in the same dialogue that all inquiring and learning is recollecting (81d). Soc-

rates states: “You see, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but all I do is question him” (82e). When Socrates argues that he was never a teacher, but someone committed to philosophical activity, it suggests that philosophizing is not teaching in the traditional sense of one who transfers knowledge to others (Vlastos, 1997). The teacher is the one who searches for the nature of things through dialectics and by following the *logos*. In this way, those who are competent to teach youths about virtue—the most noble and worthy of learning objectives according to Socrates—are those who engage in philosophy.⁴ Essentially, then, we find in the *Laches*, Socratic education that is teacherless.⁵

Ironically, while Socrates is willing to “join in assisting any man to become as good as possible” (200e), he curiously recommends that they still all find the right teacher. Why does Socrates need a teacher if he is the one “genuinely musical”? This is because Socrates’ closing thoughts are an invitation to his fellow discussants and to all people—to investigate and probe through philosophy the basis for their beliefs and to strive for knowledge of the good (Stefou, 2018). To find the teacher worthy of caring for souls and teaching virtue is to recognize the person who philosophizes, engages in philosophy, and requests all others in their company to do the same. Of course, this way of life is open to ridicule. For this reason, Socrates offers the vignette from Book 17 of Homer’s *Odyssey* as a response to that ridicule. Disguised as a beggar, Odysseus has returned to find his home taken over by suitors. Telemachus—Odysseus’ son—asks the swineherd to give the “beggar” bread and to let him take as much as he needs since “Modesty is no companion to needy men.”⁶ A beggar is presumed to be extremely hungry; thereby taking as much food as possible, not because of greediness but because of a need or desperation for replenishment. So, too, does the person committed to Socratic inquiry or philosophy exhibit, like the beggar with outstretched hands, the same disposition and courage—courage to seek the truth. The lack of knowledge is as great as the beggar’s lack of food and the courage to replenish is equally as great. Once again, the courageous Socrates reminds us that the right teacher is the philosopher, the one courageous enough to care for the souls of youth and commit to perpetual learning.

Conclusion

In the end, courage as presented in the *Laches* does not mean educationists ignore the current literature on courage in education. Locating teacher courage in authenticity, challenging and questioning school policies, encouraging risk-taking in students, displaying

wisdom and discernment, and respecting students and their opinions are important courageous acts teachers, both new and veteran, must champion and practice daily. But courage in the *Laches* is quite different. While Laches' claim of courage as prudence and Nicias' claim of courage as knowledge may be considered essential for courageous action and important for teachers, their claims are refuted.⁷ Instead, the *Laches* presents Socrates' commitment to philosophy as the true understanding of courage. And Socrates' courageous philosophical activity reflects a person truly musical. Regarding the aptitude of the teacher to care for the souls of youth, again, Socrates is that person. The *Laches*' message is to teach virtue to youths, and consequently, to care for their souls require someone engaged in philosophical activity. Being the right teacher or the true teacher is simply being a philosopher. In the end, to fully grasp courage and teaching in the *Laches*, may be somewhat elusive since one would need to emulate Socrates' philosophical activity, a difficult objective to say the least. But possibly more feasible alternative is that the teacher recognizes as Laches did, the person "to be genuinely musical, producing the most beautiful harmony" (188d). In this way, teachers can find solace in focusing on the journey or as Socrates advises "Let us hold our ground in the search and let us endure" (194).

Notes

¹ I will use "Socratic inquiry" and "philosophy" interchangeably.

² Historically, the dialogue took place during the Peloponnesian War. Both Laches and Nicias—the interlocutors in the dialogue—had pivotal roles in crafting the peace treaty between Athens and Sparta, known as the Peace of Nicias (Dobbs, 1986). Things will not end well for Laches or Nicias. Ten years after the Peace of Nicias, Laches would be killed in 481 during the Battle of Mantinea. Nicias will be killed in the catastrophic Sicilian expedition of 413 (Maiullo, 2014).

³ Sophists in 5th century BCE Athens were professional educators who toured Greece lecturing on diverse topics, with a primary focus on public speaking and conduct. See Taylor, C.C.W., & M-K. Lee (2025). The sophists. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, E.N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman, (Eds).

⁴ Avi Mintz has explicated several scholars' views on the relationship between teaching and Socrates' method. See his article "Why did Socrates deny he was a teacher? Locating Socrates among the new educators and the traditional education in Plato's Apology of Socrates in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 46(7), 735-747. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2013.78758>

⁵ Paul Woodruff offers a lucid and compelling view on this point in his chapter, "Socratic Education" in the book *Philosophers on Education* edited by Amelie Oksenberg Rorty. Woodruff refers to Socratic education as "teacherless."

⁶ I stayed with this translation from Cooper's copy of Plato's dialogues.

The 1990 Fitzgerald translation is slightly different—"This hanging back is no asset to a hungry man." The Mandelbaum translation states: "For any man in need, shame is no friend." Whichever translation, the meaning is clear, the life of Socratic inquiry calls for courage.

⁷ Kahn (1986), however, notes that Socrates never refutes the idea of courage as being prudent endurance. Because of this, one may surmise Socrates' view of this definition might still be a possibility or worthy enough not to be refuted.

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