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Editors

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Editorial Board

About

The *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* is a peer-reviewed academic journal devoted to research on the teaching and learning of philosophy. It is published online twice a year. The access to all articles is free. Articles may be about any level of education. However, the main focus is on high school philosophy. We welcome work with a philosophical or normative approach as well as reports of results from empirical qualitative and quantitative research. The journal also publishes reviews of books, textbooks, and other educational material of international interest as well as country reports. These reports present information about ways of teaching philosophy, its institutions and activities in different countries. It is an aim of the journal to promote the dialogue among researchers and practicing teachers across the world.

Call for Papers
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- Volume 5 1/2021 -
We are issuing an open call for contributions. If you would like your article, country report or book review to be published in the next issue (March 2021; Volume 5, Number 1/2021), please follow the instructions on the website. Your text should reach one of the editors no later than 25th of January 2021 (but manuscripts are also welcome at any time).

- Volume 5 2/2021 -
The following issue, which will be published in October 2021, will focus on a special topic: Philosophy Teaching and Digital Transformation. We welcome submissions on this broad topic, in particular answers to questions such as: How can (and should) philosophy be taught online? What are the advantages of online teaching? Is it possible to completely substitute the important features of philosophy classes by electronic communication or learning software? Please send your text to one of the editors no later than 15th of July 2021.

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers!

In this issue, there are two research articles.

First, Annika von Lüpke takes up the question of how to deal with sexist (or otherwise discriminatory) content in classical philosophical works in the classroom. She argues for a critically-reflective treatment of such content and proposes a three-step model that she exemplarily illustrates using key passages from Aristotle's *Politics*: a close reading of the passages, a reading of selected positions from a feminist perspective, and a reflection and discussion of that critique. She thereby not only shows the complexity of Aristotle's views, bringing together thoughts from his philosophical anthropology, ethics and political philosophy, but also the diversity and complexity of contemporary feminist approaches to classical philosophical texts.

In the second research article, Patrick Maisenhölder uses findings from cognitive psychology in order to point out some misconceptions about learning processes: reading techniques such as highlighting und summarizing, if not properly used, are no effective means for learning. Maisenhölder presents and discusses learning techniques that have been developed by Pooja Agarwal and Patrice Bain with the aim to point out their use in teaching philosophy. In particular, he explains how these findings and techniques can be used to foster metacognitive skills.

In publishing an invited article for the first time, we are starting something new. By "invited articles" we mean texts that do not proceed through double blind review. Such invited articles may be summaries of works or articles that have already been published elsewhere in another language than English.

Given that there is quite some research in the didactics of philosophy that has been done in France in the past forty years which has received no or only little attention outside of the French speaking world, we decided to ask one of its pioneers and main protagonists, the French didactician Michel Tozzi, to publish a translation of one of his articles.

In the introduction, we give a very brief overview of the debate in the didactics of philosophy in France and of Tozzi's work.

We are keeping up with the French speaking world in the Country Report section. This time, there are three reports from French speaking countries. Anne Herla describes the recent developments in school education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation that will be of interest to anyone working in our field: A few years ago, the course "Philosophy and Citizenship" (*Philosophie et citoyenneté*) was introduced into the compulsory curriculum, so that today all Belgians in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation enrolled in a public institution are educated in philosophy from a very young age. Vincent Kalla describes the situation in Cameroon, where philosophy has been taught for several decades in the last year of high school – like in France – and is now, since the reform of 2018, starting from the third to last year. Kalla draws attention to the regrettable situation of the didactics of philosophy in Cameroon: Due to a lack of specialists there is hardly any didactic discussion – but there are some signs of improvement

thanks to the works of a new generation of researchers. Sara Demuth describes the special situation of the Comoros Island, a former French colony whose present population is predominantly Muslim. The school subject philosophy is taught in the French tradition as the crowning of high school education and is combined with contents about African and Muslim philosophies – contents that are foreign to the French approach of secular education, but the educational system, as described by Demuth, seems to have found a modus vivendi.

Finally, the book reviewed in this issue is written by Argentinian philosopher Alejandro Cerletti, who holds a Ph.D. from a Parisian university. Roger Xavier and Tomás Troster review his book on the didactics of philosophy written in Spanish. By defending the claim that the didactics of philosophy is mainly a philosophical question, Cerletti gives voice to the traditional view which stands in contrast to the modern view as represented by Tozzi in this issue – a contrast which can still today be fruitful to thinking about the teaching of philosophy.

Also, we would like to thank Kira Lewandowski (Bochum) for proofreading the whole manuscript of this issue.

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The Editors

GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING ARISTOTLE'S PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The Aristotelian practical philosophy is an integral element of many school canons and also contains numerous statements which are classified as sexist from today's perspective. This raises the question of how to deal with discriminatory content in classical works of philosophy within a classroom context. In this article, I argue in favor of a critically-reflective treatment of discriminatory content in the teaching of classical works of philosophy. I propose how this can be achieved in the case of Aristotle's analysis of gender relations in the *Politics* employing a three-step model. Following a close reading of key passages, pertinent works of feminist philosophy are presented, which critically reflect upon central theorems of patriarchal views and which also put forward approaches of their own. In order to further stimulate the students' reflection, the examination of the feminist critique of Aristotle is then expanded into a debate on various forms of discourse on "gender".

1. The Challenge

"How to deal with racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism in classical works of philosophy?" A working group from the University of Jena funded by German federal and state governments recently put forward a valuable answer to this question, which can be seen as particularly applicable to prevailing contemporary discourse.[1] The authors see their contribution as a proposal to engender a dialogue for an unbiased discussion. They call for a differentiated *philosophical* approach in dealing with extracts of canonical works "which from a contemporary perspective at least would be classified as racist, sexist and/or anti-Semitic."[2] A philosophical treatment of these texts should not be engrained in a spirit of outrage nor should it seek to justify the texts by referring to the time in which they were written. Instead, the intention is for the texts to be understood and critically discussed within their own argumentative structure, context, and specific prerequisites and to translate them into contemporary contexts. Therein lies the challenge for the professional philosopher. Unless one follows the approach of close reading in this sense, only very general descriptions of racist, sexist, and/or anti-Semitic arguments and positions will result.

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[1] http://wieumgehenmitrsa.uni-jena.de (Last access: 24 June 2020).
[2] Ibid. (Last access: 24 June 2020). Translations of German texts are mine, unless otherwise stated.

Thus, in a highly abbreviated and generalised form, the aspiration and task of research are defined. But how can this be reconciled with a philosophical-didactic perspective? Should we focus our philosophical attention in teaching (in particular in schools), on text passages which not only trigger discomfort but also engender opposition and criticism in contemporary discourse? Why deal with the theories and positions of famous philosophers who are condemned as racist, sexist and/or anti-Semitic, where time is scarce and only a limited selection of material is possible? Does it not make more sense to concentrate on the type of material which serves to illustrate the prominence of those famous philosophers on the grounds of their paradigmatic achievements and which can offer guidance relevant to today?

Notwithstanding these considerations, there are strong grounds for a critically-reflective treatment of discriminatory content in the teaching of classic works of philosophy. To begin with, I will outline three arguments, which I perceive as particularly important within a classroom setting:[3]

1. The philosopher Miranda Fricker recently made the influential methodological demand that a philosophical theory should always also be considered from the perspective of those who are – usually tacitly – marginalised or disadvantaged by this theory (Fricker 2007 and 2012). The accompanying reflection on the viewpoint from which philosophers see and describe the world conveys the insight that their theories are socially situated.[4] They are formed under concrete historical and societal conditions and express *one* point of view, usually leading to the privileging of one position. The author asserts that her approach, which considers the perspective of those on the "losing side", leads not only to a more comprehensive understanding of the philosophical theories themselves, but, in relation to the political dimension of knowledge and understanding, leads also to a "moral posture of attention for others" (Fricker 2012: 63) – that is to say, groups marginalised in traditional philosophical discourse. A capacity for corrective virtue results from regularly practicing changing perspectives and offsetting the impact of stereotyping, marginalisation, and inequalities.[5]

2. This approach also enables us to understand our own knowledge as situated. For it goes without saying that the classical works of philosophy are tied to their specific locations in the same way our knowledge and our judgement of those works are. Should this transference occur in students then it should follow that their own philosophical practice as well as the building of a philosophical canon becomes an object of reflection and criticism (Hagengruber 2013: 24–25). Students are not merely obliged to tolerate an interim and antecedent selection of learning material.

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[3] My reasoning throughout this article is based on the subfield of practical philosophy.
[4] For the standpoint theory important in feminism see especially Haraway 1988.
[5] See Fricker 2007: ch. 4 and 7; Fricker 2012. On the fundamental question of the teachability of virtues see Gebhard, Martens and Mielke 2004. Like Fricker, the authors assume in their contribution that corrective virtues, which are about recognising injustice that has occurred and compensating for it, are reflexive abilities, which can as such be taught (Gebhard, Martens and Mielke 2004: 131–140).

Instead, they can become active participants in learning as critical interventionists, who question the canon by means of independent philosophising and debating.

3. The critical impulse with regard to both the classical works of philosophy and the students' own philosophical practice leads them to the critical self-conception of philosophy itself, as is paradigmatically expressed – albeit with a religion-critical rather than socio-political thrust – in Immanuel Kant's *Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?* (1784). This corresponds to an understanding of philosophy which on the basis of carefully considered criticism calls for change with the objective of promoting freedom. The students become conscious that philosophy, in this sense, empowers them to critique power in the same way as its canonical texts are an expression of discursive power.

The close interrelationship of theory and practice expressed in these arguments correlates closely with the educational objectives of teaching philosophy. Where practical philosophy is taught, this is not done as a theory of practice for the sake of theory alone, but to enable the students to pursue the purpose of an individual and collective good life (Steenblock 2000a: 16). Values such as the capacity for democracy, freedom, ideological openness, tolerance, and humanity are deeply embedded in the curriculum.[6] In this respect, the aims of philosophy education are closely related to the aims of the feminist philosophical project: feminist philosophy is inconceivable without the context of practical application (Nagl-Docekal 1989: 14).[7] Works of feminist philosophy and gender studies expose structures of domination and discrimination extant in classical works of philosophy, which still persist in contemporary society. They enable a critical examination and rethinking of tradition. Considering this background, it would seem advisable not to exclude discriminatory text passages from philosophy lessons, but to deal with them by bringing answers from modern philosophy to bear, in particular from feminist philosophers.[8]

In the following, I would like to propose how this can be achieved in the case of Aristotle's practical philosophy. His works are on the one hand an integral element of many school canons (Rolf 2007; Albus 2013a) and on the other hand contain numerous statements which are classified as sexist from today's perspective (Connell 2016: 1–52). Among the three forms of discrimination mentioned by the Jena paper, I will concentrate on sexism[9]. Arguments in favor

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[6] For an overview of the German curricula see Albus 2013a: 528–532.

[7] I base this on Herta Nagl-Docekal's general definition, according to which "feminism" as an umbrella term means "all efforts to overcome the discrimination or oppression of women" (Nagl-Docekal 2012: 233).

[8] This approach corresponds to the method of gender-sensitive philosophy teaching proposed by Kinga Golus: as a first step "traditional philosophy should be examined under the aspect of gender or gender difference", as a second step "women should be made explicitly visible as philosophers in the history of philosophy and in the present" (Golus 2015: 115–116).

[9] I base my remarks on the working definition of the term "sexism" in the Jena paper: "Sexism is a generic term for discrimination on the basis of gender, which refers to a heteronormative gender order that is usually implicitly assumed and naturalised. Sexism refers to historical and current power relations in which the (usually exclusively two) sexes are attributed an unequal (intellectual, moral, ontological) status and women* are subordinated to men*. Sexism finds its expression in explicit and implicit degradation of women* and non-binary persons, in stereotypes as well as in excluding, pejorative and oppressive cultural practices and traditions." (http://wieumgehenmitrsa.uni-jena.de; Last access: 24 June 2020).

of dealing with the topic of gender in the school context are its topicality and socio-political urgency (Landweer et al. 2012), the close connection it has to students' own concerns and the often-expressed assertion that philosophy education must contribute to the forging of identity in adolescents (Steenblock 2000a and 2000b; Thein 2014; Debus 2017).

2. The Methodical Approach

I propose a three-step model for teaching Aristotelian practical philosophy in a gender-sensitive way:

1. As a first step, knowledge of Book I of the *Politics* is imparted using short text passages. The initial aims are to study the underlying gender ratio in a text-hermeneutical way and to raise the students' awareness of gender asymmetries. In regards to the teachers, I am also particularly interested in rectifying the erroneous depictions of Aristotelian sexism that can be found in feminist discourse as well as in school learning materials.

2. In the second step, selected texts from pertinent works of feminist philosophy are presented. These texts critically reflect upon central theorems of patriarchal views and in addition, they put forward approaches of their own. The objectives at hand are to teach feminist philosophy topics and to train students in the skills of analysis, scrutiny, and criticism, which they themselves need as tools to join in the discourse. In addition to the aims of imparting specialist knowledge and elevating the students' general level of reflection, the intention in the selection of texts is to open up the topic, since it is one of the undisputed findings of feminist research that, together with sexism, other forms of oppression – for example, based on ethnic or religious affiliation or skin color – must also be taken into account (concept of intersectionality).

3. The third step seeks to promote the following objective – one which is central for Kant and for modern philosophical didactics – knowledgeable and reflected independence in thinking and judging (Steenblock 2000b; Martens 2003). In order to stimulate reflection, the examination of the feminist critique of Aristotle is further expanded into a classroom debate on various forms of discourse on "gender". This is also intended to prevent the impression that feminist philosophy amounts to a simple and ideologically motivated rejection – a prejudice which often leads adolescents to develop a fundamentally negative attitude towards feminist concerns (Nagl-Docekal 2012; Haase 2014). In order to counteract these structures of prejudice, the learning process should remain open in the spirit of dialogue and attention should be drawn to the diversity and disputability of feminist research.

Methodologically, I am also guided in particular by two recommendations of recent didactic research: a) In her work on canon formation for the teaching of philosophy, Vanessa Albus calls

for the core canon to be supplemented by a multi-level fringe canon (Albus 2013b: 13).[10] I propose the texts of feminist philosophy presented in this paper to be included within that canon. My objective is not to cast Aristotle out from the core canon of philosophy teaching with a verdict of sexism, but to expand the canon for the benefit of gender justice. To this end, it is necessary both to question classical texts on the gender ratio presented therein and to take into account works from feminist philosophy and gender studies (Nagl-Docekal 2012: 240–241; Golus 2015). b) Following Hannelore Faulstich-Wieland, Katharina Debus distinguishes between the didactic strategies of dramatisation, de-dramatisation, and non-dramatisation of gender (Debus 2017). While dramatising strategies explicitly address gender, de-dramatising strategies make visible "that gender is neither the only nor the most important category of individual and social difference" (Debus 2017: 31).[11] Since dramatising strategies are necessary on the one hand to explain gender asymmetries, but on the other hand also carry the risk of consolidating gender stereotypes, they must be supplemented by de-dramatising procedures (Faulstich-Wieland 2005). Following this recommendation, both the text passages from Aristotle's *Politics* and the contributions of feminist philosophers were selected in such a way that they make other distinguishing characteristics between people visible thereby relativising the category of "gender".

3. The Context: Aristotelian Practical Philosophy

The Aristotelian analysis of gender relations is decidedly diverse. Statements about the differences between the masculine and the feminine and between man and woman are found most frequently in the biological writings, in the *Metaphysics* and in the works of practical philosophy. The subject of gender is approached from very different perspectives, with Aristotle always assuming a duality and inequality of the sexes (Föllinger 1996). Before interpreting individual text passages, it is critical that we carefully reflect on their place within the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. In the Corpus practical philosophy should be viewed as a project largely independent of natural philosophy. Within practical philosophy, the sphere of the ethical and the sphere of the political cannot be separated.

3.1 The Distinction between Practical Philosophy and Natural Philosophy

Often ignored in didactic and feminist literature on Aristotle is the distinction between practical philosophy and philosophy of nature (Connell 2016: 1–52). It may at first seem obvious to treat statements about the nature of women in the *Politics* and the *Ethics* against a background of natural philosophy because of the numerous references to "nature" and natural conditions in Aristotle's practical philosophy. However, such an approach contradicts the Aristotelian understanding of science and the philosopher's high methodological reflexivity and flexibility (Corcilius 2011). According to Aristotle, the individual sciences must not make use of the

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[10] On the terminology: "The core canon represents [...] the very long-lasting and powerful tradition of exemplary works. It is constant and normative." "The fringe canon is, in comparison to the core canon, a canon with smaller range of validity and power." (Albus 2013a: 30)

[11] Katharina Debus introduces non-dramatising approaches as an "alternative to the strategy of dramatisation with subsequent de-dramatisation" (Debus 2017: 33). They do not explicitly make gender an issue, but are intended to "enable experiences, promote competences and discuss issues" that generally "promote acceptance of the diversity of lifestyles" (Debus 2017: 27).

contents of other subjects in an unreflective way. Each discipline has its specific subject area, its own principles, evidence, and procedures. Applying a common measure in different genres or compiling and making use of arguments gathered from different disciplines is not permitted.[12] As is well known, Aristotle calls this methodological error *metabasis eis allos genos* (A.Po. I 7, 75ᵃ38–39). The philosopher expressly demands – and certainly with didactic intent – that the practical disciplines must be understood in and of themselves. He advocates the principle of prioritisation in accordance with the subject matter, so that secondary matters do not become the main concern and the scope of the investigation shifts from the political to the biological, for example. Even if recourse to the content of other disciplines were possible and our knowledge of a thing would be increased by the addition of further perspectives, Aristotle's systematic interest is in the specific subject area that constitutes a single science as such – in the case of practical philosophy the essence of man in the context of the *polis* (EN X 8, 1178ᵇ5–7). Biological and ethical perspectives are therefore strictly separated in his work.[13]

Practical philosophy is concerned with actions and the good life. Actions, in turn, are the result of considerations that focus on those things that are in the power of the actor and that can be seen as ways and means to achieve an end that is judged as good (EN III 5, 1112ᵃ31). Aristotle considers further elaborations that distract from this guiding question and practical objective to be methodologically mistaken and subsequently excludes the area of the natural in the sense of things that take place regularly or irregularly without human intervention (EN III 5, 1112ᵃ19–27; Flashar 1971; Bien 1985; Scott 2015: 105–122). Correspondingly, the notoriously difficult concept of nature, which is indispensable in both natural and practical philosophy, is shaped quite differently in the two fields (v. Lüpke 2019: 114–140). In principle, neither Aristotelian philosophy as a whole nor Aristotelian *Politics*, from which the text passages discussed below are taken, can be assumed to have a clear and uniform understanding of "nature". On the basis of the distinctions that Aristotle himself makes in the fifth book of *Metaphysics* (Metaph. Δ 4, 1014ᵇ16–1015ᵃ19), it is necessary instead to work with a range of possible meanings. Central to Aristotelian practical philosophy is the meaning of "essence" (cf. Rapp 2016). In this sense, the philosopher uses the noun *physis* and the forms derived from it to speak of individual and species forms, first and foremost about human nature. This consists of the ability to develop and exercise practical reason. Therefore, *physis* can mean both the ability to reason as a presupposed basis of human development and the use of reason as the goal and norm of human education.

The consequences of these scientific-theoretical reflections for teaching are far-reaching. An interpretation of passages from works of Aristotle's natural philosophy *and* practical philosophy, for example, demands a high level of knowledge and reflection on the part of both teachers and students. Anyone wishing to discuss the relationship between the sexes in the biological writings will have to deal with the theories of procreation and heredity *before*

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[12] Except in those exceptional cases where one science is subordinate to the other (such as the subordination of optics to geometry), cf. Primavesi/Rapp 2016: 52–55. See Aristotle, A. Po. I 7, 75ᵇ12–15.

[13] Sabine Föllinger names Aristotle, EN VII 6, 1148ᵇ31–33 (Föllinger 1996: 203) as a singular exception. I do not mean to say that biological and ethical views do not influence each other and cannot be compiled as a comprehensive Aristotelian anthropology (Müller 2019).

Aristotle (especially in the *Corpus Hippocraticum)* and with the contrast between the warm and the cold, the four-cause doctrine, and hylemorphism, all of which are central tenets of his work. In the case of the treatment of man and woman in practical philosophy, as will be outlined in detail below (4.1), the relations of domination in the soul are decisive (see especially Pol. I 13, 1259^{b}21–1260^{a}24; Föllinger 1996). Considering this background, I regard assignments linking Aristotle's biological and ethical views, for example, by asking students about the consequences of biology for his concept of political order, to be misguided.

3.2 Aristotle's *Politics* as Part of his Practical Philosophy

While practical philosophy is determined as a project largely independent of natural philosophy, the field of the ethical and the political cannot be separated in the Aristotelian theoretical framework: Both areas are interdependent and together form "the philosophy of human affairs" (EN X 10, 1181^{b}15; Flashar 1971; Bien 1985; Höffe 1995; Schofield 2006; Frede 2013). This discipline examines the good and just conduct of man, who as a human being cannot exist without connection to others. If the primary focus of the Ethics is on the pursuit of happiness and the actions of the individual human being, the only way for an individual to live well is in the *polis* – and thus in a community which somehow needs to be organised and administered (Pol. I 2, 1252^{b}27–30). For the realisation of his highest end, *eudaimonia,* man is dependent on the community and has always been conceived of as an actor in the state association, as a *zoon politikon*. Even though the *Ethics* deal primarily with the general development of abilities inherent in human nature, Aristotle strongly emphasises the differences between people in the *Politics* and takes into account constitutional and role-specific differences. As a result, the books of the Aristotelian *Politics* not only complement the *Ethics*, but also challenge them: For it becomes clear that *eudaimonia* is open to only a few people, namely the free and prosperous Greek men, while the roles of many other people, such as slaves and wives, are to provide for the necessities of life and to maintain the household (Pol. I 5, 1254^{b}24–31; 13, 1260^{a}25–36; III 4, 1277^{a}33–37; ^{b}24–25; 5, 1278^{a}10–11; VII 8, 1328^{a}21–40). The close relationship between political philosophy and ethics thus does not exclude the possibility that there is also a strong contrast between an empirically-based sociological model, in which the different roles of men and women are sharply emphasised in a discriminatory way, and a general philosophical model, which refers to reason as an essential characteristic of human beings. While the model of the *Politics* provides the basis for the socialisation of the sexes, the *Ethics* go beyond a mere reflection of social conditions. They contain a normative surplus, which makes it possible to challenge the model of the *Politics*.

This too has consequences for teaching, wherefrom the whole of Aristotelian philosophy today above all ethics is taught (Rolf 2007: 44): If we take up Miranda Fricker's methodological demand and look at the Aristotelian theory from the side of the marginalised – those who are excluded from happiness and political participation – it becomes apparent that the inequality existing among people (which is particularly emphasised in the *Politics)* calls into question central theses of Aristotle's general anthropology. How does Aristotle justify the exclusion of the many from happiness and political participation? According to Aristotle, happiness lies in the activity of reason as the best part of the soul (EN I 6, 1098^{a}16–18). Is it only the few who

can realise this? Do they only succeed at the expense of other people? Are not all human beings endowed with reason? On the one hand, Aristotelian ethics proves in this regard to be elitist; on the other hand, the interpreter's gaze is directed to the conditions necessary for the development of a virtuous character in the sense of *eudaimonia*. These exceed the natural predispositions in the biological sense. They are by no means immutable, but they make it necessary to enter into reflections on legal provisions and on questions of education when teaching Aristotle.

4. Texts for Teaching Practice

I am to further substantiate my proposal to teach Aristotle's practical philosophy in a gender-sensitive way by use of selected short text passages. As outlined in section 2 above, by applying the didactic strategy of dramatising gender, central theses on gender relations in Aristotle's ethical and political writings can be initially developed (4.1). As the next step, two key texts of feminist philosophy will be presented that critically review Aristotle (4.2). Making use of de-dramatising strategies, the texts are chosen with the intention of relativising the topic of gender by drawing attention to other forms of discrimination (4.2.1) and by drawing out the question of human nature and thus the fundamental question of anthropology (4.2.2). Anthropology is to be extended to include its gender dimension (Thein 2014; Golus 2015: 117).

4.1 Aristotle's Thesis of the Legitimacy of Man's Rule over Woman

In the first book of the *Politics,* from which our text passages have been taken, Aristotle is primarily concerned with examining different communities in order to determine which form of rule is to be considered as good in each of them. For unlike Plato,[14] from whom Aristotle here distances himself (Pol. I 1, 1252ª7–16), he assumes that the individual communities presided over by the free Greek man in his various functions (as for example statesman or head of the household) differ in their nature. In each community, the man rules over people with different qualities and therefore they must be ruled in their own way (EN VIII 12, 1160ᵇ31–32). Each community demands its own form of rule, whether it is made up of husband and wife, of master and slaves, of father and children within the house, or it is a community of rulers and the ruled in differently-ordered states. What might be appropriate for a tyrant is not suitable for ensuring the stability of an oligarchy; what seems appropriate to do to a slave is misplaced where citizens alternate between ruling and being ruled as equals, as in a democracy.

This in itself is an important observation about gender relations in the ethical and political writings of Aristotle: The relationship between man and woman is seen here as a relationship of domination and the sphere of control is attributed to man, in the same way as the perspective of the lord and citizen is the guiding principle in the *Politics*. The dominion of the man, as we will see in the following passage, is regarded as justified, because he is superior to the woman. The statements are therefore not based on a common human nature, but instead on the assumption that man and woman are fundamentally different in a manner to be specified here.

These interrelationships can be summed up in two basic claims:

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[14] Plato, *Statesman* 258ᶜ8–259ᶜ4.

a) It is the man who rules the woman.
b) The dominion of the man is justified because the man is superior to the woman.

These claims can be developed in the classroom on the basis of the following passage:

> [T1] For ruling and being ruled come not only under essentials but also under benefits; [...]. For wherever there is a combination of elements, continuous or discontinuous, and something in common results, in all cases the ruler and the ruled appear; and living creatures acquire this feature from nature as a whole. [...] First, the living creature consists of soul and body; and of these the former is ruler by nature, the latter ruled. [...] Again, the relationship of male to female is that the one is by nature superior, the other inferior, and the one is ruler, the other ruled. (Aristotle, Pol. I 5, 1254^{a}21–^{b}14; translation: Saunders 1995)

Here, Aristotle introduces the principle of universal nature, which always serves to bring together a ruling and a dominated part within communities. He characterises this structure as "necessary" and "useful". The association of man and woman is also an expression of nature conceived as a differentiated and ordered whole. The order of nature is teleological. Its hierarchical character not only allows us to differentiate between those who rule and those who are ruled, but also demands that the better part rules in each case. The position of the better is attributed to the man. This raises the question of how Aristotle justifies the superiority of man. The indication that it is natural leaves open the question as to what man's superiority consists of. The following widely-received and controversial passage can be consulted to answer this question:

> [T2] We have an immediate guide in the position in the case of the soul, where we find natural ruler and natural subject, whose virtues we say are different – that is, one belongs to the rational element, the other to the non-rational. Well then, it is clear that the same applies in the other cases too, so that most instances of ruling and being ruled are natural. For rule of free over slave, male over female, man over child, is exercised in different ways, because, while the parts of the soul are present in all of them, they are present in them in different ways. The slave is completely without the deliberative element (*to bouleutikon*); the female has it, but it has no authority (*akyron*); the child has it, but underdeveloped (*atelês*). (Aristotle, Pol. I 13, 1260^{a}4–14; translation: Saunders 1995)

Crucial to the understanding of gender relations in Aristotelian practical philosophy is that man's claim to dominance is based on his superiority in qualities of the soul – and not on the different contributions of males and females to procreation or other propositions from the biological writings (Föllinger 1996: 184). Human nature is in itself differentiated and hierarchically organised. Reason, as a specifically human capability, is superior to the physical and as the highest human capability represents the best for man and his highest possible purpose (Pol. I 2, 1252^{b}32–34; 5, 1254^{b}2–14). Man gains his specific form only with reason, his perfect

form however with virtue. Whereas the slave's soul lacks the *bouleutikon*[15], an important rational faculty, the woman possesses practical reason, but it is not effective (*akyron*). Dorothea Frede has shown that the Greek *akyros/n*, with which the woman's reason is in this case restrictively characterised, is a term used in legal and political contexts and is used by Aristotle in this same sense (Frede 2018). Laws and political decisions can become *akyros,* i.e. invalid, due to adverse or changing circumstances. The institute of *kyrieia* ensures that the father, husband, or other close male relatives are the guardians of women. Women are represented by others in all public matters and are not allowed to administer their own property. In this sense, the practical reason of women has no authority. Aristotle does not justify the inferiority of women on the basis of biological characteristics. Is it that the philosopher is simply giving an account of prevailing social conditions? If this were the case, he would still be obliged to provide *an explanation* for the inferiority of women, a status he in fact does not question.

In order to be able to explain *why* the practical reason of women holds no authority, it is important to look at the context of the much-quoted and much-discussed *akyron*-passage. Aristotle is by no means simply concerned with the description of the social status quo here, but rather deals with the quality of character of all those involved. Immediately following the previous passage is stated**:**

> [T3] Well then, we should take it that a similar situation inevitably prevails in regard to the moral virtues also, namely that all must participate in them, but not in the same fashion, but only so far as suffices for each for his own function. That is why the ruler must have moral virtue complete; for his function is without qualification that of a master-craftsman, and reason is a master-craftsman; and each of the others ought to have as much as pertains to them. So it is evident that all those mentioned have moral virtue, and that the same moderation does not belong to a man, and to a woman, nor justice and courage, as Socrates used to think; the one courage is that of a ruler, the other that of a servant, and likewise with the other virtues too. (Aristotle, Pol. I 13, 1260ª14–24; translation: Saunders 1995)

The different conditions in the souls of the people in the household correspond to character virtues of differing quality (Lienemann forthcoming). The different character virtues, in turn, correspond to different activities and also correspond to the goods desired by these activities, which as we know can be arranged hierarchically. As Aristotle repeatedly points out using the example of master and slave, the rank of the activity combined with the good striven for by carrying out this activity reveals the rank of the person who carries it out. In the same way, the housewife who works within the house and whose virtue is related to the best possible fulfillment of precisely those tasks required for a well-ordered house, while the free Greek man strives for higher things as a member of the superior *polis*. It is the *function* which women and slaves perform within the house – to provide all the necessities of life – which in turn liberates the free Greek men to participate in politics and philosophy and is constitutive of Aristotle's practical philosophy.

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[15] The achievement of the *bouleutikon* must be thought of as a process. Its focus is on the individual steps and the choice of means to achieve an end which is considered good.

We may now add to the two initial theses elaborated above two further claims, which are central to the topic of gender in the ethical and political writings of Aristotle:

c) Man's superiority is a superiority of the qualities of the soul: whereas the woman's assigned role in the household only enables her to develop subservient virtues, man has "virtue in completeness" (Pol. I 13, 1260ª17–18).
d) The man's superiority qualifies him to strive for higher things. While the woman's place is in the house, the man is politically and philosophically active.

Aristotle characterises as natural a political order which is directed towards the purpose of liberating free Greek men for politics and philosophy. It is necessary in so far as the political and philosophical activity of the one cannot be realised without the participation of the other. But these conditions are by no means necessary in the sense of general principles of natural law. If we focus on the *genesis* of the inferiority of women, it becomes clear that it is not correct to simply assume a reduced ability in the sense of a natural disposition. Rather, the virtue of the woman, which is directed towards the good fulfillment of the tasks in the house, is acquired and it is by no means the case, as is often asserted in research literature, that nature simply makes woman and slave available (see for example Schütrumpf 1991: 373). The suitability of women for their special tasks in the *oikos* is not determined by Aristotle in terms of biological characteristics (Spelman 1994: 105–107). As far as virtues are concerned, which have been learned through education and habituation, the question of a biological basis remains open at the very least.

4.2 Critical Feminist Readings in Aristotle

4.2.1 Elizabeth V. Spelman

Different members of the household need to be ruled differently, so the guiding principle of the first book of the *Politics.* Therefore, it would seem reasonable to distinguish the study of the nature of women from the study of the nature of the slave – as indeed was Aristotle's plan, albeit uncompleted.[16] In her book *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought,* Elizabeth V. Spelman draws attention to the fact that these two partial-studies really belong together in the context of studying women. Indeed, the group of slaves always included women. But Aristotle is not interested in female slaves as a distinct group (Spelman 1994: 104–105). In this regard, Spelman continues, research has followed his lead, although a more comprehensive picture of gender relations in Aristotle's political theory can be drawn if we take into account that the philosopher always speaks of "woman" in a certain respect:

> [T4] I take a different track in trying to get at Aristotle's views about women. Instead of focusing simply on his discussions of the differences between men and women, I begin by asking about another and very closely related distinction he makes: the distinction between women and slaves. This distinction cuts across that between male and female, since slaves can be either male or female. The importance Aristotle attaches to the difference between 'women' and 'slaves' raises

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[16] In Book I of the *Politics* only the relationship between master and slave is treated in detail.

serious difficulties for any readings of his views about 'woman's nature' based only on the distinction he draws between 'men' and 'women'. For in Aristotle, the significance of the distinction between men and women varies according to whether the men and women we are talking about are free or slave. There is no simple distinction in Aristotle between men and women. (Spelman 1994: 99–100)

Aristotle clearly distinguishes the group of free Greek housewives from the group of those who are biologically women but belong to a different "class" as slaves. The philosopher speaks – quite differently than the many naturalisms in this context seem to suggest – about social roles:

[T5] Aristotle does not allow for the possibility of slaves who are women, but only for slaves who are female – for he draws a distinction between woman and slave in such a way that 'women' can only mean free woman, not slave woman. When Aristotle talks about women, he doesn't mean us to be thinking about slave women. (Spelman 1994: 104)

At this point, some particularly persistent stereotypes in the perception of Aristotle can be refuted: for the inferiority of the woman does not derive from the fact that it is she who bears the children, nor even from her specific contribution to reproduction, nor does the superiority of the man derive from his physical strength. It is the task of slaves to work with the body. Not all biological men are competent to rule, as the slaves lack the quality which "naturally" exerts power. And in the domestic relationship between the wife and the slaves, it is the wife's corresponding task to rule.

In the classroom setting, these dependencies can be captured in the following overview:

woman (free female): female body/deliberative capacity without authority
slave (female): female body/no deliberative capacity
man (male citizen): male body/deliberative capacity with authority
slave (male): male body/no deliberative capacity
(Spelman 1994: 108; slightly modified)

In light of this, it would seem that to be characterised by Aristotle as a "woman" is almost a privilege, and class membership[17] emerges as a second important category of difference and oppression. The degradation of slaves, regardless of their sex, is based on their status, while the oppression of free Greek wives is based on the comparatively higher status associated with their

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[17] Elizabeth V. Spelman rightly points out that both the category of "class" and the category of "race" are problematic when it comes to describing the characteristics by which the group of slaves in ancient Greece is oppressed: "Slaves in ancient Greece can't be said to constitute a class in terms of their position in relations of production or in terms of shared consciousness. [...] Moreover, reference to 'racial' differences is likely to lead to misunderstanding as well, because [...] Aristotle did not think the distinction between master and slave or between free and slave corresponded to a difference in skin color or any other physical difference." Unlike Spelman, who because of the Aristotelian phrase "slaves by nature" chooses to speak of discrimination on the basis of "race", I choose to speak of "class". For Aristotle, there may well be a difference between the quantity of people who are de facto slaves in a *polis* and the group of people who, by their nature, are predisposed to slavery. The decisive point is that slaves are not free and therefore must not determine the purpose of their actions themselves (Aristotle, Pol. VI 2, 1317^{b}10–13).

gender:

> [T6] So it can never be the case that the treatment of a woman has only to do with her gender and nothing to do with her class or race. That she is subject only to sexism tells us a lot about her race and class identity, her being free or slave, and so on. For her, being subject only to sexism is made possible by these other facts about her identity. So rather than saying she is oppressed 'as a woman', we might more accurately say she is oppressed as a citizen-class woman is oppressed. (Spelman 1994: 116)

In the classroom, these observations, in turn, should lead to the concept of intersectionality, which is fundamental to feminist philosophy. It refers to the overlapping of gender discrimination with other forms of oppression. It is the low status of female slaves that makes their gender insignificant. Different forms of discrimination do not exist in isolation from one another but instead, interact with one another (Chodura et. al. 2019).

4.2.2 Genevieve Lloyd

In Aristotle's *Politics,* as we have seen, rule is by no means for all those who are biologically male. It is reserved for those who are free and who are head of a household. The philosopher attributes the ability to rule in the texts T2 and T3 to superiority of the free man in qualities of the soul: he alone possesses practical reason. Thus, the possibility of achieving full character virtue, and in this way human *eudaimonia*, is bound to the perspective of the householder and citizen. Happiness is not equally shared among all men, but getting a share of happiness is the exclusive purview of men (Spelman 1994: 117).

In her influential work *The Man of Reason. 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy* (1984), Genevieve Lloyd skilfully draws attention to the close connection between reason, masculinity, and domination. She shows how a relationship, which Plato conceived as a relationship within man, is transferred to social and legal structures over the course of the history of philosophy and seems to legitimise the subordination of women (Lloyd 1993: 7). Just as the soul rules the body and reason rules over passions within the soul, Aristotle says that man rules over woman (Pol. I 5, 1254^{b}2–14). If a rational person is male and reason legitimises dominion, then the rule of man over woman appears to be justified.

> [T7] The associations between 'male' and 'rational' and between 'female' and 'non-rational' have, of course, a very long history. The idea that the rational is somehow specially associated with masculinity goes back to the Greek founding fathers of rationality as we know it. [...] [Aristotle's, AvL] claim is not of course that women do not have rationality, but they have it in an inferior, fainter way. They have rationality; they are distinguished from the animals by being rational. Yet they are not equal to men. They are somehow *lesser* men, lesser in respect of the all important thing: rationality. (Lloyd 1979: 18–19)

The concept of reason, however, is used by Aristotle not only in the sense of it being a specific innate characteristic of mankind, but also in the sense that this characteristic needs to be perfected in order to achieve the higher purpose of human life. Man's striving for *eudaimonia* is fulfilled by exercising reason in the best possible way. Only through the activity of the

rational part of the soul does man gain his essence. In the Aristotelian theory, the full realization of human nature is reserved for the group of free men. Thus, the supposedly gender-neutral definition of human proves to be masculine.

> [T8] When the Man of Reason is extolled, philosophers are not talking about idealizations of human beings. They are talking about ideals of manhood. (Lloyd 1979: 18)

One of the methods of feminist philosophy, which students using Lloyd's example learn, is to examine general statements about humans to see whether women are included or explicitly excluded. Existing knowledge can be used in that, for example, in many languages the words for "man" and "human being" coincide (man, homme, uomo). The contradiction inherent in the exclusion of women from the *Declaration of Human and Civil Rights* in France in 1789 is also a connection familiar to many students from history lessons (Nagl-Docekal 2010: 123).

4.3 Suggestions for in-Class Discussions

The two influential texts of feminist philosophy presented here were and still are controversially discussed in research. Due to their topicality, differentiatedness and openness, these debates offer ample inspiration for discussion in the classroom. Based on short quotations, the final section of this article will introduce controversial core questions from recent debates.

4.3.1 The Question of Equality and Difference between Women in its Political Dimension

> [T9] [T]he paradox at the heart of feminism: Any attempt to talk about all women in terms of something we have in common undermines attempts to talk about the differences among us, and vice versa. (Spelman 1988: 3)

While Spelman leads us to the concept of intersectionality, the number of intersections to be considered in research is controversial. Besides the three "classical" forms of oppression "class", "race" and "gender", other categories of difference such as "body", "sexuality" or "age" are discussed. Thus, the group of women becomes increasingly diversified. This is on the one hand advantageous for avoiding essentialist definitions and stereotyping of "woman", which lead to exclusion. On the other hand, the focus on differences makes political representation more difficult, because a common basic experience of discrimination, which motivates the feminist project and which it aims to overcome, appears questionable from this standpoint. The increasing differentiation of feminist theory threatens to paralyse political practice (cf. Klinger 2003). Fundamental questions arise as a result, such as the relationship between science and politics and the possibilities for philosophy to contribute to overcoming structures of discrimination.

4.3.2 The Complexity of Womanness

> [T10] Individual women are *particular*, not the same. (Stoljar 1995: 262; quoted from Mikkola 2006: 78)

If, as in Spelman, we emphasise the differences between women due to very different experiences in very different realities of life, then the question also arises as to whether we can still speak meaningfully of "woman" philosophically and which form that should take. Here, the positions of "gender realism" and "gender nominalism" are opposed to each other:

Gender Realism	Gender Nominalism
[W]omen have some feature (definitive of 'womanness') in common and this feature is what makes them women. (Mikkola 2006: 77)	[A]lthough a range of features are associated with women (such as certain social roles, psychological dispositions, experiences, and expectations), there is no single feature or set of features that women as women have in common that makes them women. (Mikkola 2006: 78)

The position of "gender realism" raises the question of what the common necessary characteristic – in the terminology of metaphysics: the universal property – of all women is. Thereby, the distinction between sex and gender is presupposed so that biological characteristics are excluded (Mikkola 2006: 94). Is it a shared experience, social role, or disposition? Representatives of "gender nominalism", on the other hand, who like Spelman deny the existence of a common necessary characteristic, point to the many differences between women. The category "woman" as such seems questionable to them. This debate enables reference to be made to the classical essentialist substance theory, which distinguishes between necessary and accidental properties. Furthermore, it is particularly productive for teaching in so far as it allows a distinction to be made between semantic and ontological perspectives (Mikkola 2016: 1–6). This distinction in turn leads to the very controversial basic question of the relationship between properties and concepts, which is relevant in metaphysics.

4.3.3 Humanist Feminism

> [T11] [W]e should stop taking *woman* as the organizing notion of feminist philosophy and reframe our analyses of injustice in humanist terms. (Mikkola 2016: 2)

While the example of Genevieve Lloyd presented above (4.2.2) makes references to human nature appear problematic from a feminist point of view, Mari Mikkola emphasises in her more recent works (2012 and 2016) the potential of a reference to human nature for feminist discourse. She proposes to describe discrimination of women as dehumanising and to rehabilitate humanism as the basis of feminism. In this context, human nature is, as it is in Aristotle, both descriptive and normative: On the one hand, it is the presupposed basis, on the other hand, it is the end and norm towards which human education is to be directed. The success of the feminist project is ultimately measured here by women's capability to freely develop the possibilities inherent in their nature as human beings.

Outlook

The study of Aristotle could indeed prove to enhance the program of humanistic feminism, for in his practical philosophy the question of the essence of man is combined with considerations of the social and political order on which this essence is to be realised. The theses of man's gift of reason and his striving for *eudaimonia*, which is fulfilled precisely in the activity of reason, retain their validity even where people are unjustly excluded from participation in the *polis* and thus from the chance of a happy life. From here, the question of what a legal and political order could look like that would allow all people to participate politically and strive for happiness seems topical. It can be assumed that this also represents a compelling question for students. Aristotle himself would have no doubt that teaching is needed to establish fair and unbiased political structures. For reason, which by nature belongs to man, requires education.

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Abbreviations: Aristotle's works

A. Po. – *Posterior Analytics*

EN – *Nicomachean Ethics*

Metaph. – *Metaphysics*

Pol. – *Politics*

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Using the Findings of Cognitive Psychology in Academic Philosophical Learning Contexts: Some Examples

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Abstract

In this text, the findings of cognitive psychology will be used to tackle certain misconceptions in academic philosophical learning contexts. It will be shown that some techniques that university teachers often recommend and on which students often rely on for working on texts and acquiring the contents of them and other contents – like for example highlighting, note-taking, and summarization – are not that effective for long-term retention. At least not if some aspects are not considered. The aim is to show what empirical research has found out about effective learning and how this can help to create tasks that foster long-term retention of philosophical contents which also helps with training higher-order skills such as applying, reflecting, evaluating, and modifying these contents.

1. On the use and abuse of common techniques for learning

In academic contexts and therefore also in academic philosophical contexts,[1] certain conceptions about effective learning are well-established. Especially about the effective learning from texts that students have to read in seminars. "[S]urveys of college students confirm what professors have long known: highlighting, underlining, and sustained poring over notes and texts are the most-used study strategies, by far" (Brown/Roediger/McDaniel 2014: 15). Also, techniques like summarizing texts can be added to these common strategies. (Dunlosky et al. 2013). But the problem is that these common techniques who are thought of to be effective for working on texts and acquiring the contents of them and other learning contents are not that effective (Dunlosky et al. 2013). At least, if they are not done in a certain manner. The consequence of using wrong strategies, or, for that matter, using them wrongly, is that students invest too much time considering how little of the learning contents[2] they are able to

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[1] There are no studies known to me that focus on academic philosophical learning contexts alone. But from the research available and my own experience, it seems highly probable that the problematic misconceptions described here do not stop at the frontier of academic philosophy but can also be found within it.

[2] In this text, philosophical learning contents are everything teachers in academic philosophical learning contexts want their students in their courses to be able to retrieve from the mind when they are asked for it. This can be, the overall gist of a text, ideas, terms, models, theories, definitions etc. This does not mean that in every case they

retrieve in the long run.

This is not only a problem because of the waste of time for the students (as well as the teacher who has to use time in the course to repeat what students ought to know) but also because a better retention of learning contents (in Bloom's 1956 or Anderson's 2001 language: *remembering* and *understanding*) helps students with the ability to apply the learning contents "more flexibly in the future, applying what they know in new situations" (Weinstein/Sumeracki 2019: 120). Furthermore, better retention supports the abilities to reflect, evaluate and modify ideas, terms, models, theories, definitions etc. (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 42-43). In other words: Research has shown that better retention of learning contents supports higher-order skills.

Considering philosophical problems (cf. Barz 2019), retrievable knowledge and higher-order skills are important. In the process of tackling a philosophical problem, it is helpful to know and to be able to apply existing solutions or parts of solutions to the problem, i.e. ideas, terms, models, theories, definitions etc. But, of course, these problems cannot be solved by just using existing ideas, terms, models, theories, definitions etc. since their contribution to the solution of the problems is not given by themselves and often up to debate. They cannot simply be applied to a problem to solve it in the way physical knowledge can be applied to create solid bridges. Therefore, students in philosophical learning contexts also need to be able to reflect, evaluate and modify the solutions before applying them to a problem – or have to discard them before this can happen if the solutions do not have the required quality (Brosow 2020).[3] In order to have applicable solutions at hand and to train higher-order skills, learning contents have to be retrievable from the mind. A good retention of learning contents is therefore necessary in academic philosophical learning contexts – at least for a certain quality of philosophizing as the process of trying to solve philosophical problems (Roeger 2016: 95-96). However, the strategies to foster the retention of philosophical learning contents differ in their effectiveness.

The question now is: what do teachers in academic philosophical learning contexts have to consider when they want their students to effectively read texts and acquire the contents of them and other learning contents better?[4] To answer this, a distinction between so-called retrieval

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should be able to reproduce them word-for-word (although some technical terms often have to be remembered correctly). It also means that they have to be able to reproduce them in their own words. Philosophical learning contents can therefore, of course, be everything that teachers in academic philosophical learning contexts want their students to know even if the things in questions have – from certain perspectives – nothing or only remotely to do with philosophy. But this text does not ask if the learning contents that teachers in academic philosophical learning contexts want their students to remember really *are* philosophical learning contents, and it does not ask what *ought* to be taught and learned. The text is about effective learning techniques for the contents that teachers choose for their courses – without evaluating them. But to give the reader some ideas of philosophical learning contents that at least the German-speaking philosophers think of not only being worth teaching and learning but also necessary in academic philosophical learning contexts, I recommend the study conducted by Frank Brosow and Andreas Luckner (2019) of which the main results are also available in English (Brosow/Maisenhölder 2019a) and texts presenting the results of this study (e.g. Brosow/Maisenhölder 2019b). The philosophers and texts presented there and the names, ideas, terms, models, theories, definitions etc. that can be found in the texts mentioned or in the philosophical approaches of the respective persons are philosophical learning contents that could be learned more effectively with the ideas presented in this text.

[3] If the new solution passes the quality test, it may nevertheless require further reflection. Even when the solution becomes a new learning content, e.g. if it is a well-reasoned solution of a philosopher, it is still up to debate because it may contain undetected problems, so that the reflection, evaluation and/or modification of it still is necessary.

[4] According to Jonas Pfister (2014: 117), the didactics of philosophy tries to find answers on ten different questions of which two are descriptive questions. These two questions ask how one can teach and learn (best) in

practice and other learning strategies has to be made.[5]

2. What retrieval practice is and why it works

While "[l]earning is usually thought to occur during episodes of studying, whereas retrieval of information on testing simply serves to assess what was learned" (Roediger/Butler 2011: 20), research has shown that retrieving information from memory is not only an assessment strategy but also an effective learning strategy.

As the name suggests, retrieval practice focusses on "pulling information out of students' heads, rather than cramming information into students' heads" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 14). It is therefore realized by so-called closed-book tasks which means that learners complete tasks without viewing their notes, summaries, or texts while doing so. The effectiveness of retrieval practice, which is (partly) attributed to the so-called *testing effect*, has been shown in various experiments.

In one of the experiments that are often used as a reference for research on retrieval practice, Roediger and Karpicke (2006) let 120 students learn information about the sun and sea otters. One group of students had to read the texts twice – i.e. review the information – while the other group read the text only once and wrote everything down what they remembered from the one-time reading of the text – i.e. without reading the text again. Of each of these two groups, some students had to take a test on the material after five minutes, some after two days and some after one week. The results were – in brief – the following: "Relative to testing, additional studying aided performance on immediate retention tests; in contrast, prior testing improved performance on delayed tests" (Roediger/Karpicke 2006: 251). That means: while re-reading was accompanied with better short-term results, retrieval lead to better long-term results. These findings could be reproduced in several other studies.

The reason why closed-book tasks (as learning strategies, not as assessment strategies[6]) foster long-term retention of learning contexts has to do with what is known as *desirable difficulties* (Bjork 1994). The active retrieval of learning contents from the mind demands mental effort because active and conscious thought processes need to be activated. This increased mental effort leads to a deeper processing of the retrieved learning contents (Tibus 2008: 97). In other words: The central observation in research on desirable difficulties is that difficulties that stimulate elaborative processes during the learning phase often go hand in hand with improved knowledge acquisition (Merkt 2016: 104). Or to put it plainly: challenges are

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philosophical teaching and learning contexts. In this text, the findings of cognitive psychology are used to – at least partially – answer these questions.

[5] Hereby, I will mostly focus on Pooja Agarwal's and Patrice Bain's (2019) book *Powerful Teaching*. Although others – for example Brown, Roediger and McDaniel (2014) – have explained what retrieval practice is and how it works, the first two have not only described and explained it but also combined this with elaborated exercises that one can use in one's own seminars.

Conflict of Interest Statement: I may seem here and in the following a little bit enthusiastic about the book / website by Agarwal/Bain, but for me the resources they offer were just useful. Therefore, I want to declare that I have no personal connection to both the authors – neither financial nor personal.

[6] To be learning effective activities, exercises in which learners have to retrieve information have to be low-stakes or ideally no-stakes opportunities (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 48). That means that they are not graded or that the single grades students get are not weighty for the overall grade. The reason for this is that only then students can focus on their learning, do not have to worry about bad consequences but "can experiment, be challenged and improve over time" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 48).

good for learning (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 241). Other tasks, like summarizing or highlighting texts, taking notes or reviewing the texts, summaries and notes, do not create such learning improving challenges.

That, of course, does not mean that every challenge makes learning effective. There are also *undesirable difficulties*. That means, tasks that are *too* challenging and therefore not learning efficient. They can then be quite the opposite since they can, on top, lead to demotivating experiences regarding the area of study which may lead students to turn away from the respective field. *When*, however, a desirable difficulty becomes undesirable is a question with much space for further research. Nevertheless, there are some findings. They will be discussed later in the text.

3. Strategies and Resources – some findings from learning psychology

How to create desirably difficult challenges? According to Pooja Agarwal and Patrice Bain (2019), one can make use of the so-called *power tools*. These are research-based strategies that work as criteria for designing learning effective exercises. Three of the four power tools they name – *retrieval practice*, *spacing*, and *interleaving* – are guidelines for creating desirable difficulties, and the last tool they mention is for fostering metacognitive skills and for preventing remembering false information: the *feedback-driven metacognition*.

Retrieval practice means "learning by bringing information to mind" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 93) which leads to a deeper processing of learned information (see above). *Spacing* can be explained as retrieval practice that is done multiple times over a certain period of time. That means that the learning contents that are learned at time t1 are retrieved again at time t2, then at time t3 and so on. Here, the active retrieval creates a desirable difficulty that activates deeper processing, but also the time distance to the initial learning, which makes it harder to retrieve the respective information. So, this principle makes use of the finding that "forgetting can be a *good* thing – a desirable difficulty that powerfully increases student learning" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 106). *Interleaving* means mixing similar learning contents (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 113). It leads to desirable difficulty because students have to actively discriminate between the contents, which leads to a deeper processing of information.

Here, of course, undesirable difficulties can occur. For example, when interleaving is done with beginners in a certain field of learning. Research has shown that inexperienced students profit most from "highly structured sequences of learning activities, where relative mastery of one small thing is acquired before moving on to the next bit of learning" (Concepción 2018: 29). In contrast: for near-experts and experts in one field of study, interleaving is the most learning efficient strategy since it creates a desirably difficult challenge for them to find fine nuances in similar concepts (Lang 2016: 74-76). When one wants to create desirable and avoid undesirable difficulties, such findings should be taken into account when designing learning scenarios.

The last power tool is a means against misunderstanding and remembering false information: *feedback-driven metacognition*. When the first three power tools are combined with it, the possibility that false information or misunderstandings are stored in the memory decreases, and initially falsely remembered information will be better remembered due to the *hypercorrection*

effect (Metcalfe/Finn 2012). It is a possibility to foster students' metacognitive skills". Students are "able to reflect on what they know and what they don't know" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 123). At least, if tasks are designed in a certain manner. For example, if students do not only have to retrieve information but also rate how trustworthy they are. So, they may have to tick if they are sure or not sure to have the correct answer, which is then checked. They can see if they really knew what they claimed to have known. Such feedback is useful since "[r]esearch confirms that students frequently *think* they know something, when actually, they don't. Also, students are typically *overconfident* when they predict or assess their own learning" (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 126). So, exercises that make use of feedback-driven metacognition can help to learn how to assess one's learning and to fight the *illusion of fluency* and the *illusion of confidence* (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 127-131; Kahneman 2011: chapter 19-24).

To bring these power tools into good use, one can think about ways of implementing them into exercises. One may also use the different ideas that Agarwal and Bain present on their website where templates for different exercises that make use of the power tools can be downloaded.[7]

Retrieval practice can, for example, be implemented by simply switching from note-taking to retrieve-taking (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 63ff.). Students read texts or passages of a text but instead of taking notes with the text open, they read passages, close or cover the text and retrieve what they remember of the passage from their memory. Similarly, summaries can be modified by making them *free recalls* or *brain dumps*.[8] This means that students read texts or passages of texts but instead of highlighting the text, taking notes and afterwards summarizing it with the text and notes open, they do the same but close or cover their text and notes while summarizing the text. Thus, desirable difficulties are created, mental effort is increased, and processing is deepened. The same goes for mini-quizzes that students have to complete after reading a text – when the book is closed (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 65).

Spacing can be realized by using *Blast from the Past* (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 97-98) where students have to retrieve learning contents from their memory. One could also use *Power Tickets* (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 166-168) where the students have to answer questions to several topics.

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[7] https://www.powerfulteaching.org/resources. Accessed: 22nd September 2020.
[8] https://www.retrievalpractice.org/strategies/2017/free-recall. Accessed: 22nd September 2020.

What did we talk about…

	Today?	Yesterday?	Last week?	Last month?	Last quarter?	Last semester?
	[insert concept 1]	[insert concept 2]	[insert concept 3]	[insert concept 4]	[insert concept 5]	[insert concept 6]
Write **one** fact						
Write a **second** fact						
Write a **third** fact						

1

Figure 1. Power Ticket Template.[9]

Depending on the topics, this exercise could also be used for interleaving. For example, if there were similar concepts covered throughout the semester, e.g. different utilitarian theories. The teacher could ask the students to write down three distinguishing facts of each of the theories covered. Desirable difficulties are created through the necessity to retrieve the information from (short and long-term) memory (e.g. the beginning of the semester) and to discriminate between similar concepts. But again: this may be too challenging for beginners and only create desirable difficulties for near-experts or experts. For beginners, *Power Tickets* that leave out interleaving and focus on (spaced) retrieval practice only are more suitable.

To additionally boost metacognitive skills and to minimize falsely remembered information, exercises like *Four Steps of Metacognition* can be used (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 138-145). In this exercise, students have to answer questions (retrieval practice and – depending on the questions – spacing and even interleaving) but also have to estimate their own knowledge by ticking if they are sure that they know the answer or not. They have to look for all the answers where they ticked that they did not know the answer or are not sure if their answer is correct, and they also have to control if they really got the answers correct of which they thought they had, that means.

Dietmar Hübner is partially right when he says in one of his videos: „In a textbook, it's pointless to ask reproductive questions. So, to ask what are the soul parts and the cardinal virtues in Plato's works is pointless because you can simply turn back to page 109 and there is the table in which you find this information."[10] But he is wrong when he implicitly thinks that this is the only option for reproduction tasks. If he would change the tasks in his textbook according to these principles, they could be very useful to foster the student's ability to

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[9] URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRMxEJ5J6AY; 1:52–2:07; translation P.M. Accessed: 22 September 2020.
[10] Ibid.

reproduce information and more. For instance, by explaining the students how and why retrieval practice works and – to use the Plato example – by letting the students explicitly retrieve Plato's cardinal virtues and soul parts from their memory in a mini-quiz or a *Four Steps of Metacognition* when they first have to read the text and then – in form of a closed-book task – complete the exercise. This may look like the following:

Four Steps of Metacognition: Plato

☆	?	Items to Know	Answer
		Name the four cardinal virtues in Plato's concept.	
		Name the three parts of the human soul according to Plato.	
		…	

Figure 2. Four Steps of Metacognition Template[11] *adjusted to the Plato example.*

4. Basic and high-order questions

The exercises mentioned so far support higher-order thinking because students are better able to remember the learning contents when they have to apply, reflect, evaluate, and modify them. However, they are mostly basic questions that ask for factual recall, either word-for-word or in the words of the learners. In order not only to *support* but *train* higher-order thinking skills, one should also create higher-order retrieval practice (Agarwal/Bain 2019: 41-42). This again can be done by using the power tools to create exercises, for example the mini-quizzes but with certain changes.

To make mini-quizzes boost higher-order thinking the questions have to go beyond the recall of facts. They can be described as *sophisticated mini-quizzes* or, as Robert Loftis (2019) puts it, as *sophisticated multiple-choice questions*. They demand, for example, the correct application of learned information to new examples, the identification of the correct premises or conclusions of an author's position, or the ability to detect fallacies in an argument. To answer such questions, students have to use higher-order skills. They can therefore be used to train such

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[11] Taken from: https://www.powerfulteaching.org/resources. Last access: 22 September 2020.
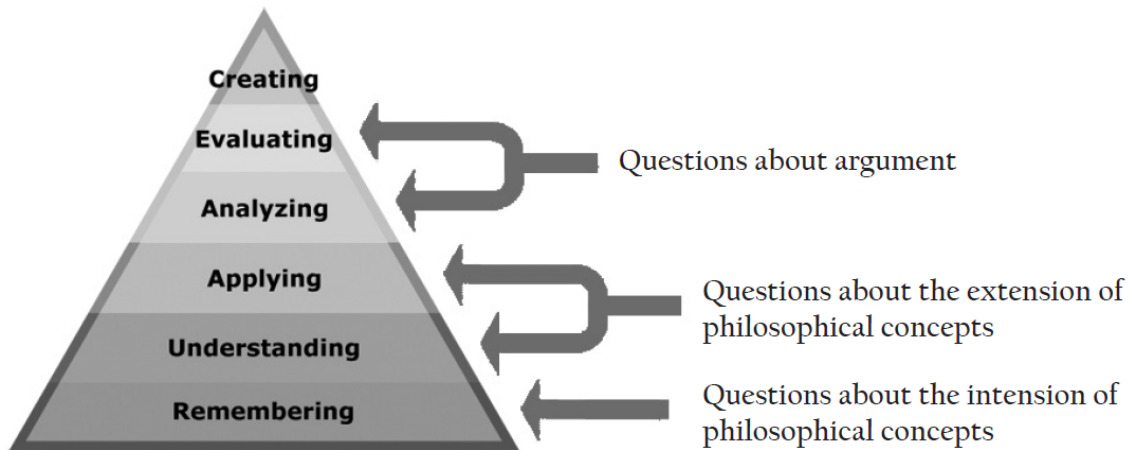
higher-order skills[12]:

Figure 3. Bloom's (altered) Taxonomy (Loftis 2019: 92)

Creating good sophisticated multiple-choice questions is not easy. The questions have to be unambiguous, and the answers have to be written in a way that the correct ones are not easily distinguishable from the wrong ones. Therefore, one has to include so-called *distractors*, i.e. answers that only look to be the correct answer to the question asked, so that students have to actively reflect about the correct answer (Loftis 2019: 93-94). This requires mental effort that activates deeper processing.

In his text, Loftis gives a lot of examples, of which I will present only two. The correct answers are the ones in italics. The first question demands the correct application of a position. I present it here in a slightly altered version (Loftis 2019: 113-114):

> Cameron has always lived by the principle that the good of the many outweighs the good of the few. So, when they first heard about the classic version of the trolley problem, they thought it was obvious that one should throw the switch. But when they heard the fat man version of the trolley problem, they were perplexed. Cameron recognized the process they were going through as a case of reflective equilibrium and decided the thing to do was [...] [to reject][13] their intuition about the case. Which of the following best describes the outcome of their decision? (Select one)

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[12] It has to be said that Loftis (2019) sees multiple-choice tests as *assessment strategies*, not primarily as *learning strategies*. In this text, however, they are seen as a possibility to create higher-order retrieval practice since they demand students to retrieve *and* apply, analyze and evaluate.

[13] Originally it says: "Cameron has always lived by the principle that the good of the many outweighs the good of the few. So, when they first heard about the classic version of the trolley problem, they thought it was obvious that one should throw the switch. But when they heard the fat man version of the trolley problem, they were perplexed. Cameron recognized the process they were going through as a case of reflective equilibrium and decided the thing to do was stick to the rule, rejecting their intuition about the case. Which of the following best describes the outcome of their decision?" (Loftis 2019: 113f.). Thanks to one of the reviewers, I realized that the answer would be too obvious when it says "the thing to do was stick to the rule". Therefore, I cut it out so that learners who try to answer this question have to a) retrieve what the fat man version of the trolley problem says, b) retrieve what reflective equilibrium means and c) think what it implies in this version of the trolley problem if the intuitions are neglected.

a) Cameron will say you should both pull the switch and push the fat man.
b) Cameron will say you should pull the switch, but not push the fat man.
c) Cameron will say you should neither pull the switch nor push the fat man.
d) Cameron will say you should push the fat man but not pull the switch.

The students should be given a space to explain why they choose the answer so that, on the one hand, they have the chance to get points for ticking a wrong answer, when they have good reasons for it. On the other hand, it allows teachers to see if there was another way of understanding the question.

The second question asks students to analyze the arguments that Kant gives for his focus on a rational basis for ethics (Loftis 2019: 114-115):

> Which of the following are reasons Kant gives for saying that Reason is the only thing that can serve as the justification and motivation for moral behavior? (Select all that apply.)
>
> a) Emotions are not stable, so a morality motivated by emotion will not last.
> b) Emotions have no cognitive content, so they cannot be used to judge right and wrong.
> c) People who lack emotions are unable to find any meaning in life, so amorality without emotion would not motivate.
> d) Emotions are closely linked to the right and wrong things to do, so a morality founded on emotion has more than an accidental link to goodness.
> e) People who act out of emotion are only satisfying their own needs, so a morality founded on emotion has no moral worth.

By creating such questions and by mixing them up with basic questions, one can foster students' long-term retention of philosophical learning contents *and* train higher-order skills.

Conclusion

Of course, this is no promotion for the sole use of basic and higher-order retrieval practice in teaching philosophy. The basic and higher-order retrieval practice is a research-based possibility to foster students' long-term retention of philosophical learning contents, their metacognitive skills, as well as their skills in application (of concepts), analyzing, and evaluation.

But to see these possibilities, teachers in philosophy do not only have to focus on answering the questions of the didactics of philosophy that are close to philosophical questions, e.g. normative questions what philosophical education should aim at. They also have to focus on answering descriptive questions such as how to teach in philosophy so that what is taught is learned (best) and how to learn (best) (Pfister 2014: 117). To answer them, teachers can conduct empirical research themselves, or they can, like it was done in this text, investigate whether research holds findings that are relevant for them. In other words: teachers in philosophy should become what Concepción has called *scholary teachers*, i.e. "people who study research on teaching and learning and deploy what is learned in their courses" (Concepción 2018: 27).

Research on effective learning offers great insights that can be used in teaching philosophy. This can have a positive effect on the quality of philosophising since it supports higher-order

and meta-cognitive skills.[14]

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Introduction:
Michel Tozzi and the Didactics of Philosophy in France

It is well known that the school subject "philosophy" has a long tradition in French high schools. However, there is – which is less well known – also a French tradition of didactics of philosophy. Unfortunately, didactical research in France has so far been published for the most part in French only. Since we see great potential in engaging with the didactical research done in France, we took the opportunity to invite one of the leading French researchers, Michel Tozzi, to publish a translation of his article *Une approche par compétences en philosophie?* (2011). In this introduction, we give a very brief historical overview about the development of the didactics of philosophy in France and then some information about Tozzi's work.

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The modern debate in the didactics of philosophy in France started in 1975 with the foundation of the GREPH (*Groupe de recherches sur l'enseignement philosophique*), the idea for which was based on a text by Jacques Derrida. The GREPH had basically two reformatory aims. First, to free philosophy from its isolation and bring it in contact with other fields of research. Second, based on Derrida's claim that everyone had a "right to philosophy", to extend philosophy education from its traditional place in the last year of high school (*lycée*), the *terminale*, to the years before that, the *première* and *seconde*, or even down to middle and primary schools. Out of the work of the GREPH resulted among others the publication *Qui a peur de la philosophie?* (1977, "Who's afraid of philosophy?") and the initiative for the creation of the *Collège international de philosophie* in Paris in 1983.[1] However, the GREPH did not attain its aims – and not much has changed since then.[2] Nevertheless, the GREPH helped to prepare some of the changes in the didactics of philosophy in France.

One can, in a simplified manner, distinguish between two camps, the *traditionalists* and the *progressives*, as one might call them.[3] The traditionalists try to develop the teaching of philosophy within the traditional setting of the lecture by the teacher (*cours magistral*), while keeping the two basic forms of traditional written evaluation, the tightly regimented genres of texts specific to the French system, the *dissertation* and the *explication de texte*.[4] The traditionalist camp is backed by the Inspectorate and the Association of Philosophy Teachers (APPEP), which publishes didactical articles in their organ *L'enseignement philosophique* (since 1947). As examples of work in this traditionalist camp, one might cite the work under the direction of Françoise Raffin and the work of Jacqueline Russ on philosophical writing and on reading clas-

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[1] The papers by Derrida concerning these issues (*Du droit à la philosophie*, Paris: Galilée, 1990) have been translated into English in two separate parts: *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy 1*, Stanford 2002 and *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, Stanford 2004.
[2] See Serge Cospérec, *La guerre des programmes (1975-2020)*, Lambert-Lucas: 2019, for a book length treatment of the "wars of the study programs" over the last 45 years.
[3] Cf. Cospérec (2019), p. 25-26.
[4] For these genres, see the Country Report by Christine Martin, "The stricter the rules, the freer the thinking? The dissertation in philosophy teaching – three teaching examples from France," *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* 2 (2) (2018), 52-55.

sical texts. Still today, the traditional view is shared by the vast majority of the whole body of teachers in France.[5]

On the progressive side, one can distinguish different strands. The first strand is the development of a competency-based approach by Michel Tozzi. Tozzi was inspired by the work of France Rollin, herself inspired by Michèle Le Doeuff. Second, one should mention the work since the 1990s of the Philosophy Section of the French Association for Progressive Education (*Groupe français pour l'éducation nouvelle*, GFEN). Research output by members of the GFEN can be found in the journal *Pratiques de la philosophie*, edited by Nicole Grataloup. A third strand can be seen in the work of ACIREPh (*Association pour la Création d'Instituts de Recherche pour l'Enseignement de la Philosophie*), founded in 1998, which publishes the journal *Côté Philo: Journal de l'enseignement de la philosophie*. Although a lot of work has been done in developing new approaches, materials, and methods on the teaching of philosophy in the last thirty years, the whole progressive camp represents only a small minority of the whole body of philosophy teachers in France.

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Tozzi is on the progressive side. In fact, we may consider him to be one of the pioneers of the modern didactics of philosophy in France since the early 1990s. He has been a leading figure in the progressive movement ever since. Born in 1945, Tozzi started out as a philosophy teacher in high school from 1967 (which he continued until 1995). It is only in the late 1980s that he starts with his research in the didactics of philosophy, his early work being published as a Ph.D. thesis in educational sciences (*Contribution à une didactique du philosopher*, 1992). Further work was published as a habilitation thesis (*Eléments pour une didactique de l'apprentissage du philosopher*, 1998). From 1995 until 2007 he was professor at the department of educational sciences of the University of Montpellier 3, where he acted as its director for several years. In 1998 Tozzi founded the journal *Diotime. Revue internationale de la didactique de la philosophie.* Since 2003, when the content went online and open access, *Diotime* has become a major platform for international exchange. Unfortunately, almost all of the articles are in French. Of the very many publications of professor Tozzi, one should mention at least the early edited volume *Apprendre à philosopher dans les lycées d'aujourd'hui* (1992), the introduction to philosophizing *Penser par soi-même* (1994/2005), and the synoptic article *20 ans de recherche en didactique de la philosophie (1989-2009)* (2009).

Tozzi's approach in general is one that bases philosophical reasoning on competences. In the article we chose for translation for this journal, he focuses on the notion of competences and brings into context the different elements of the approach he has developed over the years. For readers outside of France and especially for those from German-speaking countries, it might come as a surprise that this competency-based approach is not considered to be part of mainstream didactics of philosophy. It can only be explained by the special status of the subject and its defense by the traditionalists (see above). Tozzi's approach not only delivers a needed alternative to the traditional approach. In the present article, Tozzi shows that its heart, the writing

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[5] See also the review of a book by Denis La Balme, which represents the traditional approach, in *Journal of Didactics of Philosophy* 4 (1) (2020), 40-43.

of a *dissertation*, requires competencies, and he gives an original explanation of what it means to teach for competencies in philosophy.

We hope that Tozzi's article will find many readers outside of the French speaking world and will inspire more studies, translations, and cooperation between researchers in different countries across the world.

The Editors

A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN PHILOSOPHY?[1]

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1. Introduction

The definition of programs "by competencies", the orientation of working to develop competencies, is, at the global level, a significant current trend in the evolution of education systems, which are progressively institutionalizing this approach – with profound consequences on how curricula are written, on how teachers are assessed, and on how students are made to work.

The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, for example, have issued recommendations on the eight key competences for lifelong learning, describing "the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes" associated with each of them.[2] French-speaking Belgium issued a decree on 24.7.1997 on competences, the regulatory framework for the development of all programs. "Competence" is defined as "an ability to implement an organized set of knowledge, know-how, and attitudes enabling the accomplishment of a certain number of tasks." Quebec and the Canton of Geneva are known for their institutional progress on this issue, which is not self-evident when it comes to practice. For its part, the French common base implies "being able to mobilize one's skills in complex tasks and situations, at school and then in life" (Decree of 11 July 2006). Schoolchildren now have a skills booklet to be validated at the end of secondary school.

Philosophy as a school discipline is confronted with this evolution: indeed, in the current curriculum of the French general series (Decree of 27 May 2003), there is an explicit reference to skills to be developed: "It is necessary to clearly indicate both the themes to be taught and the skills that students must acquire in order to master and exploit what they have learnt." "It is in their study that the competences defined in Title III below will be acquired and developed." It speaks of "learning to think philosophically," of "aptitude for analysis," of "the ability of the student to use the concepts elaborated and the reflections developed and to transpose them into a philosophical work that is personal and lives of the knowledge acquired through the study of concepts and philosophical works." It underlines "the capacities to be mobilized" – a terminology which, together with its underlying theoretical implication, is quite new in the history of philosophy programs.

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[2] RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), 30.12.2006, L394/10.
URL: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006H0962&from=FR

Philosophy is thus challenged, on the one hand, as a school subject – like the others – by the new ambient norms of competence, and on the other hand as a critical reflective approach to societal and school evolutions, in order to reflect on this new paradigm (notably in philosophy of education): is the competency-based approach in philosophy legitimate, or to be proscribed? Can it nourish the didactic reflection of the discipline? Does it have beneficial aspects, both for students and teachers, in a perspective of learning to philosophize? And if it appears desirable, what are the possible abuses, and how can they be avoided?

2. The theoretical and practical procedure of the competency-based approach

A) The question of the definition of the concept
The concept of competence has been introduced into the vocational and educational worlds for many years (in the 1970s in vocational education curricula, in the 1980s for the *seconde*[3]), and integrated into a procedure called "competency-based approach". This concept is still discussed in research, particularly in the educational sciences: the exact definition of the concept and the procedure of the competency-based approach – a controversial issue in cognitive psychology and in didactics of the notion of transversal competency. It raises questions about the relevance of its institutionalization (writing of programs in which an action verb is placed before content); about its use in the classroom (where it is often confused with a simple objective or procedural knowledge), etc. It is not totally stabilized and must therefore be used with epistemological and methodological caution. Current research in this area in France is based on research in cognitive psychology and non-English-speaking work ergonomics. From a philosophical point of view, the concept has been confronted by some with Aristotle's *hexis* (a disposition acquired and lasting through renewed praxis, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book II, chap. 4), but the latter gave an ethical dimension to this kind of second nature; by others with Bourdieu's *habitus*, but the latter, distinct from the habit (*habitude*), is rather unconscious.

Among the definitions circulating, here are a few examples of recognized researchers in the field of education from the French speaking world. A competence is:

- "The ability to associate a precisely identified class of problems with a determined program for treatment" (Meirieu 1989).
- "A capacity for effective action in the face of a family of situations, which one manages to master because one has both the necessary knowledge and the ability to mobilize it in a timely manner to identify and solve real problems" (Perrenoud 1997). He also specifies that "it is a question of facing a complex situation, of constructing an appropriate response without drawing it from a repertoire of pre-programmed responses."
- "An integrated and functional set of knowledge, know-how (*savoir-faire*), soft skills (*savoir-être*) and know-how-to-become (*savoir-devenir*), which will make it possible,

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[3] Note of the editors: In France, high school comprises three grades: *seconde, première* and *terminale. The seconde* is therefore the third year before high school graduation, the *baccalauréat*. Traditionally, philosophy was only taught in the last year, the *terminale*.

when faced with a category of situations, to adapt, solve problems and carry out projects" (Marc Romainville 1998).

– "A complex know-how (*savoir-agir*) based on the effective mobilization and combination of a variety of internal and external resources within a family of situations" (Jacques Tardif, Université de Sherbrooke, conference held on 27 April 2006 at this university).

– "Being competent means being able to mobilize an integrated set of resources to solve problem situations" (Gérard 2008). Or: "Someone is competent when, placed in situations that involve solving a certain type of problem or performing a certain number of complex tasks, he is able to effectively mobilize the relevant resources to solve or perform them, consistent with a certain vision of quality."

It is a dynamic conception of competence in relation to students' learning processes, involving the contextualization of processes, the decontextualization necessary for the transfer of acquisitions, and their recontextualization in new situations. A competence thus develops an "intelligence of situations" (Jonnaert). Laurent Talbot specifies, that "the approach by competences is a socio-constructivist approach, which means that the student's activity is understood as essential for learning. It is the students who build their skills", in particular by reinvesting knowledge (Talbot 2009: 6).

B) Elements of the definition

We will retain from this approach – this will be the definition that we will test in philosophical learning – that one is competent when "one can mobilize in an integrated way internal and external resources to accomplish in one's activity a determined type of task in a complex and new situation." This definition takes up a number of elements that are recurrent among researchers.

For example, in the final year of high school, a student is considered competent in philosophy if he or she knows how to write a *dissertation*[4] properly on the day of the baccalaureate.

Let us clarify several points: "competence" is not innate but is learned through practice, it is the result of a process of acquisition, of learning that takes time.

Competence is not opposed to knowledge, since it implies the mobilization of knowledge. It takes knowledge seriously. Being competent in a philosophical *dissertation*, for example, most often implies knowledge of authors. But knowledge is not enough to define a competence: I can know my multiplication table, or this or that grammatical rule (declarative knowledge), without knowing how to do multiplication properly or use the rule in a sentence (procedural know-how). Reciting an author's doctrine without putting it into perspective of the question posed is not appropriate in a philosophical *dissertation*. A distinction must therefore be made between a competence (which implies a "living knowledge") and knowledge that is decontextualized, inert, cut off from tasks and situations.

A competence is accomplished in action, it is know-how (*savoir agir*), and that's what

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[4] Note of the editors: The *dissertation* is strictly regulated form of a philosophical essay, a genre specific to the French system. We therefore decided to keep the original name throughout the article.

distinguishes it from knowledge (*savoir* or *connaissance*). It links knowledge to power; it is a tool for emancipation. What counts is the mobilization in action (in situation, in context), of knowledge, of procedures, of processes (writing a *dissertation* in the situation: at home or on the day of the baccalaureate, and in the context of such and such etc.). Competence is a "mobilizing knowledge" (Le Boterf 1994). It is not simply a matter of restoring automated procedures.

But it is necessary to mobilize it "at the right time and for the right purpose." There is an appropriateness of such and such a resource in relation to such and such a task, this is the know-how of mobilizing knowledge. As a result, the competency-based approach may appear to be more ambitious than the simple transmission of knowledge.

In this mobilization, several resources are summoned, and they are combined, articulated, used in synergy, in proportion to their individual and collective integration. For example, in an acceptable *dissertation*, language, lexical and semantic knowledge is used, and most of the time knowledge of concepts, authors, other disciplinary knowledge, reference to a course, personal experience, a knowledge of conceptualizing and arguing, analyzing an example, a habitus of ordering ideas, etc.

By internal resource, we can understand knowledge, know-how, social skills (in France, we speak rather of knowledge, abilities, attitudes) or experiences. And these resources can be cognitive, social, or physical. External resources for a student can be the teacher, classmates, a lesson, a text, a book, a tool, the Internet, etc. The resources can be human or material.

Nor is a competence an objective, in the sense of the "pedagogy by learning objectives," because it does not improperly fraction knowledge or know-how, and always calls for a complex task, not a fragmented, sliced task, which makes and gives overall meaning and purpose to school activities. It can thus, through motivation, help to reduce failure at school.

A competence is not visible, unlike a performance. Its theoretical referent is constructivist, not behaviorist. It involves complex mental operations. The competency-based approach aims to replace the paradigm of the pedagogy by learning objectives, which has shown its theoretical limits and practical drifts. In my thesis, I have made fifteen objections to the latter in the application to philosophy (Tozzi 1992). A competence can be developed by itself, but also become a resource for another competence (e.g. "knowing how to read a text" for "reading a philosophical text").

This approach itself raises criticism. It is part, as Max Weber would say, of the rationalization of human relations, in this case of educational action, seeking the effectiveness of school results, as opposed to disinterested knowledge. It would displace the primacy and quantity of knowledge, the primary role of the transmission of knowledge at school, especially that which is not of immediate social or economic use, and instrumentalize it to develop competences. (Some have even gone so far as to speak of "cultural illiteracy"). This utilitarian conception of knowledge would in fact be linked to the logic of enterprise, imported into the field of education, in connection with the evolution of the labor market (Del Rey 2010). Some, such as Hirtt (2010), add to these arguments that it cannot claim to be part of constructivism and active pedagogies, that it leads to routine bureaucracy in the practice of evaluation, and that it would even reinforce social inequality.

In this article, I will not discuss the competency-based approach in general; nor will I address the difficult issue of "transversal competencies". The generalist approach of Jean Piaget, based on "stages of development" determined by general competences that are transferable from one domain to another (e.g. hypothetical-deductive reasoning at around 10-12 years of age), finds opposition nowadays in the cognitivist point of view of disciplinary didactics according to which competences acquired in one domain are hardly transferable to another because of their specificity.[5] I will simply try, as a didactician of philosophy, to see if this approach can help student philosopher-apprentices.

3. The competency-approach in philosophy classes

I propose to define the "philosophical competence" of a student (didactic reflection within the framework of the school, and I should also talk about the competence of the philosophy teacher to foster the development of these competences in the students), as a "philosophical know-how", i.e. "thinking by oneself" (*penser par soi-même*, which does not mean being absolutely original, but taking one's thoughts into one's own hands, becoming intellectually autonomous, developing one's reflexivity on the questions posed to the human condition). And this "by mobilizing internal and external resources in an integrated way on a specific type of complex and new task" – and that is our definition of competence. Let us examine the different elements of this definition in philosophy, to see if it proves to be relevant.

In France, the specific tasks that develop and validate a philosophical competence are institutionally the following: writing a *dissertation*, making an orderly study of a proposed text (where knowledge of its author is not absolutely necessary), and explaining orally an extract from a text supposedly known by the student.

These are complex tasks and activities, as they involve the mobilization of diverse and combined resources. These are carried out in a task that is always similar in its entirety (e.g. writing a *dissertation*), but different each time in terms of the subject addressed (the question asked changes). They are in this sense new each time, even if they belong to the "family of situations" or school genre of the philosophical *dissertation*. The situation in which the task is proposed is itself new: it is not the same thing, in time and place, as writing a *dissertation* "at home", "on table" and on the day of the baccalaureate.

The internal resources of a student in philosophy can be diverse. They relate to the knowledge (theoretical and experiential), know-how, and attitudes assimilated by the student at school and in his or her life.

A) Knowledge that is diverse in nature and origin
   – Knowledge of philosophical nature: philosophical doctrines (Platonism, Kantianism, etc.), or elements of doctrine (Cartesian doubt, Hegelian dialectic, ...); philosophical positions (idealism and materialism, empiricism and rationalism, stoicism and epicureanism...); content of a work (Marx's *Manifesto of the Communist Party*), or of an extract (Descartes' piece of wax, Augustine's perplexity about the definition of time,

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[5] See for example Bernard Rey's critique in Diotime 3 2002.

...); classical problems (the theory of knowledge, the question of the existence of God...); contents on certain notions (truth, freedom...); "reference points" (*repères*), in the sense of current curricula of the *terminale* (conceptual distinctions: absolute and relative, abstract and concrete...), etc.

–   The philosophy teacher's courses.

–   General and cultural knowledge, acquired outside school (concerts, museums, reading, team sports, television, internet...), or on the occasion of other school disciplines: history of ideas, literature (Cicero or Lucretius in Latin, the Enlightenment in French, the theatre of Sartre or Camus, Shakespeare in English or Cervantes in Spanish), arts and history of arts, Greece in Greek or history classes, proofs in mathematics, the physics of Newton or Einstein, the theory of liberalism in economy, institutions, republican values, legislation in civic education, etc. In this sense culture is considered to be a basis and a support for reflection.

–   The student's personal experience, the more or less analyzed experience of love, friendship, belief, beauty, body etc.

B) Skills, abilities

In order to write a *dissertation*, it is necessary to master, i.e. to know how to apply in a contextualized situation a certain number of lexical and semantic codes (linguistic capacity in spelling and syntax), and more broadly a communicative capacity (not to write for oneself only, but to aim at an addressee in order to be understood, and more precisely at an assessor with his or her criteria).

It is also necessary to implement procedures specific to the typically French "school genre" of the *dissertation*: make an outline, with an introduction that leads to the subject, an orderly development with two or three parts, a conclusion (see the works of A. Chervel at the NPRI).

In addition to these formal aspects, there are specific disciplinary requirements, developed and prescribed in the method manuals: the introduction must problematize the question (behind the question, where is the problem and what is at stake, the difficulties in solving it, etc.), the parts must, for example, support different points of view, the conclusion must recapitulate and then open to extend the questioning; there are different types of possible plans, depending on the formulation of the subject, listed in ad hoc works, etc. For our part (Tozzi 1992), what seems to us to be philosophically decisive is, rather than formal criteria or procedures, the implementation of certain thought processes that give an appearance, a philosophical aim to the "duty" (*devoir*, the choice of this term would require further development).

Three processes are particularly structuring the thinking that is meant to be philosophical (Tozzi 2005).

First, there is the *problematization*. In particular this contains the ability to question the meaning of something ("Is life worth living?") or the truth of a statement ("Are things the way they appear to us?"). Also this process involves the ability to doubt or to question one's opinions ("I believe in ghosts, but am I right?"), which are often prejudices (statements made before they have even been thought through), and to consider them as hypotheses rather than theses. This also involves the ability to go back from an affirmation to the question it implicitly answers, or

to flush out the presuppositions of a thesis and verify their relevance ("To maintain that "God is good" implies that he exists, is it true?") and to question the representations of a notion ("If I say: 'Freedom consists in doing what we want', what are the consequences?") Finally, the process also should involve the ability to make explicit if and in what way a question ("What is the sex of angels?") or a notion ("Is the unconscious a scientific hypothesis?") poses a philosophical problem.

The *conceptualization* is the second process; in particular it involves the ability to define a notion in comprehension ("The human being is a reasonable animal"), to start from its representation ("Truth is what is") and to elaborate the concept, notably with the help of conceptual distinctions (here truth and reality).

The third important process I shall call *argumentation*, or the ability to support and validate a thesis or an objection by duly founded reasons and rational arguments ("God exists because a finite being cannot have engendered the idea of an infinite being", or "It is because it is imperfect that the human being imagines a perfect being").

These three "basic philosophical capacities" are useful in complex philosophical tasks, such as writing a *dissertation*, because it is their application to a given issue that attests to the actual presence of the student's personal reflection.

C) Attitudes, or ways of being

Philosophical attitudes can be intellectual or practical. For Socrates, the existential philosophical attitude par excellence is courage in the face of death; for a Stoic, the ability to change any disturbing representation of things; for an Epicurean, the concern to enjoy only natural desires; for Spinoza the joyful increase of our power to be; for Kant the ethical action of duty alone; for Marx the collective transformation of the world, etc.

These are practical philosophical postures in life, which require training (P. Hadot spoke of "spiritual exercises"). With regard to "thinking by oneself", on which I have didactically centered my conception of philosophical competences in school, the postures are rather intellectual, quite difficult to distinguish from the processes mentioned above: one could perhaps speak of autonomy of judgement, critical mind, initiative and creativity of reflection, of putting oneself (in the perspective of an ethics of thought) authentically in front of a question (getting intellectually and personally involved in it, not only because it is a graded school task).

Among the external resources that can be mobilized to do a *dissertation* "at home", one can list (without value judgment): people, especially the teacher, at school or in a private lesson, of whom one can ask for advice; one's classmates, family, friends with whom one can informally discuss the subject. Furthermore knowledge, which can be found in the courses and textbooks of other disciplines, or through a documentary research on the internet concerning a concept, an author, a problem.

Finally, tools, such as the teacher's course in which one can immerse oneself, the philosophy textbook on the notion of the program, or a collection of texts; a work on the methodology of the *dissertation*, or on corrected answers; a digest such as "SOS bac", etc. For assignments or exams, one will obviously have to rely mainly on one's internal resources.

D) Resource mobilization

In order to accomplish this complex and ever-changing task of the *dissertation*, it will be necessary to "mobilize these (one's) resources". What is resource mobilization?

For example, it will be necessary to think in a *dissertation* about the need for a social contract: "Is a contract necessary for people to live together?" To "use" the knowledge available in one's memory (contractualism in political philosophy, the theories of Grotius, Hobbes, Rousseau or Rawls for example, with such and such a work or extract), philosophical or other (historical and legal examples of constitutions and laws, economic examples of the employment contract or the commercial contract); summoning known "legal or regulatory" breaches of contract (penal code, more generally transgression of laws and rules with a scale of penalties provided for; possible mediation techniques in the event of conflicts) etc.

It will also be necessary to think of exemplifying the question of the contract from one's knowledge but also from one's experiences, for example the internal rules or "class life" of one's school, the contract signed during a "small job", etc.

Furthermore, it will be necessary to think about implementing thought processes, intellectual know-how of problematization (how is this question important for the human condition, what are the issues at stake, why is this question problematic, how to formulate this problem, why is it difficult to think about it theoretically and to solve it practically); of conceptualization (What is a contract? The "social contract"? What does it mean to live together? Let us distinguish between man in his state of nature and in his state of culture, before and after a contract); of argumentation (a contract is necessary to protect the weakest from the freedom of the strongest; the contract is useless and even harmful because it prevents by its constraints the free development of the economy).

These thought processes do not only exist in philosophy (one uses problematization and conceptualization in the sciences, one argues in French...), but they have a specifically philosophical use: a scientific problem is distinct from a philosophical problem in its field of reference and formulation; science cannot solve certain philosophical problems (for example in ethics or politics), and vice versa; it has its specific means of proof (demonstration, experimentation), whereas philosophy can only express itself in natural language; philosophical rational argumentation, unlike in French, is addressed in its rationalist tradition exclusively to the rational community of minds, i.e. to the universal audience, etc.

Furthermore, the question posed must be taken seriously, because it concerns me personally for such and such a reason (e.g. my employer did not pay me what I was owed in full and did not respect the contract); it is at the heart of current political and economic events (threats to the intergenerational contract of pensions by distribution would lead to an injustice that would harm the least favored); and more generally it involves the human condition. Finally, it should be noted that the situation in which the task lies is complex and new.

But what is the cognitive operation of "resource mobilization"? Making an inventory of the resources available on a subject by scanning its memory is certainly useful (how many candidates at the end of the test say: "Damn, I didn't think at all about the Rousseau text we studied, right in the middle of the subject!"); but to evoke them mentally is not enough for them to be really mobilized; one can summon Rousseau's theory and not put it in perspective of the

subject; reciting the social contract according to Rousseau proves that one has knowledge, but reproducing it by heart without integrating this knowledge into the question asked could just as well serve the candidate (one can even prefer a real reflection without reference to authors to a pile of doctrines where one has lost the meaning of the question by filling pages; the ideal being obviously to master a good use of knowledge that one has understood rather than simply learned). In the same way, as much as the recourse to personal experience is relevant as a support for an analysis or as an example of a thesis, it becomes anecdotal in its contingency if it is enclosed in a narrative that does not give meaning to the subject treated.

It is not easy to define what constitutes an adequate mobilization of resources, i.e., what is best suited to the specific task proposed. What is needed is a cognitive theory of mobilization and more specifically a formalization of the philosophical mobilization of resources. P. Perrenoud gives a lead by evoking the Piagetian notions of schema (simple schema and complex schema), taken up by the neo-Piagetian psychologist G. Vergnaud.

This understanding of mobilization processes could help students in their activity in front of the task, a real activity which remains a black box of which we only see the result, the verbo-conceptual product (more or less success or failure), and not the cognitive process (how did it happen in the student's head?). It is a didactic work, little explored so far, to be carried out, as it could facilitate such mobilization.

All the more so as the necessary resources are multiple and combined. For example, to deal with the subject of the contract, one may need both spelling and grammar knowledge to write properly, knowledge about Hobbes, his experience with contracts, thought processes, a way of putting oneself in front of the question, etc. Mobilization is not only the use of resources but the ability to connect them.

For instance, I have shown in my thesis 1992 and defended ever since that thought processes are closely interdependent and articulate each other. One cannot mobilize oneself without the other: conceptualizing is defining and by the same token trying to answer a question about a notion ("What is love? Love is ..."), arguing is often justifying an answer (a thesis) to a question (Question: "Should the death penalty be reinstated?"; thesis: "No"; argument: "You can't blame someone for taking someone's life and then take away their own"); or rationally justifying a definition: "One can say that man is a 'rational animal' (it is both a definition and a thesis, a definition defends a thesis on a notion), because unlike other animals, man is the only one who has a reason". Questioning, defining and arguing are indeed distinct mental operations but they are closely intertwined.

How to articulate these capacities, knowledge or experiences., on a precise subject and between them, is one of the central questions of the didactics of learning to philosophize. The resources must be both integrated by the apprentice-philosopher and integrated with each other, i.e. contribute to a philosophically acceptable *dissertation*. Let us recall that knowledge is assimilated as knowledge by a subject when it is understood (not only learned) and memorized, but it is only integrated in the perspective of a competence when it allows the adequate realization of a complex task, in a new situation (otherwise it is only content in a box of memory).

So far, we have reasoned within the framework of the French institutional teaching of

philosophy in the last year of high school, with its programs and exams. A competency-based approach would imply in this perspective the following:

– the appropriation by the student of philosophical contents (notably notions, problematics, texts, doctrines, reference points), which is what the philosophy teacher traditionally – and often mainly, sometimes exclusively – tries to do;
– the development of capacities of problematization, conceptualization, argumentation, notably through specific exercises of a complex nature, since these are thought processes required in tasks with a philosophical aim;
– training to articulate these processes, through ad hoc situations, and ultimately *dissertations*, since training in a single process is not necessarily sufficient to know how to articulate it to others;
– the ability to mobilize one's resources: one's knowledge (philosophical or not), thought processes, personal experience, in the perspective of complex tasks on various subjects.

The last three points, which presuppose real intellectual activity, imply that something else should be done in class than just lectures, the study of texts (which often remains purely declarative knowledge for the student), or the correction of *dissertations* (prescriptive advice is rarely effective for the real activity of a student who faces an obstacle).

In short, we are less in a dominant logic of transmission of contents (though necessary). Furthermore, we follow a logic of learning, where a content only takes its full meaning if it can be mobilized in and through an activity; and where it is necessary to implement, in order to accomplish a philosophical task (e.g. a *dissertation*), know-how in terms of thought processes, philosophical and communicational attitudes or postures.

This implies a significant evolution in the teacher's practice of philosophy teaching, which is hardly based so far, despite allusions in the curricula, on a competency-based approach, in its hierarchical prescriptions, its initial and continuing training, more generally its professional culture. It is even one that is fiercely opposed (notably by its anti-pedagogy). It is this necessary pedagogical and didactic *aggiornamento* that has been the guiding thread of my research since 1988.

4. The competency-based approach in a didactic approach to learning to philosophize

A) Framing of the concept

Initially, the aim in my early research (1988-1998) was to propose a theoretical framework and practical approaches in the final year of high school, with a view to a "didactic approach to learning to philosophize". The use of the term "didactics" referred to the gradual development of disciplinary didactics by educational researchers since the 1970s, with the establishment of

the IREM[6] in mathematics: The aim was to transpose the content and methodologies specific to the discipline didactically so that they could be assimilated by schoolchildren, within their reach according to their age and level, while integrating for their learning a certain number of scientific contributions on the intellectual and emotional development of children, learning processes, in particular cognitive, developmental and differential psychologies, research on evaluation, but also neurosciences (in particular neurophysiology of the brain), sociology of curricula, etc.

I then spoke of the "learning" (*apprentissage*) of philosophizing, in order to finalize the didactic intention on the student's learning, the teacher's job being to organize this learning of the "apprentice philosopher". Finally, I referred to "philosophizing" (what the curricula call "philosophical reflection"), to emphasize the type of student activity aimed at: learning to think as much as possible by oneself, distancing oneself from one's preconceived ideas through the critical exercise of informed rational judgment.

As early as 1992, based on a two-year seminar with French philosophy teacher-correctors (1988-1989), I sketched out a definition of didactic philosophizing (and not strictly philosophical, since the philosophical consensus on what philosophy is and what to philosophize is largely unfindable), which seemed to me to be operational for the class of the French *terminale*: "To philosophize is an attempt to articulate – on questions concerning the human condition (our relationship to the world, to others, to ourselves), in an authentic search for meaning and truth – processes of problematization of questions, conceptualization of notions and argumentation of theses and objections." These three thought processes appear to me as basic philosophical abilities that combine on complex tasks to build competences in reading, writing and philosophical discussion.

In the years that followed, I encountered a number of very different ways of teaching philosophy in foreign countries. I then proposed, based on empirical findings, four and then five different, even opposite paradigms of didactization: doctrinal (e.g. Thomism under Franco, or Marxism under Stalin), historical (Italy), praxeological (Belgian secular moral education), problematizing (Lipman), problematico-patrimonial (France). Since 2000, I have also carried out a number of studies on learning to philosophize with children and teenagers[7] and in the city (e.g., *café philo*, *banquets philo*, *ateliers philo*, philosophical consultation or *rando philo*).

I then gradually became aware of the fact that my definition prioritized a paradigm that is intellectual (learning to think more than to live well, or even to die), based on problems (on questioning and conceptualizing, but rather little on philosophical heritage), and rationalistic (where rationality is little enriched by the affects or the faculty of imagination, where the argumentative prevails for example over hermeneutics). But any didactic paradigm is historically and geographically situated, bearing the context of a given educational system, even when it is criticized, and of the theoretical referents called upon.

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[6] Note of the editors: "IREM" is referring to the Institutes for research on the teaching of mathematics (*Instituts de recherche sur l'enseignement des mathématiques*). We will continue to explain the abbreviations used by Tozzi in the footnotes.

[7] See www.philotozzi.com or articles in the journal *Diotime*.

My broadened experience[8] has thus led me to relativize and enrich my didactic vision, by taking more account of certain aspects (Tozzi 2008). For example, learning to think has its full philosophical meaning only if it also involves the learning of how to live better – individually and collectively, Also, problematization and conceptualization deepen as they are enriched by the thinking of philosophers; and the voices for philosophizing and learning to philosophize, as well as teaching philosophy, are multiple. Finally, it seems necessary that children should be able to connect their reflective thinking with their sensitivity and imagination.

So how do I conceive today of a competency-based approach to learning to philosophize?

The competency-based approach must be distinguished from the simple transmission of philosophical knowledge (doctrinal or historical paradigm), because philosophical knowledge only makes sense for a subject who wants to philosophize for himself in a personal philosophical activity (problematizing paradigm). Knowing Kant's thought does have a patrimonial objective (to identify historically a great moment in Western thought, or to know how such and such a philosopher asks a philosophical question and answers it), but for a person who wants to philosophize, this encounter is always with and against this thought. Now I would say: We work on Kant's thought so that it works on us, it provokes us, and it affects us intellectually. And if we call ourselves "Kantian", for example, it is because we have had a personal positioning in relation to one or more questions that we have personally been confronted to, with the vision that Kant proposed to us and which seduced us, and also in relation to those of other philosophers who had other perspectives, which was less appealing to us less. Otherwise, more than a philosopher, even a modest one, one becomes a philosophical historian, or a commentator on an author: This is respectable and useful in the philosophical field, but it needs to be put into the perspective of learning to philosophize; which in the end is effort to think for oneself.

Therefore, the competency-based approach must be distinguished from general pedagogy by learning objectives. The latter is based on the behaviorist presuppositions of an observable behavior, which is not very operational for high-level thought processes (which are better taken into account by a cognitivist approach); it overly fractures the capacities to be developed, losing the overall sense of activity for the learner; it neglects the situational aspect and the complexity of the tasks to be carried out; it develops a restrictive conception and a too frequent practice of evaluation (obsession with evaluation), both sequential and summative.

The competency-based approach (this is a common point with the pedagogy by learning objectives) has the advantage of placing itself in the perspective of the student's learning. It also clarifies in the eyes of the teacher and the student what the student will have to acquire and mobilize in situations where he or she is led to philosophize. The approach and these activities are not opposed to the acquisition of knowledge, as it is sometimes criticized, and appears to us to be highly integrative because of the multiplicity of resources to be mobilized and combined.

However, we must be vigilant about three possible excesses, which can be mutually reinforcing. The first is that this approach is too often confined to what it prescribes (as is the case with reference frameworks in prescriptive curriculum didactics), instead of being rooted

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[8] I am very much imbued on the one hand by the Western rationalistic tradition, and on the other hand by the educational sciences, in which I taught at university for twelve years, and more broadly the human sciences.

in the reality of the student's activity (which is taken into account in descriptive didactics, as close as possible to the work of the apprentice philosopher). On the one hand, a task (in this case a school task) is, according to the ergonomics of work, prescribed (by a program, an instruction from the teacher, or even self-prescribed by the student: what I believe I "must do" to accomplish the task). On the other hand, the student's (and the teacher's) activity in class is real; what Dominique Bucheton's research team at LIRDEF[9] in Montpellier calls "study gestures" (2009). Research shows that there is always a gap between the prescribed and the real, because the task resists the student's activity with difficulties that he or she tries more or less successfully to overcome. Competence is developed in and through an activity, not through a formally defined task. It is on this real activity that one must work in didactics.

Second, the competency-based approach may simply be a pedagogy by learning objectives in a new outfit. In this case, it hides under the word "competence" the notion of learning objective and the pedagogy by learning objectives.

Finally, the approach may be based on a concern with evaluation, which is overly prescriptive (due for many to the academic requirements of grading) and insufficiently formative. The first priority perspective of a learning process must be this: learning time must be much longer than assessment time, and assessment must be primarily formative, and not summative.

This approach is to be built in philosophy. On the one hand, because the magisterial norms in force in the dominant practice are not very permeable to active methods and a socio-constructivist approach to learning. On the other hand, because of the real difficulties to understanding in theory and to implementing in practice this type of approach, in rupture with the professional habits, in particular because it modifies the role of the teacher, being essentially one accompanying and not exclusively of transmitting.

It is the task of a didactics of learning to philosophize to clarify theoretically this approach in philosophy, to analyze the practices of accompaniment of the students who go in this direction in order to capitalize the relevant attempts, and to propose tracks of practices: methods, exercises, situations, tools etc.

B) Some perspectives

1. Being clear about the thinking processes to be developed[10]

Types of processes

I have put forward as fundamental (i.e. necessary to meet the requirements of a standard test in philosophy, the *dissertation*, considered in the program of 2000 by Renaut as "unavoidable heritage of philosophical teaching"), three philosophical processes (to problematize, to conceptualize, and to use arguments). I insisted on their specificity in philosophy, since they also exist in other disciplines (sciences, French...). They were induced empirically in a historic period (in the 1990s) from the evaluation criteria of about twenty French evaluators of the *dissertation* at the baccalaureate exam. These processes, sometimes specified (e.g., for

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[9] Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire de Recherche en Didactique, Éducation et Formation
[10] See Tozzi 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2007.

argumentation: "to lead a reasoning, to appreciate the value of an argument"), are found in the current philosophy program in the final year of high school.

Further "competencies" are stated in the programs: to "analyze, ... analyze an example". These competencies should be further specified. What is a "philosophical analysis"? Is it a method? A general method, or a specific method of such and such a philosopher (one thinks for example of Cartesian analysis?) The student must be able to get a precise idea of it since this is what she or he has to implement. What is "analyzing an example"? Is it the application of this method of analysis to an example? How should this be done? The skill is named here, but it is hardly described. Some also speak of "deepening" (approfondir). However, this is a vague word. What does it mean in philosophy? A work of cognitive description must be done – this is a philosophical requirement – in order to "know what we are talking about" and "to proof if what we say about it is true".

It is a problem of knowing whether thought processes are competences, or only capacities, as I suggested to define them in our model for learning to philosophize in 1992. Especially since, in the competency approach, a competency can be mobilized as a resource to develop another competency (e.g., conceptualization for *dissertation*). The transition from a skill to a competence certainly depends on the complexity of the thought process on the one hand, and on the need to mobilize resources for a new task on the other. One can say for example that in a *dissertation* in undergraduate studies (*licence*) in philosophy on the question "Are we responsible for our unconscious?" the understanding and treatment of the subject implies a conceptualization by the candidate as a true competence, if it is based on Lacan's distinction of the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. One can say this, because it is first necessary to master the understanding of what Lacan elaborated (to have a true knowledge of it, and not the memorization of a summary). Second, it is necessary to mobilize this knowledge, and not to be satisfied with simply putting what one believes to know about Lacan in the perspective of a subject who problematizes human responsibility vis-à-vis the unconscious (questioning how one can be responsible for what one does not know, if responsibility implies the consciousness of one's acts).

Levels or degrees of demand on thought processes

I propose to refine, within the framework of a progressive approach to learning of how to philosophize, the degrees of requirement for a given process. Following the competency-based approach we understand by degree of requirement a deepening of the mastery of a thought process. This deepening is more of a spiral conception of learning than a step-by-step conception in successive stages, of which the previous one is a prerequisite for the next one: it is a question of reworking these processes over time, going further, higher or deeper according to the direction of the spiral in its realization.

Problematizing

For example, we can't philosophize, as Plato or Aristotle say, without being surprised, i.e. asking ourselves questions. There is an example from a schoolboy from CM1[11]: "Does friendship last forever?" It was a real question for this child, to which he had no answer, because it exceeded his personal experience and his knowledge of human feelings, and involved a future

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[11] Note of the editors: In the French primary school system there are four grade levels: CE1, CE2, CM1 and CM2.

that was, after all, unpredictable. Real, assumed, and expressed astonishment, where one is genuinely confronted with a problematic question, is for a child a first level of questioning, which attests to the awakening of a reflective thought.

But it will not generally be considered by high school philosophy teachers as a process of problematization, which represents a second level. A question, they will say, is not a problem. A problem is elaborated when we understand the "urgency", the philosophical stakes of the question, for example ethical or epistemological, and especially when we become aware of the difficulty to ask and solve it, often because of revealed contradictions (e.g., "Who am I?" – my identity seems problematic because my psychic and moral consciousness doubles me, my unconscious is repressed and I change in time, etc. Or, another example, "What is our relationship to others?": the relationship to others is problematic because the other is at the same time similar to and different from me, the other is close and distant, brother and stranger).

Finally, the third level of questioning is the problematization of a question with the help of philosophical knowledge (the enlightenment of the question posed will for example be deepened with the Sartrean conception of the other as hell, of pity with Rousseau or of sympathy with Max Scheler).

Conceptualizing

In the same way, a child who defines a word referring to a individual object (like: a table is a board with legs) engages in a process of conceptualization in the sense that language implies generalization (e.g., this definition is suitable for all wooden tables). The definition of an abstract word (like: what is identity?) is more difficult for the student, because the individual escapes its definition, unless one evokes situations from a student's experience (this is what one puts on both sides of the =). It seems easier for them to define a concept via extension, i.e. by pointing out an illustrative example ("A friend? Laurent is my friend.") than to define it by its general attributes ("A friend is someone to whom one confides one's secrets because one trusts him or her.").

There are degrees in the conceptualization process, whose demands on the teacher may vary with age of the students: The student's attempt of conceptualization should cover the entire scope of the concept, not just a part of it (define the table, i.e. all past, present, future, imaginary tables, not just those made of wood). He or she should not just define negatively, since knowing what it is not does not say what it is. We should tell the student to be vigilant about falsely generalizing inductions ("All swans are black."), but also that naming a single attribute ("A friend is someone you have fun with.") is not enough ("We have fun with a buddy too."). Instead, it is necessary to find specific, discriminating characteristics, obtained by conceptual distinctions (the difference between a friend and a buddy is this: a friend is a chosen person whom you like for a long time and to whom you can tell everything). We go up a step further when we use the conceptual distinctions of certain authors to approach a problem. For example, if we are dealing with the question "What can I know?", we start to support our reflection by using the distinctions between meaning, imagination and understanding in Descartes, or understanding, pure reason and practical reason in Kant.

Argumentation

For an elementary schoolchild it is easier to argue by using an example (On duties towards

pets: "I've never seen someone eat a dog, it's forbidden"), than to look for a counter-example ("We eat dogs in China, we hunt them in Mexico"), and it will be an extra difficulty to construct a more abstract argument ("We don't eat them because we love them"). In secondary school it is possible to ask the students to do more or less complex syllogistic reasoning, to hunt for sophisms or to make use of formal propositional logic. We'd thus need to refine levels of requirements for the different expected thought processes.

2. Clearly define the types of complex tasks proposed that develop specific skills
The institutional tasks proposed to students in the final year of secondary school are written *dissertations* and explanations of texts from philosophical works. Three types of tasks seem to us to be absent or minorized, even though they are philosophically formative.

First, discussion with a philosophical aim (*discussion à visée philosophique*), which is rather rare in philosophy classes (Tozzi 1999), even when there are moments of "dialogical lecture" (*cours dialogué*) which is its weak version. This is due to the low opinion of the role of the student's oral language in learning to philosophize (that of the teacher, on the other hand, is overestimated by the importance of the lecture), and to the predominance of the student's or philosophers' written work, especially in university teaching and recruitment competitions. The professorial *doxa* grants to the oral "the unbearable lightness of opinion", hence its condemnation in principle of the *café philo* in the city: the discussion would be by nature doxological, a conversation without rigor, the reign of the doxa. There is, however, a whole philosophical tradition of oral interaction in Antiquity (e.g. Socratic dialogue) and in the Middle Ages (e.g. disputatio).

It is true that the implementation of a discussion in class is pedagogically difficult. It implies mastering the management of the dynamics of a large group involved in exchanging thoughts, an organization based on rules concerning the way in which the turns of speech are conducted, the risk by giving the floor to students of not being able to control the turn of the debate and its progress as one would like to have it, vigilance with regard to intellectual requirements to be remembered and to be able to maintain etc. But it is perfectly possible and very formative for experienced students. However, those who try it often become discouraged because of the lack of adequate training.

It is the experiments with philosophical teaching in the vocational baccalaureate that have shown the interest of students in this "new school genre" (the expression is from G. Auguet in his thesis from 2003). And above all the last decade of practices with a philosophical aim in France in primary and secondary schools, where in fact this type of practice predominates, more accessible to children with school difficulties in writing. University research – notably theses – carried out on these practices based on the analysis of corpus of verbatims has shown to what extent it can be formative as soon as the animation is intellectually demanding. They develop on the one hand communicative competences – cognitive, social and ethical –, learning to listen and understand, to intervene wisely in a group on a specific problem, to formulate publicly a relevant and coherent thought. But they also develop philosophical competences on the other hand, the ability to question or how to define notions in extension and comprehension, to distinguish concepts, to find an example, to produce a counter-example, to validate rationally

one's point or to make an objection with good reasons.

The second blind spot is the focus in writing on the *dissertation*, whereas there is a possible diversification of philosophical writing. The *dissertation* is a "school genre" invented in the French educational system at the end of the 19th century (cf. the work of A. Chervel at the INRP[12]) and used in philosophy and in other disciplines (french, history, economics). It is a genre not much appreciated by the philosophers themselves, except when, like Kant and Rousseau, they take competitions, as opposed to dialogue, interview, letter, aphorism, meditation, essay, diary etc., all this variety of writings that Frédéric Cossutta analyzed as "philosophical genres". These "philosophical genres" are as many forms of writing chosen by philosophers to express their thoughts, philosophically invested, and which can be as formative as the "school genre *dissertation*". They are complex activities, developing specific skills, for example, writing a philosophical dialogue on a given question or problem (Tozzi 2000).

Third point: the official and exclusive focus on texts by philosophers (Tozzi et al. 1994, Tozzi/Molière 1998), exclusively Western, dead, and male with one exception – Hannah Arendt. As if there were, in a logic of self-referentiality, only philosophical supports that could make one think. While there are also myths – Greek or otherwise (Tozzi 2006) – or literature, more generally art (Tozzi et al. 2008; Chirouter 2008), which can trigger philosophical reflection, because they speak to us with sensitivity and imagination of the anthropological depth of our human condition. Here too, it is the practice of philosophy with children that has highlighted the interest of myth and of a consistent and resistant children's literature as a metaphorical support for a problematizing and conceptual revival of narrativity with students. Not that there aren't many such attempts in the *terminale*, but there is no mention of it in the program.

Discussion with a philosophical aim, diversified forms of philosophical writing, diversified mythical, literary or artistic supports to activate thought – there are three types of tasks that are not valued or undervalued in official French philosophical teaching (UNESCO 2007), which have shown their formative value by widening the philosophical public to children, adolescents, students in vocational education and in the city. And which could also enrich philosophy in the *terminale*. There could be complex tasks for students that could both develop the reflexive thought processes we have been talking about, but also bring up new processes (e.g. the use of metaphor in aphorism) and new specific skills (e.g. writing a philosophical letter).

3. Clarify resource mobilization processes to involve students in them

The process of mobilization of resources is certainly a blind spot in the student's philosophical work for teachers, teacher trainers, and researchers, which must give rise to studies and experimentations. But this is where the "operational character of knowledge" is tested in the student's activity (Ane Jorro).

Certain obstacles can obviously be identified empirically: mobilizing knowledge on a task is not simply a matter of restoring memorized knowledge, but of putting it into perspective on the subject. But what is it exactly that needs to be "put into perspective" – is it a doctrine, a studied text, a problem? It is necessary to make this more precise. It would certainly be easier

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[12] Institut national de recherche pédagogique

for a student to mobilize his knowledge if, as ACIREPH[13] claims, the philosophy programs were more determined, that is to say more refocused on certain problems, which would guide the questions of the subjects under examination.

Similarly, mobilizing one's personal experience is not the same as telling a fragment of one's life. It is to summon up a life experience as a support for an analysis enlightening the subject or to exemplify it. But what is a philosophical analysis of an experience? We know that it possesses the evidence of a reality that imposes itself and resists, and which seems to have a strong influence: it is true because I live it. But it is confusing reality and truth: an experience can be listened to, it can hardly be discussed; it can be deceptive (think of the illusions of the senses, or the ephemeral love at first sight). All individual experience is contingent, experiences are relative, diverse or sometimes contradictory. What can we conclude from an individual experience? And yet the analysis of reality, of which personal experience is one of the registers, whether in its sensory, affective, imaginary, or cognitive dimensions, teaches us about the human condition: under what condition can a student's appeal to personal experience be philosophically exploited? There are both philosophical and didactic debates here.

On external resources, a student may very well "copy and paste" from sources on the internet, or have the *dissertation* done by someone at home in a private class or with his family. He or she may get a satisfactory grade but will not have made progress in learning to philosophize or in intellectual autonomy, which may be problematic during the exam. On the other hand, another student might have understood that talking with peers or an adult to understand their approach, take their theses or objections seriously and take a personal position on their points of view by rationally justifying one's own, is an excellent training for thinking.

From a theoretical point of view, we hardly have a "model" of this mobilization at all. Montaigne spoke, as opposed to memorization, of appropriation which "encumbers my judgment", of "digestion", but this is only a metaphor. We must begin by asking the right questions: how does a student – which is quite naturally what a "good student" in philosophy does – mobilize his internal and external resources in philosophy? What would enlighten us would be explanatory interviews with this type of student, which would help him to verbalize as closely as possible his intellectual functioning when confronted with a given task that he succeeds in, so as to empirically identify a model that could be formalized. While being aware, moreover, that intellectual functioning can be very different from one individual to another, which raises the question of "mobilization profiles".

The questions could focus on different points:

- "How do you go about it?"
- "What is going on in your head when you are confronted with the subject?"
- "How do you mobilize your philosophical knowledge to construct and write your *dissertation*?"
- "How do you mobilize your personal experience for such a task?"
- "How do you use the teacher's course, a textbook, the internet, contacts with peers

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[13] Association pour la Création d'Instituts de Recherche sur l'Enseignement de la Philosophie

or adults etc. to help you in your task?"

An example: The interest of Pierre Vermersch's method is to put the students in contact with the reality of their activity, by focusing the interview on what they are doing, independently of their intentions or the advice received, which gives us precious information on their actual work, in the ergonomic sense of the term (real, not prescribed). To our knowledge, there is hardly any research on the subject (except at the CNAM[14], in Yves Clot's team).

Some practitioners – few in number – are groping around in their classrooms to facilitate this mobilization, especially if they have a practice of accompanying the work of students in a formative evaluation process.[15]

Indeed, it is not easy refrain from giving prescriptive advice ("conceptualize more!" says the teacher; "yes, but still..." wonders the student, helpless when he faces this order). The latter often draws inspiration from methodological works or takes up the approach that has been most successful for the teacher in the tasks requested, the same as that of the student. The teachers themselves would still need to know clearly how they go about mobilizing their resources, which often remains largely implicit.

4. Training teachers in the competency-based approach

In the *terminale*, giving a lesson or explaining a philosophical text to students does not prepare students for competences because a logic of transmission predominates. The student may acquire knowledge, which is important for a philosophical culture, but he or she does not learn to mobilize it on a written or oral philosophical task. Neither can an answer key of a *dissertation* (*corrigé de dissertation*) solve the problem because the student is then confronted with the limits of imitation: The personal experience of a philosophy teacher is in line with research on learning, which attests that receiving advice or seeing a model is not enough to ensure its active appropriation; saying how to do things is not enough to do them well, because what is proposed (the answer key), which is a finished product, does not say much about the processes involved in achieving it, and above all about the means of overcoming the difficulties encountered, which are the two conditions for success for the student. The illusion may come (and once came in a system where philosophy students were strongly socially and academically selected) from the ease of some culturally privileged students to transpose the model into a scheme of thought and action that is quite easily appropriated, which is no longer the case for most students, who then find themselves in philosophical failure with mass philosophical teaching.

Therefore, it is necessary in teacher training to clarify this approach: what is a competence, a competency-based approach, a competency-based approach in philosophy? What are the competences in philosophy sought for students (Tozzi 2007)? What are the levels of competences targeted in a progressive way? How to acquire them? How to mobilize internal (knowledge, experience, etc.) and external resources to develop them? What difficulties do students encounter in acquiring knowledge, mobilizing their resources, developing

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[14] Conservatoire nationale des arts et métiers
[15] See certain approaches of the philosophy sector of the GFEN; see their journal *Pratiques de la philosophie*, or the current thesis of Jacques Le Montagner in Montpellier 3.

philosophical competences? How can we support them to overcome these obstacles? What are the teacher's competences to teach them to philosophize? (Tozzi 2007).

This implies redefining the desirable competencies of a philosophy teacher in the framework of a competency-based approach to the discipline: not only knowing how to write a *dissertation*, build a lesson or explain a text, as it is required of candidates in competitive examinations. But knowing how to help students develop philosophical competences. This also presupposes a training of trainers of philosophy teachers consistent with this perspective.

It's a huge project, which is part of a logic of rupture rather than continuity. It comes up against the regression of overall training time, which is now very short. The teachers have all the more the tendency to reproduce the teaching model received at university, which they have unconsciously imbued themselves with, and which will then steer their practice in the classroom: very masterful, focused essentially on philosophical content, without professional preoccupation. This would require a strong professional dimension in both initial and continuing education, including in competitive examinations, and then to prepare for entry into the profession (a profession can be learned, and not only on the job). However, trainers are chosen from among those who are models of the prevailing paradigm, and hardly from among the innovators.

The competency-based approach indeed requires an evolution of the professional identity of the philosophy teacher, which arouses a lot of resistance in relation to corporate habitus. It is necessary to decentralize part of one's course, to be concerned with what is going on in the students' heads, with their real work in the proposed activities, without having the impression of "stooping down", without sticking to simple prescriptions, in short, to have a real pedagogical concern, to enter into a didactic logic of learning, of accompanying processes, of paying attention to the difficulties of the path, of constructing devices and exercises that favor acquisition. Moreover, it is often the teaching problems encountered in the field that lead beginning teachers, and more and more experienced ones, to question the relevance of certain methods, and to adapt to a new, complex, difficult situation.

It is a different situation that we are confronted with in the primary level, where attention to the pupils as children and learners is more prevalent, and where a pedagogical culture is more widely shared. However, training in philosophical discussion proves necessary, for here it presupposes an evolution of the teacher's relationship to knowledge, too: the teacher intervenes only rarely or not at all by making substantive contributions to a discussion; of his or her relationship to the word: in a discussion, it is the schoolchildren's word that is sought and favored; and of his or her relationship to power in the classroom: in systems inspired by institutional pedagogy, functions are delegated to the children (chairperson, reformer, etc.).

It is also and above all, contrary to *terminale* where philosophy professionals teach, the absence of a philosophical culture that is at issue here. Hence the need to clarify for school teachers the basic philosophical capacities and their level of complexity, because it is their consideration by the schoolchildren in the debate that will essentially engage the type of intervention of the teacher, his philosophical vigilance towards intellectual demands. For example, "Why are you saying this?" encourages the child to argue and "What difference is there between friend and buddy?" leads to the activity of conceptualization. It can also be useful

that on the themes addressed, teachers know some useful notions (e.g. on happiness, the difference between pleasure and joy), some reference points (or: when we say "can we" are we talking about the possible or about the desirable?) and some philosophical conceptions (e.g. friendship according to Aristotle).

Conclusion

The competency-based approach in philosophy is now a construction site of philosophy didactics. And it really is under construction. For some more time, certainly, because of the resistance of the milieu to this approach on the one hand, and the theoretical and practical difficulties it faces on the other.

A few years ago, the notions of learning and competence were banned from philosophy curricula (we still do not find the notion of progressivity). They 'smelled' too distinctly of the business world and of the language of the educational sciences. In a context where the competency-based approach now permeates all education systems, the curriculum has nevertheless evolved in this direction. The words are there, the competences are named. But they are only little described and analyzed, and this approach is partly contradictory to the primacy of content, the maintenance of canonical exercises. It is out of line with the training provided, which is not sufficiently professionalized, and the majority of the profession's habits, which are still centered on the master's discourse and his "lesson".

The milieu resists, and the students encourage it to adapt to new model because the old model is little in touch – except for the heirs – with a mass philosophical teaching, which presupposes another attitude towards the philosophical failure of students, which is partly that of its teaching. The competency-based approach is not without criticism.

The concept is not yet sufficiently stabilized at the scientific level (cognitive psychology for example); the way in which students can mobilize internal and external resources is insufficiently explained, which affects the types of support available to help them overcome the obstacles encountered; the approach is still too prescriptive, not close enough to the "study gestures of students"; any drift towards a rebranding of a pedagogy based on reductive learning objectives or towards "evaluationnite" (the obsession with evaluation) is not ruled out.

However, this approach is promising. It should mitigate the rejection of "pedagogy" since it does not set knowledge and competences against each other, since in tasks the latter mobilize the former. It specifies, for both teachers and students, what is expected of the apprentice philosophers to do in the proposed philosophical learning situations. Which is a clarification that is indispensable to give everyone a point of reference in this approach. It is situated in a perspective of learning, of progressiveness, taking into account the work of the students. It develops in teachers an attitude of accompaniment attentive to their difficulties. It seems democratic to me, by its concern to fight against philosophical failure and to make philosophizing accessible to all.

I see it as part of UNESCO's perspective to extend philosophy, in a perspective of dialogue and peace between peoples, to all publics: by starting philosophical awakening as early as possible, from primary education onwards, and by extending it into the city (*café philo*, adult education centers, etc.).

This is why I propose this approach by competences, by diversifying these competences in wider situations and tasks: a diffusion among children and in the city of "discussions with a philosophical aim" and of "philosophical workshops" of philosophical discussion, writing and reading; a diversification of forms of writing, reflecting the diversity of "philosophical genres" in the history of philosophy (aphorism, dialogue, essay, letter, interview, newspaper etc.); a multiplicity of media for reflection: philosophical texts, but also myths, children's books, literature, artistic productions, and audiovisual media.

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Country Report:
French-speaking Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)

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Until recently, Belgium was one of the European countries not to offer any philosophy courses in compulsory education and only in exceptional cases as an optional subject. Admittedly, philosophy graduates had managed to integrate some notions of philosophy into the non-denominational course on morals (*Morale*) as early as 2002, and had then obtained being the only ones entitled to teach this course, but one had to deal with a school program that was ideologically marked by the humanism and atheism of the Belgian secular current and that was not very consistent in its epistemic content. Moreover, being optional, this course was only intended for a part of the students and therefore did not concern all those who chose to follow a course of one of the six recognized religions (Islamic; Judaic; Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or Anglican Christian).

Today, the situation is quite different: a new course entitled "Philosophy and Citizenship" (*Philosophie et citoyenneté*) has appeared in the compulsory curriculum for students, starting in 2016 for primary school (6-12 years old) and in 2017 for secondary school (12-18 years old), so that today, all Belgian students in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, as long as they are enrolled in public education,[1] are educated in philosophy from a very young age.

The origins of this decision partly explain the lines of tension that run through the reference framework (*Réferentiel*) and school programs[2] and make this course a real challenge for any teacher (and student) who is confronted with it. Indeed, the course was born of three joint pressures: on the one hand, the body of philosophers had been fighting for more than twenty years for philosophy to become a school discipline in Belgium. On the other hand, the November 2015 Paris attacks and the 2016 Brussels bombings and the sometimes somewhat rapid analyses that have been made of them have led politicians to consider that it was urgent to reinforce education for citizenship within schools, beyond the religious or philosophical convictions of the students (it is true that, until then, questions of society were mainly dealt with in religion and morals classes, which precisely separated students into communities). Finally, since religion and morals courses were exempt from the obligation of axiological neutrality imposed on all other courses in the official system, some parents decided to refuse to allow their children

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[1] French-speaking Belgium, despite its smallness, has four education networks financed and organized differently: Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (official), official subsidized, non-denominational free subsidized, and denominational free subsidized, see *L'organisation générale de l'enseignement*,
URL: http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=25568&navi=2667.
I am sticking to formal education and its three networks, all of which share the same reference framework and the same program. I put aside the free confessional network, which has chosen not to create a specific course to implement the skills of the reference framework (common to the four networks) and has committed to provide them transversally in the other school subjects.

[2] There are two reference frameworks, one covering the skills to be acquired between the ages of 6 to 14 years, known as *socle competencies*, and the other covering the ages 14-18 years, known as *terminales competencies*. However, there are three programs: one for primary school, one for the first level of secondary school, and one for the last two levels of secondary school.

to be forced to follow "committed" courses that did not correspond to their own convictions, and they therefore demanded that the Government provides an alternative. Thus, the project of a course of Philosophy and Citizenship was born, which would bring together all the students, at a rate of 1 hour per week if they chose to continue to follow 1 hour of religion or morals, and at a rate of 2 hours per week otherwise.

The project remained to be implemented. The commissions in charge of producing the skills repositories – one for the *socle* (6-14 years old), the other for the *terminales* (14-18 years old) – were composed according to legal standards of network representativeness. They mixed trained philosophers, committed to defend the disciplinary component of the course, and teachers and inspectors from other disciplines who insisted more on the "citizenship" component, interpreting it in various ways. Indeed, there are at least three meanings: civic instruction (a body of knowledge about the State and its institutions), education for democracy through practices (advice, delegation, voting, etc.), the sharing of a "foundation of common values" and respect for standards considered essential to "living together" (a trend close to civic education in France), as desired by the Minister of Education at the time.

The very term "philosophy" was subject of debate: for trained philosophers, it necessarily referred to its academic practice transposed into a school discipline while for most other teachers it was seen as similar to the argumentative discussion inspired by philosophy for children, when it was not understood in the sense of "philosophy" as personal opinion, way of approaching existence or spirituality, etc. The term "philosophy for children" was also used to refer to the way in which philosophy was understood by the teachers ("it's my philosophy").

It was therefore necessary to agree not only on the words but also on their articulation. While the introduction of the reference framework of competencies in the *terminales*[3] tried to settle the question, there are many remaining marks within the prescripts and in the minds of the teachers of these original dissensions, which are still disturbing the identity of the course. Nevertheless, it was indeed decided to name the course "Philosophy and Citizenship", thus highlighting philosophy as central, not for its own sake, but as an approach that enlightens citizenship. One of them is therefore a discipline – inspired by the history of philosophy in its methods and resources –, the other is an object of research, since it is a question of "training in a philosophical approach to the issues and practices of citizenship."[4]

In doing so, citizenship becomes also an educational objective. It is indeed a question of "training in citizenship that is sensitive and open to the issues that work on, question and constantly transform it: political, ethical and bioethical, socio-economic, societal, environmental, cultural, anthropological, etc. issues."[5] In line with the theory of the indeterminacy of democracy supported by Claude Lefort, citizenship is being conceived as being called upon to constantly reconfigure itself in confrontation with the issues it faces, such as migratory conflicts, global warming and environmental crises, new information and communication technologies, social revolutionary movements, political disaffection, etc. Consequently, no prior definition

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[3] Référentiels de compétences – Les compétences terminales.
URL: http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=25189&navi=296
[4] *Programme du Cours de Philosophie et Citoyenneté, 2ème et 3ème degrés de l'enseignement secondaire*, p. 22.
www.wallonie-bruxelles-enseignement.be/progr/CPC%20-%20Programme%202e%20et%203e%20degrés.pdf
[5] See note 4.

of citizenship can satisfy the philosopher (and the apprentice-philosopher), who always sees citizenship as a *problem*, which excludes from the outset a normative understanding of education to citizenship in the sense of civics or even pure civic instruction.

It should be noted that this articulation between philosophy and citizenship, while clearly stated and implemented in the reference framework of competencies in the *terminales*, is less evident in the *Socle*, where the gap between the two components has remained more pronounced, with two more "philosophical" axes (1. Building autonomous and critical thinking, 2. Knowing oneself and opening up to the other) and two more "citizen" axes (3. Building citizenship with equal rights and dignity, 4. Engaging in social and democratic life). Other notorious differences remain between the two reference-frameworks, raising the question of continuity. For example, the very practice of philosophy is different, since in the *Socle* philosophy is confined to the practice of philosophizing and thinking by oneself (in the line of the philosophy for children of M. Lipman or M. Tozzi), and then opens to the reading of texts of philosophers at the end of secondary school (where the competence "to read and understand a philosophical text" becomes omnipresent).

This difference in the practice of philosophy can be explained by the supposed immaturity of the students, but also by the training of the teachers: primary and early secondary school teachers have virtually no training in philosophy (just a very general philosophy course, a little epistemology, a course in neutrality). Whereas upper secondary school teachers are trained in philosophy beforehand, either because it is their basic training (a master's degree in philosophy with a didactic orientation), or because they must follow a complementary training in philosophy (when they have a master's degree in ethics, law, political science, anthropology, or social sciences). They are therefore *a priori* much better equipped to tackle the philosophical tradition. "A priori" because, in reality, the current situation, in the midst of transition, is a little different: the course is now given overwhelmingly by former teachers of morals or religion who are not always trained philosophers and who have received only limited training in philosophy and its didactics (a 30-credit certificate). Many of them therefore find themselves faced with an extremely demanding task: to teach a subject and an approach with which they are themselves becoming familiar, only in a hurry.

This task is made all the more difficult by the fact that the Belgian program for the competencies in the *terminales* (and I am now sticking to this level of teaching), Learning Acquisition Units (*Unités d'Acquis d'Apprentissage*, UAA), are entirely based on themes (Ethics and Technics, Discourse and the Pitfalls of Discourse, Truth and Power, The State: Why, How Far?, etc.). These are not developed anywhere; one can just cling to a list of knowledge (reduced to their simplest expression: concepts, sometimes currents of thought, without any further details), know-how, and attitudes, which one must then sort and arrange oneself to bring out a philosophical problem, find authors, a didactic framework, etc. Contrary to some countries, where a set of authors and doctrines is imposed, the teacher here is entirely free to compose his course, as long as it deals with the themes and concepts of the reference framework. But these themes and concepts are very numerous (far too numerous, in fact, for a one-hour course) and come from very different philosophical fields (showing here the diversity of the particular areas of expertise of the designers), or even from other disciplines, which

makes their appropriation very complex, and their didactic transposition necessarily perilous.

As for the approach proposed by the programs, it is not easy to identify it without solid training in philosophy. It is based more explicitly on methods of philosophy for children in primary school but then asks to "proceed by problematization and conceptualization."[6] The whole challenge of the course is to be able to get rid of one's primary opinions (and not to express them spontaneously, as it is still sometimes believed) by questioning the type of coherence they mobilize, by pointing out the presuppositions they contain and the consequences they imply. Following this, the course of Philosophy and Citizenship "questions and analyzes the categories and conceptual oppositions that structure our ways of thinking. One should reflect upon and think about them rather than being thought about by them."[7] The philosophical concept itself always comes from this type of work on pre-established categories, in short from a critical work of problematization. The program thus maintains, in the footsteps of Gilles Deleuze, that the history of philosophy can only be understood if one can relate the concepts studied to the problems to which they respond, in a specific context that makes them necessary in some way.

The goal of this critical work is to arrive at autonomous thought, the exercise of which allows one "first, to understand the plurality of logics, ethics and politics that humanity is the bearer of; second, to acquire the means to judge and decide autonomously."[8] There is therefore a practical scope to the course, which is in line with its objective of forming citizens, not as an external end, but as an internal end to the very exercise of philosophizing, so much so that philosophy and citizenship are intimately intertwined.

To conclude this brief presentation of the Belgian Philosophy and Citizenship course, let us note some specificities that make it original and interesting. Belgian-style philosophy, taught from the first primary school level, all types of schools combined (general, technical, professional), is intended to be "philosophy for all", and it contrasts with the more classical French conception of philosophy as the "crowning glory" of secondary school, requiring the prior acquisition of knowledge before being able to practice. Having integrated the contributions of the "new philosophical practices" (*Nouvelles pratiques philosophiques*), the philosophy course is conceived as a fair balance between the work of competences (thinking skills) and the transmission of a tradition, with its own corpus of knowledge; the emphasis placed on epistemology, logic, politics, ethics, automatically relegates other fields of philosophy (aesthetics, metaphysics, phenomenology, etc.) to a second place. Furthermore, the privileged place is given to current issues and to contemporary philosophers contrasts with the idea of philosophy turned towards the past, dusty, and out of step with our times; finally, integrating other disciplines such as sociology, law, anthropology, etc. into the course makes philosophy a discipline connected to "foreign subjects."

As we can see, the Belgian legislator has been particularly ambitious in its conception of the course of Philosophy and Citizenship, extended over twelve years, with demanding programs. It is now a question of giving the means to achieve these ambitions, by granting two hours of

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[6] See note 4, p. 18.
[7] See note 4, p. 18.
[8] See note 4, p. 19.

classes per week to this new discipline, as is the demand by many teachers, and by offering to all those who implement it in the field a continued training, over the long term.

Country Report:
Introduction to the Didactics of Philosophy in Cameroon

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Philosophy has been taught in schools in Cameroon for several decades. As far as the secondary education that interests us here is concerned, the teaching is done by professionals trained for the most part in the country's institutions of higher education, the *Ecoles Normales Supérieures*. However, the reality to be deplored is that there are not many specialists in philosophy didactics in Cameroon, let alone discussions on the subject (Kalla 2018). This explains the stagnation of philosophy teaching at the secondary level in this country, the teaching programs having changed in 2018, following a global reform of the Cameroonian education system. This reform, carried out by the pedagogy inspectors in particular, made it possible to introduce philosophy as a subject in high school in the third year before the *baccalauréat*, the *seconde*, and above all to include the competency-based approach in the teaching and learning of this discipline in secondary education (Kalla 2019b), even though the program of the last year of high school, the *terminale*, remains unchanged since 1998.

As regards the teaching programs, the one in force in the *terminale* is contained in the Ministerial Order N°114/D/28/MINEDUC/SG/IGP/ESG of 07 OCT 1998, that means, 22 years ago. We may easily realize that this is not without problems, especially when we know all the changes that have and are taking place in the field of philosophy in particular and in education in general. This makes the parameters of didactic action contained in this document inappropriate in relation to the current context (Kalla 2019a). Fortunately, this is bound to change with the reform of the Cameroonian education system. Hence the teaching of philosophy in the *seconde*, whose curricula are set by Ministerial Order N°226/18/MINESEC/IGE of 22 August 2018, which is innovative by introducing philosophy to students who are still in early adolescence, in addition to introducing a new pedagogical approach, in particular the competency-based approach starting with real-life situations. The year after, philosophy was also introduced in the second to last year of high school, the *première*, as a continuation of the program of the *seconde*, and it also includes some lessons from the *terminale*. The logical consequence is that the program of the *terminale* will also undergo changes next year. This reform is not without a notable impact on the revision of teaching methods, the elaboration of teaching contents, the evaluation and even the improvement of teaching aids, in short, the didactics of philosophy, or rather the didactics of philosophizing in general. This implies an important work on the part of teachers who are invited to appropriate the new philosophical practices contained in these new programs in Cameroon.

As far as teachers are concerned, it must be said that to be a philosophy teacher in Cameroon, both in the public and private sectors, it is compulsory to have a background that leads to at least a bachelor's degree (*licence*) in philosophy. This diploma gives the holder the right to teach the discipline even at much lower levels. In other words, a student who has validated all

of the credits at the bachelor's level has almost no difficulty with the philosophy teaching programs at the secondary level, except for the notions of didactics that do not appear in the curriculum. This is neglected in the private sector, where one is most often satisfied with the bachelor's degree in addition to some teaching experience for the recruitment of philosophy teachers. However, in the public sector, it is necessary to have gone through a higher teacher training college, which guarantees, beyond philosophy itself, the learning of pedagogy in addition to didactics (Kalla 2019a), it is understood that one enters by competitive examination, which makes the recruitment very selective.

It must be said, moreover, that the teaching of philosophy in Cameroon had not changed much over the past twenty years, so that teachers were no longer even innovating in terms of developing didactic content and even teaching techniques (Kalla 2019a). This led to a very unproductive routine in terms of didactics. It is only very recently with the reform of the Cameroonian education system as mentioned above that it has been necessary to adapt to new curricula for different and new levels (*seconde* and *première* in addition to the traditional *terminale*), and above all with new practices that are part of an approach that is itself new, in this case the competency-based approach. A recent study has shown that philosophy teachers in Cameroon were refractory to these yet salutary changes in the framework of the didactics of philosophy in Cameroon (for the conclusions of the study see Kalla 2020). It should be mentioned that these teachers would gain from an interest in the didactics of philosophy, a necessary condition for a significant improvement of the teaching and learning of philosophy in Cameroon.

From the point of view of researchers in the didactics of philosophy, it must be said, unfortunately, that Cameroonians are hardly interested in it. Given the almost nil number of specialists in the subject, the absence of journals, debates or more simply discussion forums concerning the teaching and learning of philosophy in Cameroon. Fortunately, for nearly three years now there has been a group of young researchers, most of them graduates of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* of Yaoundé, working as philosophy teachers in public and private secondary schools, who are writing theses in the didactics of philosophy, necessarily soliciting the supervision of experts sometimes from abroad. This points to a better future for the didactics of philosophy in Cameroon.

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Country Report:
Comoros Islands – Philosophy Teaching in Secondary Education

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1. An Educational System Inherited from the Former Colonial Power, in the Process of Hybridisation

The Union of the Comoros is a former French colony located in the southwest of the Indian Ocean, which became independent in 1975. It comprises four islands, one of which is the subject of a dispute with France as it became a French department (Mayotte).

As a result of a mainly Bantu and Arab-Shirazian mixing, the Comorian population is united both religiously by Islam and linguistically by Shikomori[1], which shares its status as an official language with Arabic and French. Its symbolic importance is low, however to the benefit of Arabic (both the religio-lithurgical and the business language with Persian Gulf nations) and French (language of administration, politics, media, school: language of knowledge, power, social success and emigration[2]). From primary school to higher education, the exclusive teaching medium is French, but unofficially, Shikomori is orally used to compensate for an insufficient command of French by both the students and the teachers (Bavoux 2002), in a diglossia context suspected for causing low philosophy academic performance (Demuth 2014).

The Union of the Comoros is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world[3]: since independence, the Comorian education system has suffered from a lack of resources coupled with the country's chronic political instability (numerous coups d'état) and massive demographic growth (Lacoste & Leigniel 2016). The impact on learning conditions has led to the proliferation of private schools[4]. At upper secondary, supervision conditions are nevertheless generous (student – teacher ratio: 14) compared to the averages observed in Sub-Saharan Africa (24); the gross enrollment rate has increased from 21% in 2008 to 44,5% in 2015 (PTSE 2017).

Even after three reforms (1976, 1982, and 1994) the school system organisation still bears the mark of the French one, with its division into three cycles punctuated by very selective exams. The *baccalauréat*, after three years of high school – general education cycle structured in sections, as in France in the early 90s: literary, scientific and economic –, gives access to higher education locally[5] or abroad. However, a certain syncretism is undeniable, related to the legacies of the traditional Koranic school and States of the Arab League's increasing support offers, but also to the submission to international standards supported by the United Nations

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[1] Close to Swahili.
[2] Out of a population of approximately 800,000 inhabitants, nearly 400,000 live abroad. Of them 80% live in France.
[3] 2019 GDP per capita: 833 USD; HDI rank: 165.
[4] In 2015: 62 private high schools for 10 public ones (PTSE, 2017).
[5] University of the Comoros was created in 2003.

system[6].

2. A French-styled Subject Crowning Secondary Education, Crossbreed with Local Adaptations and Sponsored Contents

As in France, as well as in all former French colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa, philosophy in the Comoros is a compulsory subject and appears as the showpiece test of *baccalauréat*. However, since 2008, it is no longer taught only during the last year of high school: Comorian students benefit from two to three hours of "philosophy initiation" class the year before – which is atypical.

At the *terminale* level, philosophy is taught weekly for three hours (in the scientific and economic section: test coefficient respectively 1 and 2) or five hours (in the literary section: test coefficient 5, the highest of all): depending on the *baccalauréat* type, given the very low pass rate (around 30% in the last five years; around 10% in 2014 and earlier), the philosophy test is decisive for obtaining the qualification.

Due to a French institutional tradition philosophically hostile to any didactisation of philosophy (Tozzi 2009), it is implied by Comorian curricula that philosophy would be in itself its own didactic: the example provided by the lecture of the teacher conceived like a *dissertation* – French exercise *par excellence* – and based on the study of "major" philosophical texts, all accompanied by periodic written training leading optionally to remedial exercises, prepare students for a four hour written terminal examination: essay[7] or text analysis, at the candidate's discretion.

Yet, French-style teaching of philosophy, with its Western-style rationality carrying foreign epistemic structures and Eurocentric programs left in memory by the 1970s *coopérants* teachers who often appeared as representatives of the materialist-Marxist doctrine, has long had the reputation of being a colonial and anti-religious instrument of acculturation, dedicated to corrupting Comorian youth (Demuth 2014). An identity defense reflex may then explain locally conceived textbooks – which is uncommon[8] – and curricula adaptation efforts[9] to give more meaning to a learning accused of being disconnected from the students' life[10]. Thus, philosophy curricula reveal strong similarities with the French model[11], in which is mixed the teaching of the history of African and Arab-Muslim philosophies and debates over Ethnophilosophy, content linked to norms or values promoted by UNESCO, as well as notions of civic and

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[6] The Comoros benefits from the support of multilateral partners, in particular the World Bank, UNICEF, the European Union, but also the UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa for the implementation, since 2009, of the procedures for evaluating the quality of education through the program for the analysis of educational systems (PASEC) of the Conference of Ministers of Education of countries sharing French (CONFEMEN).

[7] Whose subject is formulated as a question.

[8] Most other French-speaking African countries either do not have a philosophy textbook or import unsuitable French ones (UNESCO 2007).

[9] Last revision in 2010.

[10] Which did not occur in all the francophone sub-Saharan countries - in Burkina-Faso, for example, French curricula from 1925 remain (UNESCO 2007).

[11] Consisting of a list of concepts defining fields of philosophical problems to explore and of a list of philosophers providing texts to study.

religious[12] education related to the major contemporary issues of Comorian society[13].

Since teachers and students only have one philosophy textbook to refer to, one might ask whether it is acceptable that teaching supports orientations such as respect for Islamic values, the need to fight against underdevelopment and the righteous use of "community spirit", for this imposes conceptual limits. However, one can retort that the centralisation of didactic material defined by public authorities represents a barrier against proliferation of proselytising or doctrinal works, and that it is philosophy's epistemic nature to draw its vitality from measuring itself against concrete matters of individuals and societies.

Lastly, the University of the Comoros, even if the fields in which Comorian students most often enroll are those overrepresented in the 1970s in French universities – social sciences and humanities – does not provide philosophy courses, which is only distilled in theology and law courses. This prevents any interaction on a national scale between secondary and higher education, which may contribute to reducing philosophy to a closed body of knowledge since the archipelago is deprived of places involved in living philosophical production. As a consequence, no real conceptual decolonisation of philosophy curricula or didactic orientations implemented could be carried out: the official textbook is a collection of thematic texts of which 96% are from Western philosophers and teachers themselves do not feel equipped to contribute to such a task.

3. Philosophy Teachers Training: Between Institutional Void and System D

Philosophy teachers are recruited on application file by the State. The lowest diploma required is a bachelor's degree in philosophy, but most teachers have a master's degree or a doctorate[14] – necessarily obtained abroad, often in Madagascar.

Qualification for school education does not require following any special teacher training courses: upon leaving university and once hired, teachers are sent directly to the classrooms. The profession is learned on-the-job and mainly by mimicry from lessons of more experienced peers or from one's own student experience.

Priority is given to basic education, Philosophy is the great disinherited of the Comorian education system: as the only subject without an *Inspection* unit, there's no coordination or evaluation of philosophy teachers, nor an official in-service training organisation. This institutional deficiency is however compensated for by individual initiatives: informal tutoring arrangements are set-up internally in high schools, and a corporate association provides a legal framework allowing volunteers from the three islands to meet regularly, in order to engage in common didactic reflections, to share pedagogical practices and thus alleviating both isolation[15] and the deficit of educational resources. The demand for discussions with foreign didacticians is very strong among those philosophy teachers who are only motivated by a sincere vocation, given their working conditions – a call that this report will hopefully relay.

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[12] Comorian high schools are not secular. Besides the first year, in addition to the study of the links between philosophy and religion, five themes are questioned: industrial revolution, globalisation, colonisation, slavery, human rights.

[13] Through T*erminale* courses such as "Society and Development" or "Violence and Nonviolence", for instance.

[14] Their salary does not only depend on seniority, but on their highest qualification.

[15] Isolation scarcely overcome by the internet (expensive connections, complicated access to electronic devices, power cuts).

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In 2008, one year after receiving his joint Ph.D. from the University of Buenos Aires and the University of Paris 8 (under Alain Badiou's supervision, who was also the main subject of his thesis), the Argentinian philosopher Alejandro Cerletti published a short and incisive book, entitled *The Teaching of Philosophy as a Philosophical Problem*. According to Cerletti, "years ago, the question of 'teaching philosophy' was not considered a relevant philosophical problem and was considered, to a greater or lesser extent, a special case of didactics"[1] (p. 83). Being himself a professor of didactics and teaching practices in philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires and the National University of General Sarmiento, Cerletti emphasizes that philosophy classes should not be considered a mere juxtaposition of a philosophical content and some didactic method. Even though he is fully aware that there are several conceptions of what philosophy is about – and therefore of what it means *to teach* philosophy –, Cerletti holds that teaching philosophy is fundamentally "to give place to the other's thinking" (p. 82) and that the best teachers are those who are able to teach in the most diverse conditions, "not only because they are able to conceive many didactic strategies, but rather because they are able to rethink, in their own daily practices, their own knowledge and their relations to philosophy itself" (p. 10).

Two main influences can be highlighted in Cerletti's work. The first one is Badiou's, whose conception of philosophy as a *creative repetition* is a milestone in the book: "philosophy would always be identified by the permanent play of what it affirms and what it questions; by means of the tension among affirmation, opposition and creation" (p. 34). The second one is Immanuel Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* Although the German philosopher is only mentioned three times in the book, Cerletti claims that a philosophy teacher should act as a philosopher and provide the students with an opportunity to become philosophers as well.

In the four introductory pages, Cerletti puts forward his main thesis: "to teach philosophy is basically a subjective construction, supported by a series of objective and circumstantial elements" (p. 10). To carry out this task, Cerletti holds that philosophy teachers should practice this construction in a creative, active way. Therefore, instead of providing generic recipes of class design and didactic techniques, Cerletti intends to stimulate teachers to take the *central role* of teaching, "as *philosophers* who recreate their own didactics according to the conditions in which they must teach" (p. 10).

The opening chapter, "What is 'to teach philosophy'?", argues that such an elemental problem may be unfolded into several other questions, such as "What is *to learn* philosophy?", "What does it mean *to convey* a philosophical content?" and even "What is a *philosophical*

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[1] All quotes are translated by us, Roger Xavier and Tomás Troster.

content?" But these questions would also rely on the answer(s) of "What is *philosophy*?" Although he presents some definitions of this capital concept, Cerletti reminds the reader that "philosophy is rather characterized by the constant reinvention of its own meaning" (p. 14). Therefore, "whether it is made explicit or not, what is considered to be philosophy should have some kind of correlation to the way it is taught" (p. 18) – and this should not only be explicit to the students, it should also be a part of the teachers' daily thinking in preparing their classes.

Chapters two and three deal with the distinctive features of philosophy and the problems of conveying it. In chapter two, Cerletti points out that questions such as "What is life?" could have both philosophical and biological answers. On the one hand, a biology teacher could provide an answer that *presupposes* some *given* concepts and would be satisfied once the students understand them. What distinguishes the philosophical approach is its *intentionality*: philosophy "aspires to knowledge without presuppositions" (p. 24) and even after finding an answer, it could inquire the very concepts that supported this answer – which means that it is not as important as the questioning itself. Such an *attitude* is to be deemed uniquely philosophical: "the restlessness of the search is a feature common to all philosophers" (p. 28). Nevertheless, regarding philosophy teaching, the problem that emerges is how it is possible to teach someone this specific *intention* or *attitude* if, ultimately, it relies upon a *desire* to know. In the third chapter, where Cerletti borrows Badiou's conception of philosophy as a cycle of repetition and creation, the same problem is evoked in a more explicit way:

> ... in a deep sense, it is not possible to teach "to love" wisdom, as indeed it is not possible to convey a formula for falling in love. [...] Between the philosophical questioning and the *desire* to philosophize there is a leap that is beyond any teacher. It is also the distance between the desire to know (philosophy) and the *desire* of the desire to know (the desire for philosophy). This leads us to a paradoxical situation: **the essence of philosophy is, constitutionally, unteachable**, as there is something in the other that is irreducible: their personal gaze while appropriating the world, their desire, in short, their subjectivity. Therefore, teaching philosophy can never guarantee that one will "learn" to become "a philosopher", at least not in the way the teacher *wishes* it to happen. (p. 37, bolds added)

Nevertheless, Cerletti is not a pessimist. Understanding that philosophers are "*re*-creators" of problems (p. 25) from the standpoint of their own world and time, he claims that the primary mission of a philosophy teacher is to instill that philosophical attitude into the students. Even though philosophy repeats old questions and problems – "a repetition is a condition of possibility for creation, that is, for the appearance of something different" (p. 32) –, philosophical repetition demands to be interpreted and reformulated *from the context in which it occurs* and, therefore, should also be a repositioning and a recreation of the problem it re-enunciates. Between repetition and novelty, the teaching of philosophy must pursue to rearrange the questions previously made by other philosophers, but always from *our* present reality, as well as to project them *towards the future*, making a synthesis of these old questions, giving them a new value. Philosophy can thus be a *creative* repetition and "a good [philosophy] teacher will try [...] to create the conditions for, perhaps, a 'love' to take place" (p. 37). If it is not possible to guarantee the *teaching* of philosophy, it is possible, at least, to verify its learning,

whenever the student "establishes new relations with the world" (p. 39).

The title of chapter four inquires: "Why teach philosophy?" Cerletti narrows down the question by asking: why teach Philosophy *in schools*? For those who work in philosophy – teaching, researching, writing – the question might seem odd at first, but the author draws attention to the fact that the legitimate place of philosophy in schools is questioned all the time by politicians and lawmakers. The issue about the *why* can quickly turn into a question about the *utility* of philosophy: what is the *use* of philosophy, especially when compared with other school subjects? Cerletti proposes the following answer: instead of advocating the utility of philosophy – inserting it in the same quantitative interplay of market values practiced today –, or exalting the uselessness as its main virtue, he maintains that the "meaning" of philosophy is to try to "denaturalize what seems obvious" (p. 51). Accordingly, a philosophy course is a place where we "can *think* the world where we live and decide how we place ourselves in it" (p. 51). Philosophy should reflect on the *present* and cannot avoid questioning the very space where the teacher and the students are: their classroom, their school, their neighborhood, their city, their country, their planet, ... Thus, for Cerletti, philosophy could be seen as an exercise of freedom: while philosophizing, the person "takes nothing for granted and **is not satisfied with others thinking for them**" (p. 51, bolds added).

Chapter five raises some issues that should be stressed. The most natural translation of its title – "La *formación* docente: entre profesores y filósofos" – would be "Teacher *training*: between teachers and philosophers". In some European countries, there are no university degrees exclusively aimed at the formation of high school philosophy teachers. In France, for example, after completing the first university study cycle, called *licence*, one may undertake the recruitment exam called CAPES, and then become a high school teacher. But in Argentina – and also in Brazil, where the translation of Cerletti's book is more extensively read than its original version[2] –, there are two different university degrees in philosophy: *profesorado* – focused on teaching in high schools and *licenciatura*[3] focused on research and teaching in higher education. These two degrees have in common some "theoretical" courses – less numerous in *profesorado* degrees, which in turn have some exclusive subjects focused on teaching practices. Considering this framework, we can understand Cerletti's critique: "A philosophy teacher is not 'formed' only by acquiring some philosophical contents and some pedagogical contents, and then juxtaposing them" (p. 53). Trainee teachers learn more from experiencing and observing the way their own teachers and professors work, rather than from thinking about teaching theories or teaching techniques which they have not tested by themselves. As Cerletti stresses, as students in a philosophy teacher training, "the years of apprenticeship have a major naturalizing force" (p. 57). In other words, trainee teachers tend to internalize the way they were taught by their own teachers, and they rarely take that into consideration. While we are being taught a given philosophical content, at the same time, we are being taught *how* to teach. In this regard, a course that prepares future teachers of philosophy must enable them to become the teachers *they* want to be, by providing – in their own *practice*

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[2] According to Google Scholar, the Brazilian translation of Cerletti's book (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2009) was quoted 189 times, against 102 of the original version. Cf.: http://bit.ly/CerlettisProblems (20/08/2020).

[3] Curiously, the word "licenciatura" in Brazilian Portuguese is equivalent to "profesorado" in Spanish, and "bacharelado" (in Brazilian Portuguese) means the same as "licenciatura" (in Spanish).

– teaching strategies that may be applied in their given working contexts, and that may be fully integrated with their own personal conceptions of philosophy and education. Once again, Cerletti highlights that *what* is taught must have a direct relation with *how* it is taught.

In chapter six, Cerletti addresses some issues around the teaching of philosophy, institutions, and the state. Asserting that there are no neutral institutions, he asks: "is a 'free' expression of philosophy conceivable in educational institutions?" (p. 68). Alongside with Foucault, Cerletti takes Socrates as the emblematic figure of the rebel thinker who became a hero in the philosophical canon and asserts: "the radical and denaturalizing philosophical attitude [of a philosopher like Socrates] can only be presented [in an educational institution] by following a monitored narrative or reading, which cuts off any danger" (p. 65). Is it possible to encourage such a critical attitude that may be turned against the very institution within which it was nurtured? Reminding us about the fact that sometimes the teaching of philosophy is presented by governments as a path to civic education, Cerletti points out that this may also confront the limits of institutional education. In spite of such conflicts – and, at the same time, always bearing them in mind –, he praises philosophical education:

> Philosophy is fundamental in forming critical individuals capable of questioning the validity of an argument, the legitimacy of a fact or the apparent unquestionability of what is given. Its task *par excellence* is to promote a sharp thinking that makes it possible to demystify the illusion that certain practices and knowledge are 'natural', and showing the conditions that make them appear in such a way. (p. 72)

Cerletti concludes that the way philosophy is taught in schools must be constantly questioned, as well as its place within educational institutions, not forgetting the limitations of the criticism that teaching philosophy has in such institutions.

The seventh chapter is entitled "Towards a philosophical didactics". Here, Cerletti asserts: "if the *goal* of our methodology is to philosophize, the 'content' to be taught must connect the philosophical **activity**, the philosophical **attitude** and the philosophical **theme**" (p. 77, bolds added). To do so, he defends that the teaching must also link the philosophical contents (whatever the teacher decides them to be) with what students already know, their values and what they think. Even though it is uncertain that students will actually philosophize, teachers must stimulate them to take hold of the philosophical problems. Otherwise, as Paulo Freire states, philosophical lessons will be "answers to questions that have not been asked"[4]. Another important issue of this last chapter is how to evaluate the learning. Cerletti affirms that although it may be possible to assess a given set of skills and the mastery of the notions taught – like the history of philosophy, and concepts –, only those who learn philosophy are really able to say "I have learned!" This, needless to say, poses some problems. Thus, the real evaluation of a philosophy student would be not a major concern for the teacher. Referring to Jacques Rancière, Cerletti points out that "the schoolmaster is the one who keeps those who are searching on *their*

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[4] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia da autonomia*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2006, p. 86. This quote is ours, but it is very close to what Cerletti states on page 79: "the students must have made the problem their own [...]. Otherwise, [what is taught] will only be a series of strange answers to unasked questions and, as we know, this leads only to the repetition of the same thing".

course, on their personal path of search, not the one who dictates what to think and do" (p. 81). Following Rancière, Cerletti defends the displacement of the teacher from the role of *regulator* to the role of *emancipator*. The teacher is thus someone who will teach the *desire* to learn, and to ask questions, always beginning from what the pupils think. For Cerletti, any given didactics, even the most complex and well elaborated, will face its limits when confronted with the *other*: "to give place to the other's thinking" (p. 82), and because of that, teaching philosophy is always a process built upon the dialogue, with the goal of taking philosophy from the realm of exclusivity to the public space. As the last words of the chapter state:

> Of course, in the end, each one will choose whether to philosophize or not, but they must know that they *can* do it, that it is not an unfathomable mystery that only a few people have as a treasure. And in this process, the teacher has a fundamental task in stimulating the will. (p. 82)

In the conclusion, Cerletti claims that philosophical knowledge was regarded in the past as separated from didactic knowledge, but this can no longer be the case: *what* is taught must have a direct relation to *how* it is taught – and this also applies for what purpose and in what way future teachers will be trained. "Every genuinely philosophical course [and this also includes university classes] should fundamentally mean an encounter with thinking that involves the decision to relate to knowledge in a new way" (p. 85). To do so, Cerletti gives a few practical advices about how to construct a course plan based upon the ideas expressed throughout the book. It is not intended as a prescription nor a description of a teaching method, but rather may serve as an illustration of what the author understands by *teaching philosophy and philosophical method*:

1. a critical-reflexive moment, when teachers evaluate their own experiences as well as their personal conception of the content that is to be taught;
2. a propositional-theoretical (or foundational) moment, in which the teachers needs to answer *why* they are teaching precisely what they are teaching – and Cerlleti emphasises that it is not only about the content, but also about displaying the teacher's own commitment with the subject;
3. a didactical moment, after having sorted the two first points, the teachers must then organize their class, having in mind *what* they are going to teach and *how,* and again the construction of this didactical plan must be in synchrony with the environment;
4. a new critical-reflexive moment, when the teachers come back to the first step, but now having put to test their own didactics, beliefs and knowledge, they can have yet a different insight on their own practice, because:

> If the question 'what is it to teach philosophy' is itself a philosophical question, it never stops from asking, and the horizon of its answers is updated from the experience of teaching and the philosophical will of the teacher to continue investigating. (p. 88)

For all teachers intending to devote themselves to becoming philosophers in the task of teaching philosophy, this book is certainly a highly profitable reading. More than a checklist of questions

and problems that a philosophy teacher should tackle for their teaching practice to really be philosophical, it urges the need for philosophizing about the present – not without the philosophical tradition but recreating it in our own world and time. And to make an appropriation of this great tradition, Cerletti echoes Kant's "Sapere aude!", declaring (p. 76): "we must *dare* to think ..."