

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY IN ADOLESCENTS BASED ON THEIR INTERESTS AND CONCERNS

Enseñanza de la filosofía en adolescentes a partir de sus intereses y preocupaciones

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Abstract

This work is based on the interest in finding didactic strategies to promote philosophical disquisition in adolescents from the framework of their own motivations. We start from assuming that, based on their concerns, the students' reasoning has a clear philosophical nuance. The aim is to explore the ordinary questions these young people have about the oddities of the world, and about themselves, as the necessary basis for building a philosophy teaching project that is shaped from their own voice. The exercise was carried out with young people from five preparatory schools in the city of Guadalajara, Mexico, for this we used the art of deliberation as a tool, because it puts reasoning and the word into play. We find that their concerns are related to their life project, their identities, sexuality, insecurity, among other things, i.e., controversial issues to practice with adolescents the art of thinking. In addition, we believe, based on the issues that concern them, that the conditions are in place to develop their rhetorical and argumentative capacity. Finally, from their interrogations and interpellations, it is possible to think about the construction of an agenda for the teaching of philosophy in our schools, defining problems and topics of interest from the adolescent's world and life.

Keywords

Adolescent, interest, everyday life, teaching, philosophy, thinking.

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Resumen

Este trabajo parte del interés por encontrar estrategias didácticas para propiciar la disquisición filosófica en las y los adolescentes desde el marco de sus propias motivaciones. Partimos de suponer que, a partir de sus preocupaciones, los razonamientos del estudiantado tienen un claro matiz filosófico. El objetivo es explorar las preguntas ordinarias que estos jóvenes tienen sobre las rarezas del mundo, y sobre sí mismos, como la base necesaria para construir un proyecto de enseñanza de la filosofía que se configure desde su propia voz. El ejercicio se realizó con jóvenes de cinco escuelas preparatorias en la ciudad de Guadalajara, México, para lo cual utilizamos como herramienta el arte de la deliberación, porque pone en juego el razonamiento y la palabra. Después de delibrar con los y las estudiantes encontramos que sus inquietudes se relacionan con su proyecto de vida, sus identidades, la sexualidad, la inseguridad, entre otras cosas; es decir, asuntos polémicos para practicar con las y los adolescentes el arte del pensar. Asimismo, a partir de los temas que les preocupan, creemos que están dadas las condiciones para desarrollar su capacidad retórica y argumentativa. Finalmente, desde sus interrogaciones e interpelaciones, es posible pensar en la construcción de una agenda para la enseñanza de la filosofía en nuestras escuelas, definiendo problemas y temas de interés desde el mundo y de la vida adolescente.

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Palabras clave

Adolescente, interés, vida cotidiana, enseñanza, filosofía, pensamiento.

Introduction

Ferry (2007) states that one cannot explore the world in which we live without philosophy, because it provides us with the tools necessary to think about our existence and to subject things to thoughtful criticism that we must change in order to live in a happier world. Given its relevance in our lives, the concern to continue cultivating it, particularly among children and young people, remains relevant, hence the interest in finding strategies for new generations to take an interest in it. It seems reasonable to think that basic education is decisive to be passionate about philosophy, because our children and adolescents possess a natural talent to elaborate questions about the world they are discovering (Thomson, 2002; Jaspers, 2003). In 2007, UNESCO declared the importance of teaching philosophy at all educational levels, including preschool and primary school, i.e., *the age of discoveries*. Thus, UNESCO considers that childhood and adolescence are key ages to initiate the art of thinking, i.e., it is in the phase when they begin to be aware of the world around them and to use their imagination to elaborate and establish a more orderly and enlightened life project; this awareness and this imagination are potentiated through reflection in its philosophical sense. However, on a more didactic level, it would be necessary to determine more precisely which are the questions and themes that we can use to initiate a philosophical disquisition with them.

In this way, their interests and motivations become a challenge for teachers, and for all those concerned in learning philosophy, generating an interesting dialog in relation to the problem of their teaching (García & Varguillas, 2015). Since their own interests are the point of origin, the teaching of our discipline cannot consist in showing and explaining the set of historically developed philosophical doctrines. On the contrary, as Porta and Flores say (2017) philosophy is an experience that must be lived; for this reason, the idea is to explore the ordinary questions that children and adolescents have about the oddities of the world, and about themselves, as the necessary basis for building a philosophy teaching project that is set from their own voice. If questions are more essential than answers in philosophy, as Jaspers (2003) argues, then the following questions can be raised as a starting point in the work: What are the questions that are significant for adolescents and at the same time may have a deeply philosophical character? How do they commit to their beliefs and assessments? These questions must be explored from their own experiences; hence, the aim of this paper is to investigate what type of topics are interesting for adolescents, which questions emerge from their deliberations, and analyze the radicality of their concerns and interests as a possibility to awaken and cultivate philosophical reflection in them. The objective of our work should be understood as a preliminary step to think, in the medium term, of didactic strategies for teaching philosophy to adolescents. As Ferry says, “it is rather a matter of making possible a spontaneous discovery of philosophical ideas” (2007, p. 16) already present in the thought of our adolescents, reason for which it is an appropriate age for philosophical questioning (UNESCO, 2009). Consequently, as noted above, the idea of tracing questions that concern adolescents is that they are essential for the construction of their thinking, beliefs, and values, i.e., for the formation of their personality and the shaping of a citizenship “open to the world” (UNESCO, 2011, p. 18) with a clear humanist view.

Undoubtedly, their own concerns may be oriented toward philosophical reasoning, for example, when they try to justify some of their beliefs about the problems that surround them and to those who react in their daily lives. Thus, when young people are aware of the nature of their problems, are amazed at them and their implications, and take turns at the solutions that humanity has given them, a firm step is required to discover them, to discover the others and, at the same time, to reason about the ideas that should be discussed and those that must be discarded if they harm human beings and every living being. In other words, if we get our adolescents to discover their own radicality in the classroom, that of

others and of life in general, we would be creating in them a philosophical attitude. Necessarily, from their concerns, the students ask a series of questions that have a clear tone of philosophical reflection. This nuance cannot be ignored, as it is the very foundation for thinking about more systematic and relevant strategies on the teaching of philosophy.

For this reason, the methodological interest of speaking with high school students, of giving them the opportunity to explore as an indispensable exercise to develop their skills of reflection and justification, which, in turn, are necessary conditions for decision-making in the affairs of their world. This work presents both a theoretical and methodological base that serves as a basis for pointing out some results that we group into categories that arbitrarily have constructed, which are inter-related because the topics of the discussion, besides keeping an order and a relationship between them, were always around the same object-theme.

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Theoretical frame

Asking is key in philosophy; in its origins, Greek thinkers, for example Socrates, attribute it a fundamental value as a guide to search for truth. In this sense, Muñoz (2013) considers that well-formulated questions are a possibility of finding the knowledge within us. For this reason the idea that: “The philosophical question enquires for the philosophical sense of the present from which it is formulated” (Espinell & Pulido, 2017). This means that knowledge has its origin in the concerns and doubts that we generate in our daily basis. Thus, it can be said that philosophical questions are not the exclusive matter of specialists who face theoretical problems of a high level of abstraction, far from the real and everyday existence of people. Rather, we must draw up living questions (Sane, 2011) related to the challenges of the world. As Heidegger says, “We ask ourselves, here and now, for us” (1999, p. 7). It is therefore in present, that which amazes us and leaves us perplexed, where philosophical questions arise.

To ask in philosophy is a task that extends to the limits of the agent, i.e., it is not exhausted in a first answer, as the respondent is not satisfied with it: “Philosophical questioning, then, does not satisfy the first attempt of response, but is essentially constituted in the re-questioning” (Cerletti, 2008, p. 24). This condition of the philosophical question motivates the interrogator to establish a dialog with his peers to clarify the doubts that arise from the constant question and re-question about the issues: knowledge about the world, freedom, identity, fate, justice, etc. These issues, as Blackburn (2001) says, arise naturally in men and women.

On the other hand, the nature of the questions in philosophy also leads to examine whether we really know the things we believe to know and what are the reasons we must sustain that belief. This task, as already said, was the nucleus of the life of Socrates, who made questioning a permanent exercise in direct relation to his way of life: “Socrates loved to expose the limits of what others really understood, as well as to question the postulates on which he built his life” (Warburton, 2013, p. 8).

This idea, because of its paradoxical character, can be questioned in relation to our work: What makes a question become a philosophical question? Following Cerletti (2008), it can be said that it is the intentionality of the interlocutor that makes a question philosophical. Why? Because through the questions, the agent shows his commitment and interest in finding rational and justified answers. The philosophical question discovers, unhides and reveals what the world is and what the human being is, as part of the world (Heidegger, 1999). These intentions and the unease to know are inexhaustible sources, as long as the human being is alive. This is what interests us: starting from the interests of the interlocutors and making them discover that the idea of philosophy is already in them, in their attitude. This attitude presupposes the discursive rules formulated by the teacher for the teaching of philosophy, since it depends, to a great extent, on them that students find meaning to the subjects that arise as the object of deliberation.

From the above, there is a need to meet two conditions: That discussions and criticism be focused on the current problems that affect them; and that the terminology used be accessible, particularly when the audience is made up of a group of young learners. In this regard, Pombo (2018) points out:

If teaching, like writing, is primarily a work in and about language, i.e., a discursive practice, will it not be forced, in this perspective, to understand that teaching (philosophy) is not only to make explicit what is already thought but to find the word necessary to think what only with it is allowed to think? What to teach (philosophy) is not a second moment in the face of the development of reflexive elaboration? (p.187).

It is important to say that although philosophy integrates questions as well as logical analysis and argumentation in its work, these elements can lead to confusion for beginners, especially when it comes to adolescents due to their abstract nature and the use of a specialized lexicon. For this reason, we reiterate that reflection must begin with the problems at hand. Let us not forget that philosophy has a dimension of action that





goes beyond being a merely speculative exercise, as Zangaro (2013) says. Hence the suggestion to start from their circumstances, where vital practices and experiences are reproduced, often mediated by institutions, such as the school itself, for example. What it is all about is the use of tools to cultivate philosophical thought. In this sense it must be aimed at a didactic of philosophy. We are convinced that philosophy, like any discipline, also invokes didactics for its teaching. Revenga (2014) points out that didactics in philosophy have a mediating task between the contents of the discipline and how those contents are recreated in the classroom. This reasoning leads us to emphasize that a didactic applied to philosophy has several tasks: 1) understand the nature of those who learn, their conditions and their world 2) imagine the improved ways of teaching the discipline and for this it uses the most significant strategies to do so, and 3) know the context where the task is concretized. These three actions form a methodological guideline and cause a radical reflection on the didactics of philosophy. We are convinced that philosophy, like any discipline, also invokes didactics for its teaching. Thus, when we approach how to teach adolescents, for example, it is normal that questions arise about how to do so, which conflicts arise as Paul (2016) said, while recognizing their interests to be able to imagine a didactic on what and how to encourage reflection in young people. What is the benefit? The balance that we can obtain, in trying to provoke a philosophical attitude with this proposal, is that their reasoning forms in the adolescents their relationship with others, their capacity for deliberation. Thus, what concerns them must be analyzed, enriching the development of their ideas, and reinforcing their positions, affecting, to a greater or lesser extent, their actions.

Likewise, Broncano (2019) proposes that if we want to teach philosophy to young people, we must listen to them to bring philosophy closer to adolescents, must go to schools to meet them and let our imagination into play. Positively, the school is a fundamental space for the life experiences of young people; it is there that they have the greatest openness to question about issues and problems that interest them.

Methodology

Nature of the Study. Considering our objectives, the study is part of a qualitative paradigm. According to epistemological and methodological approaches, this model proposes a flexibility degree in the treatment of the object of research (Ragin, 2007), an appropriate characteristic of our

work, since one of its purposes is to give voice to people within a given context. In the qualitative approach, following Hernández et al. (2014), reality is defined through the interpretations of research participants regarding their own mediations. Because of its scope, the study is exploratory because the information obtained from the reality being investigated is preliminary in nature, providing the basis for further studies or for suggesting assertions or postulates (Strauss & Corbin, 2016). According to its nature, the work does not meet representative criteria, since the idea was to promote the dialog with small groups of participants on their concerns, ideas and interests about the world they inhabit. On the other hand, we must know that the concerns of these participants are mediated by the context in which they are. This implies the possibility that the concerns of young people in urban settings may not be the same with the concerns of young people in other contexts, for example, rural or indigenous.

People. In qualitative research, sampling decisions are directed at individuals or groups who promise greater ideas and relevant information (Maxwell, 2019). From this epistemological perspective, our research focuses on adolescents who attend high school in the city of Guadalajara, Mexico. The starting point is that high school is a space of socialization where young people learn to socialize with peers, play their convictions and share their way of seeing the world and life. Also, according to Piaget (1990) it is at this age when adolescents firmly examine ethical models and questions about rules and beliefs. On the other hand, it is at this educational level that students, in our country, reflect on philosophical topics related to the citizenship of young people and their own knowledge; likewise, ethical disquisitions are addressed on the main social problems of society. In addition, philosophical discussions have a special emphasis on this age, because students discuss about the different problems that interest them and based on them, they assume and practice a series of norms, ideas and values and examine what is happening around them. It is also true that they are invited to be the thinkers and actors of the current situation with a view to the future (Goucha, 2011). For this reason, the high school becomes the ideal space to deliberate and fulfill the objectives of research. The work was carried out *in situ* with students of the first semester of five high schools; five deliberative groups were formed, made up of eight adolescents, four men and four women.

Working technique. The art of good deliberation, proposed by Aristotle (2012), was the τέχνη to engage in dialog with adolescents. Deliberation brings into play two central capabilities in the human condition: Reason and word. If we think with words, as Berlin says (1993), then the



examination of words is at the same time the examination of our thinking. Indeed, thoughts depend on words, how and why we express them: i.e., words materialize our thinking, our intentions, and our feelings. This thought-word relationship is exercised as the core of deliberation always considering two basic aspects: the inter-subjective recognition of the different positions of the participants and the specific situations that guide the decision-making to act in the world. As a vehicle of philosophical discussion, deliberation allows the students to recognize that postures must be supported with reasons. This may include agreement or disagreement over their beliefs about problematic issues arising from their daily lives, but that deliberation leads them to discover how committed they are to their positions, while valuing the different possibilities of thinking about the same topics. This is precisely one of the tasks involved in the practice of philosophy: the determination of how responsible we are with our attitudes toward knowledge (Thomson, 2002).

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In this case, knowledge was not based on discussing the various philosophical currents with our interviewees, as is done at the universities, but we start from their own circumstances, from their concerns, from their very being. It allowed to de-hide those issues that arouse interest, curiosity, and unease to be debated in a broader and deeper way. At the beginning, our questions were general, but then questions gradually deepen the topics but always related with the initial questions. The generic nature of the questions was intended so they would begin to deliberate and think on subsequent issues.

Strong ideas are obtained from their narratives that are constant among the participants; secondary ideas are derived from these but are strongly linked to the first ones. Thus, from the analysis of the information produced in the deliberations it was possible to trace three broad categories that, operationally, synthesize their interests: the life project, sexuality and identity. The following subcategories are derived from these three subcategories: future, love, death, life, and social norms. As can be seen, these subjects consider different cognitive dimensions: ethics, aesthetics and, in some cases, epistemology itself. This condition does not necessarily mean to expect for a good response (Tozzi, 2011). In the corpus of narratives that illustrate the results, the different categories and subcategories are mixed, with the intention of emphasizing the eloquence adolescents express their passion on the subject. It should be emphasized we only present some of them in this work due to the space.

The results arise from discussions with only five deliberative groups. Thus, they depend on the subjectivity of a small group of inter-

viewees and on the mediations that we make of their value, i.e., the scope of our study is limited by our own interpretation. This double technical limitation would explain the fragmentary nature of the presentation of the results that we present below.

Results

Interests and concerns of adolescents

In relation to the inner world	In relation to the outside world
<p><i>-Life project:</i> Questions about the future Happiness Death</p> <p><i>-Identity:</i> Knowing about yourself, Questions about yourself Friendship</p> <p><i>-Sexuality:</i> Knowledge of the body Protection in sexual relations Love</p>	<p><i>-Insecurity:</i> Self-care Violence in its various forms and manifestations Dissolution of values</p> <p><i>-Care of the environment:</i> The importance of nature Animal rights</p> <p><i>-Technology:</i> Truth and falsity of information on the Internet Friendships on social networks</p>

Life project. One of the issues that show the interests of adolescents is related to the idea of having a life path that allows them to build their existence. As well as the ways they consider appropriate to do so, what is the importance they give to their life project? What meanings do they attribute to it? Below are presented some of their judgments:

- E: There are issues that concern adolescents What issues would these be?
- M1: Preparation for the future, because many times they tell you that you will make decisions alone and it is your problem; because if I ask, What am I going to study? They should teach us at school to think about how I will do in the future. We are only prepared with the subjects and you decide what you are going to study, but you do not know very well what is the most convenient career, which careers you can get into, which ones can help you, which ones you can be better at. As my partner said, “Develop our creativity.”
- E: Are you talking about a life plan or project?
- M1: Yes. As I say, to know ourselves more to know what we are good at; as a psychological profile, to know what we like and what we don’t, and to follow a life plan.
- E: Why is the life plan so important for a teenager?

M2: Because right now we do not know what we want to be; right now we have dreams like wanting to be pop stars, or wanting to be one of the world's singers, being artists or sportsmen, but maybe in the future that is no longer fashionable, or he is no longer cool and will no longer benefit us. Because right now we are at the trends and we cannot know the trends that will come in the future.

E: There?

H2: Well, because that's what you'll do in the future, what you'll do all your life, it's what you'll do day by day, and if you don't choose well, it can be both tragic and boring, because technically in your whole future you'll be like that.

E: So, the life plan is somehow linked to the future, but why should you care about the future?

H4: Well, because it is to see beyond, as my peer said, what you are going to dedicate yourself to, and it is not the same as dedicating yourself to something you don't like but something you do with pleasure (Deliberative Group 4).

In another group, disquisitions have similar connotations:

Why having a life plan?

H1: To find out what I want for me in the short and long term. So, if you would talk a little more about the life plan in each of us, it would be an orientation of what we can do when we are adults, in terms of our career.

M1: To know what I really want to dedicate to, to know what I want to do every day without getting tired. Because there are many people who choose one thing just for money, without seeing how much it can affect, as it also affects mentally.

H4: To improve as a person

E: You?

H2: To be able to support a family myself, not depend on someone else, be myself, who I want to be, live as one day I wanted to live.

(Deliberative Group 3).

In a third group, discussion occurs like this:

E: So, have you pictured yourself in the future?

H1: Yes, many times. But as I tell you, that cannot be all. I say that the most typical thing for a person is to see himself as an adult, with money and things like that. Let's say it this way: Futile and worldly things; it would be nice if they talk to us about something else, how do you see yourself, do you look happy? with a family or single? You now.

M7: I say that life is a moment, and you have to do whatever you want, because there will be a point where you will not be able to take seriously every decision you want, but also try to be happy (Deliberative Group 2).



By reflecting on these answers, when adolescents refer to the life project, they naturally open themselves to the world, as Jaspers (1985) says: they argue why they should think about the future facing the uncertainty of the present, they are concerned about what they are about to live (Madriz, 2006). The deliberation on the life project of these adolescents is related to foresight their existence, which constitutes a resource to face the contingencies of daily life. Thus, we can infer that there are questions of universal, philosophical curiosity: Why are we so interested in the future? why is it so important to think about what you are about to live? why is life uncertain? The responses rehearsed by the young people of the five deliberative groups, with their different nuances, show that they think passionately about what is to be, to become, reflecting on an end (Rodríguez, 2010), expressing in its own way that socratic impetus we speak of which can be summed up as a philosophical passion for life. It is in this scenario where the school must give itself enough time to listen to them and encourage them in the construction of that life project that they seek to materialize in the future.

Identity. The importance of having a life project enabled adolescents to ask themselves another of their concerns: Personal identity. If thinking about what we will be in the future, it is also normal to ask what we are in the present. The search for identity implies an opening to the world, a discovery. “Who am I?” “who are you?” are radical questions in the human being, so seeking their answers is irreversible. This implies the recognition of others, because it is in relation to them, with their qualities and attributes, that it is possible to reaffirm the unique and the unrepeatable, through processes of acceptance and opposition to the common and repeatable. Thus, those who also seek to build and insert themselves into the world from their singularity, are indispensable. Jaspers said (1985, p. 22): “But I only exist in the company of my neighbor; alone, I am nothing”. However, their ideas essentially appeal to a clear interest in knowing themselves and the way in which their life will be:

What are you interested in?

M5: In knowing who I am or what characterizes me, because if you see most students have the same characteristics. In certain ways we look alike, but one of the most important things is knowing what makes me special, things that make me exactly different from people.

E: So, would you like to be treated with issues that have to do with your identity? M1: Yes, because, as she says, it is not the same thing that you tell yourself: “You belong to that group”, to be told: “You are like that”. You have a certain presence, in a certain way, in your person; because

many times we classify ourselves as the nerd, the popular, when you are more things, not only what they say.

(Deliberative Group 3).

Another group has similar concerns:

E: So, have you wondered who they are?

M1: Yes.

H2: Yes.

E: And what have been the answers?

M3: I think you never get to know a person; I think theirs is a lot in this age, because it is the age where you have the most doubts, it is the age in which you have to know who you are going to be and who you are. These are very constant questions.

H4: Because there is some time when you reflect and ask yourself why you exist, what for, and what is the reason of this life.

E: Others...

H2: At our age, many look for someone to be equal to him, to identify with another person, and to look for stereotypes.

E: But don't these stereotypes bind you to a model that doesn't respond to their characteristics?

H3: If, for example, in movies, when the main character is a bad guy, it attracts all the girls and so on, one who sees that type of movie is attracted to that kind of stereotype: that boy is popular and I want to be like him.

H4: Mostly because that is one of the biggest problems, because normally a teenager has no ideas for the future, he will be putting them up, and the society that he sometimes spreads to is stealing, drugs, problems, violence, and that causes problems of both self-esteem and identity (Deliberative Group 1).

The interest in these young people in the construction of their identities, in knowing who they are and in what they are different from their peers, is not beyond the search of any young man to take care of himself, to clarify his condition of being individual and unique. The human, as Quaknin (2006) argues, is in the personality. Similarly, contact with oneself is a first step in the dialog with that other which has common attributes and interests; recognizing such qualities, each adolescent is concerned to define and see himself, to model both his character and his body, what Williams (2013) calls the *one-to-one relationship*.

Sexuality. One topic emerged with special interest for both genders due to biological and social reasons: Sexuality. This subject cannot be disassociated from the two previous ones, because we notice that, as it is deliberated from a concern, new questions emerge from it, thus subordi-



nating one another. Thus, the idea of sentimentally relating to someone in the future emerges as a central element of the life project. Moreover, thinking about identity also implies thinking about the body, since the body itself, as Williams (2013) asserts, is a necessary condition of personal identity. It is therefore a question of analyzing how the interests of these adolescents are connected in topics. This mysterious character of sexuality responds to the very nature of the body, as Morales (2011) says, it is that symbolic place where the condition of enigmatic beings happens, but at the same time of sentient people:

E: Now that you came up with sexuality, what topics of sexuality would you like to talk about?

M4: More like practices. How contraceptives or things like that are used.

M2: Or as dynamic, because you may learn faster by doing an activity instead of listening. And it would be easier to get information because there are three types of learning; perhaps some can learn them by reading alone, or those who listen without seeing them, but there are many who need to practice it in order to learn and understand it well.

E: Why is it so important to talk about sexuality?

M4: To know, to prevent.

H3: I would say that, mainly because in adolescence what the teenager is looking for is to experiment, to know, and at the moment you do not know how it happens, but you do. And even if you know the information, then in full action, is not the same.

H1: You know the theory, but not the practice.

E: Is there a difference?

H2: Well, it would be part of my point of view: How to do things, because they only tell you how to prevent it. But even when something bad happens to you, it's when you realize it. But why waiting for something bad to happen to you, if you can prevent it through planning, have all the financial means needed to keep a baby (Deliberative Group 3).

In another group, discussions took the following tone:

E: Out of the issues that interest you, which would be topics for girls and which for boys?

M1: I think we should generalize because I have been in situations... For example, in primary school they talked about menstrual pads and men were not part of it, and they lack information.

M2: Yes, they were told to get out of the living room because they would only talk to the girls, when they will also have to know, because when they have a partner, they will have to go and buy everything.

E: Do men and women care about the same problems?

H1: Sometimes not.

M3: For example, we have mood swings from menstruation or things like that, and if we're talking in a class about it, they would get bored. But as it is information they will know, even if they get bored.

E: So, it would take more classes for them to know your body?

M4: Yes, of course.

M3: And everyone should be listening.

(Deliberative Group 5).

As observed, the adolescent lives sexuality as something unprecedented and experiences it with intensity in each of the parts of the body; from this feeling arises the interest to know not only the bodily exteriority, but also the possible joys of his/her partner or companion. Following Alberoni (1991), we can say that sexuality is the vehicle by which life explores the boundaries of the possible, the horizons of the imaginary and nature: The nascent state. Thus, adolescent living is linked to the game of sexuality: Body, affections, eroticism, reproduction.

Love. When deliberating about sexuality, concern for things about love arose. In their concerns a series of questions and answers originated, thus shaping a rhetoric that places them fully in the time and space of the other (Duch & Melich, 2012). In our society, love is born as a universal law that puts the human being in motion. Plato already in his dialog *The Banquet* showed the magnificence of love in the life of every person. In this way, for young people, love is projected as an extraordinary experience to which they will soon be invited; for them it is conceived as a source of inspiration to give meaning to the world:

E: What other topics?

M1: Relationships.

E: What kind?

M1: Well, it happens that you like someone, but you don't know what it is, if it's a simple crush, because you don't know if it's love.

E: Would you like to be told about love?

M2: Yes, as you see, pregnancies are a big problem today in girls, because there are people in their homes who do not give them enough love. And they leave their house, and any boy tells them a nice thing that makes them feel special. And get impress with the boy, or are with him and give everything for him, when it really is not what the boy felt. And they fall into that precisely because they lack attention, you could say, because if you lack attention in the family, you'll want to get it on the street.

E: So why is it important for teens to talk about love?

H1: Normally, because it is the stage in which it starts, it is the first time in which you are supposed or think you are in love. As my partner said, it is usually a problem with pregnancies, which... what we teenagers



look for sometimes because of lack of love from the family, we look it in someone else, because someone feels incomplete or doesn't feel capable enough. And when looking for someone else, because normally in adolescence, you don't get to give anything.

E: Do you believe that human beings in general can live without love?

H2: Well, it may be possible but in a sad way. I don't think a person without love can be happy.

M3: A very boring, very monotonous life: You get up, prepare breakfast, eat, go to school, come back, do homework... and if you don't have the love or affection of someone, it would be very boring.

M1: There are people who are very self-centered, for example me. I can see myself in the mirror and say that I love myself; but there are people who can't do that and that is when they need the affection of someone else. Or someone says "I love you" to feel alive, to feel that they have a reason to exist (Deliberative Group 2).

As can be seen, the need for love starts in the minds of these young people, with the expectation that they will soon be experiencing this mystery. Despite their young age, the experiences that love awaits are too human, so they could hardly escape their influence. It is an engine that grows in their spirit, power that will soon elevate to the delights of another body. This desire to possess another body is one of the scales of love, as Plato points out at the banquet; bodily appetite, as he says, is a seed that is born and blossoms in the dimension of spirit (Reale & Antiseri, 2004). We have to use the expression of Octavio Paz (2001), the flame of love is kindled in this age, reason for which it is a subject of interest for every teenager.

Insecurity. In contrast, and at the same time cohabiting with love, violence is another of the experiences that have accompanied the human being. In the case of Mexican society, we can all relate with violence, directly or indirectly; it has become so present that even adolescents, who previously seemed alien to it, are now also victims. Today, violence is expressed in a variety of ways (García-González, 2019), many of which are standard practice, generating a feeling of insecurity from which no one can escape. How do young people experience this feeling of fear and insecurity? These are some narratives:

E: What other concerns do you have? What topics would you like to discuss in your classes if you had to choose?

M1: I guess insecurity, whether between peers or outside, because a classmate was assaulted on the first day of school, and the authorities did almost nothing about it. The teacher realized and simply took him to the nursing, and the next day everything was normal.

E: What aspects do you think a teenager should know about safety?



H1: Questions of assaults or how to identify when people can kidnap you.
H3: Well, I think they should also teach you not to have as much value to things, because things happen to us because of insecurity

m2: Learning to identify that person who sometimes looks suspicious, and instead of making him trust and getting closer to him, leaving the place. We had been told that when you see that they are behind you, that you shout someone's name, even if it is no one, so that they are frightened... things like those (Deliberative Group 2).

In another group, the issue of insecurity is addressed as following:

E: What are some concerns you have when you come to school?

H1: Perhaps insecurity.

E: Why insecurity?

H1: Well, the simple fact of... like us, who attend in the afternoon, it is very dark when we finish classes and the problem is that there is more insecurity at night, like the case of harassment, robberies and other things.

M1: For example, that there is not much lighting, because sometimes when we go out there are almost no lights. And as I need glasses right now, I hardly see and stumble.

E: What else about this topic?

H2: Transportation

E: How?

H2: Sometimes it takes a lot, at least it takes me a lot of time (Deliberative Group 5).

In relation to this topic in one of the groups a young man expresses said:

H1: Society is getting worse and worse.

E: Why do you say so?

H1: In the case of people psychologically speaking, for example, recently cartels killed a family in the United States by confusing them. Also, we are destroying the planet because of pollution, and we do nothing to stop it (Deliberative Group 4).

Certainly, adolescent narratives about violence are passionate. This passion can be a starting point for reflecting on the human condition, capable of producing beauty in the world, but also of committing cruelties. The moral and ethical implications of the problem of violence are evident; that is why it is important for young people to be aware of it. Adolescents can glimpse ethical categories such as evil through deliberate action. The cultivation of moral judgment would make it possible to distinguish evil and cruelty (Lara, 2009); thus, it is a good exercise to sensitize adolescents to the importance of building a moral and educated society.



Reflections

Beyond the adjectives that simplify the judgments of adolescents, we find that their interests and concerns are not linear; instead, they seem like a hurricane. However, we can observe that the life project emerges from their narratives as particularly attractive from a philosophical and pedagogical point of view. For any person, the construction of a life project is full of questions; these are valuable conditions for the exercise of philosophical deliberation and, therefore, for the elaboration of a philosophy teaching project.

It is therefore reasonable to think that adolescents, as they begin to live a life by being aware of it, seek ways to do so by trying to find meaning to their reality that they are spontaneously confronting. In this search, they question their existence, their identities, and their fears, among other dimensions. If Jaspers (1985) is right to say that we are harbored by a world conscience, the construction of a life project is a valuable opportunity to captivate these young people in the exercise of philosophy, through their problems and issues, many of which have been and are widely discussed in this discipline. The basic questions that any young man asks—what am I going to do with my life? what do I want for my future? — these are questions that, although they arise from the individual being, they do not reduce themselves; discovering them requires questioning others, the world, society, and its values. If they understand the life project of others, they can become more critical of their own ideas and more tolerant toward the views of their peers, as simple as they may be perceived. This is the basis of the ethical questioning of our existence, as Socrates proposed.

Naturally, in this early age, when thinking about a life project and manifesting itself around it, friendship, recognition of the other, coexistence, are cultivated, as well as the rights of others and a set of values that adolescents refer to as fundamental to discuss at school. In a strict sense, for this group of adolescents, to manage a life plan as an end is to draw an imaginary route that allows to build and reconstruct their existence, examining the ideal means to do so in the best way. This concern is a clear sign that, at that age, they are thinking about their future. This scenario represents a good time for them to put their intellect and sensitivity into play, teaching themselves to give and ask for reasons in any matter. With the life plan, the young student dimensions himself, becomes aware that only he can build the foundations of his own future; at the same time, when he contrasts his ideas with his peers, he discovers that there are coincidences and differences. Now, building the project of life involves



narrating who we are (Larrosa, 2013) in a present; this narrative, which involves a here and now, opens the possibility of future, i.e., the possibility of imagining the future as another horizon to live. From an Aristotelian point of view, it can be said that “deliberate human action always looks to an ultimate or supreme purpose” (Rodríguez, 2010, p. 89). In these conditions, deliberation occurs, philosophically speaking, not only about life as the ultimate end, but also about the *aporia* of time, from its phenomenal existence to its metaphysical conception (Jullien, 2005), this topic was widely discussed by Aristotle, St. Augustine, Bergson, Heidegger and other great philosophers.

Likewise, their concerns about the life project includes a topic that is also essential to them: Identity. “Who am I?” “What makes me different from others?” And “What things are valuable to me and not to others?” these are common questions framed in cultural configurative practices of the world, deepening the knowledge of themselves. We know that the concept of identity is historical: Before, the self was thought of as a substance, a metaphysical concept that shifted thanks to the contributions of Locke (Braustein, 2008). Today it has connotations in which our adolescents participate, and which should be analyzed given its different uses. With this historical background context, it is important to discuss with them that identity involves, first, a process of introspection and, second, the recognition of others who play an essential role in the construction of their life: Family, school, and friends. To some extent, young people recognize that the search for their individuality, for an original identity, is linked to an ethical cause, since every project of life is aimed at becoming part of the world that is dwelt and desired. This helps achieving two things: 1) not to get caught up in mere appearance and 2) to look not only at themselves, but also at others.

Thus, the interest of adolescents can be understood as a plot with different topics, each of which, in turn, will relate with other issues: future, love, self and violence, etc. These are part of a series of topics that, given their universal character, are the focus of philosophical reflection. However, perhaps any of the interests of young people, related to their self and the world around them, can serve as a starting point for them to start the path of philosophy, emphasizing only that honesty and method are basic premises of a philosophical attitude (Rivero, 2015). This idea already traces the role of teachers: to limit ourselves to generating the conditions for adolescents to cultivate their creativity, the power of their thought and their sensitivity to connect with life and to let them start, in this way, their adventure for the spectacle of philosophy.



Conclusions

Some concerns common to adolescents have been included in this paper, which can be a starting point for thinking about how to cultivate a philosophical attitude in them. One premise for them to be interested in philosophy is the recognition of their condition. Since many of their interests are related to ethical dilemmas, their deliberation could be an opportunity to develop their intellect and sensitivity to crucial issues in the social aspect; for example, marijuana legalization, sexual discrimination, the dilemma of love, adolescent abortion, and gender-based violence. Any human situation can become an ethical dilemma, according to certain circumstances (Rivero, 2015). These dilemmas are relevant because they relate to their own experiences, and they are as real as the decisions they make (Cohen, 2005). But teens also have other kinds of interests. Cultivating the narrative can be a good alternative for speaking and writing about their role in life, about the future, because the story, as Avilés and Balladares (2015) argue, has a particularly pedagogical and formative formation.

In other words, by exercising the oral and written narration of their thoughts and feelings, they develop their rhetorical and argumentative capacity, and they examine the problems related to morality and aesthetics. Is it not clear that the time has come to give them small lessons in philosophical doctrines to gradually reinforce their perspectives in an argumentative way? The answer is yes, with the condition of not attempting to replace their ideas dogmatically. This is how adolescents begin to value our principles, learn from others, and begin to make clearer and more obvious judgments about their beliefs and about the moral practices of society. Nussbaum (2015) notes that as children grow up, and through storytelling, they learn more complex traits such as moderation, perseverance, righteousness, and dignity. This is precisely one of the objectives of cultivating a philosophical attitude in adolescents. Although these reflections are modest, they share the concern of many colleagues to construct an agenda for the teaching of philosophy, defining problems and topics of interest to and from our adolescents, and thinking about the configuration of a didactic.

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