Europeana Learning Scenario

Title

Exploring and questioning philosophical ideas through images.

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Summary

Table of summary	
Subject	Philosophy
Topic	Any philosophical idea, notion or concept[1].
Age of students	15-17
Preparation time	30 minutes (the teacher must explore the online platform www.europeana.eu before the activity, and make sure students have access to computers and connection during the activity).
Teaching time	2 periods (2X45 minutes). This is adjustable to the context and the group dynamics.
Online teaching material	www.europeana.eu Several web applications can be used to display the content (images and definitions): online web canvas or boards (Padlet, Lino…), presentation tools (PowerPoint or similar), rich document editors (Word or similar).
Offline teaching material	Printer, paper and glue can be used for an offline variation of this activity.
Europeana resources used	Images to be found by students.

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Integration into the curriculum

This learning scenario can be used freely for any Philosophy lesson of the Philosophy curriculum. It can also suit for an introduction to Philosophy class. Furthermore, it can be used for History lessons or Ethics when teaching about propaganda and the power of images in general.

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[1] Example: truth, freedom, justice, knowledge, normality…

Aim of the lesson

The objective is to teach students philosophical thinking (analysis and critical thinking) in conjunction with visual literacy. Students will understand that images are about denoting realities and connotating implicit significations. Students will also realise that this is especially true when pictures are ambiguous, symbolic, and involve emotions and imagination. Also, students will develop their knowledge of the European heritage and information literacy (content search using an online platform: www.europeana.eu).

The learning scenario will teach students to:

- define and rigorously use concepts and terminology of philosophy;
- exercise their intellectual competence through analysis, synthesis and questioning;
- exercise their intellectual curiosity and relevantly link philosophical ideas to the world, through historical or artistic images;
- move from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the general, and vice versa (a picture is always particular; an idea is always general);
- develop intellectual agility within discourse by freely using different registers, levels, voices and domains, etc.;
- exercise their capability to engage in a dialogue, debate, etc.

Trends

- **Collaborative Learning**: a strong focus on group work.
- **Peer Learning**: students learn from peers and give each other feedback.
- **Visual Search & Learning**: images and multimedia are powerful.
- **Open Source Learning**: teachers copy, share, adapt, and reuse free educational materials.
- **Learning materials**: shift from textbooks to web resources and open source books.

21st century skills

- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**: students will use various types of reasoning to define philosophical notions and relate them to relevant visual illustrations. Stuents will:
  - effectively and collaboratively analyse and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs;
  - analyse and evaluate major alternative points of view;
  - synthesise and make connections between visual content and arguments;
  - interpret visual content and draw conclusions based on the best analysis.
- **Communication:** students will display online pictures to the class (this can be done using presentation software) and will orally present their findings and justify their interpretation.
- **Collaboration:** students will work in groups and can distribute the tasks.
- **Media Literacy**: students will access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms. They will explore and interpret and present various media forms (p: pictures, video). They will understand both how and why media messages are constructed and for what purposes. They will examine how individuals interpret messages differently.
- **ICT Literacy:** students will manipulate digital devices and tools to search, organise, comment and present online content.

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Introduction	**Presentation of the learning objectives and expected tasks.** The teacher reminds students that, like all philosophical terms, the studied term during this lesson can be used by many people and in all kinds of ways: it is a polysemous term related to various interpretations. The proposed activity precisely aims to reveal and distinguish the multiple meanings of a philosophical word. The teacher presents the primary goal of this learning activity: to explore the different significations of a philosophical term through searching and interpreting pictures and through the capability to question and challenge the meanings. The teacher discusses with the class to collect the first set of remarks and questions. This material will initiate the thinking on the chosen philosophical term. The teacher exposes the primary meanings of the philosophical term without going too much into the details. The aim is to initiate the thinking and get a set of meanings as material for the next step. The teacher distributes students in groups (2-3, randomly or by specific criteria) and attributes a particular meaning to each group. The teacher presents the task(s) that each group/participant will have to perform: 1. Search and choose two pictures that best illustrate the meaning of the philosophical term. 2. Share the two pictures onto a digital tool (word processor, presentation program, online board, etc.) or only by printing and pasting the pictures. 3. Prepare the presentation to the class: A) description of each picture and B) interpretation of how each picture illustrates the philosophical term. 4. Collectively challenge and question the findings and statements of the other groups.	15'

Images search and interpretation	**Searching, choosing, sharing and interpreting images on Europeana.** After the tasks have been stated, students/groups explore www.europeana.eu collections, limiting the search to images (through the filter settings). The students are invited to refine and deepen the search iteratively, using variations of keywords and keywords combinations. Students choose two pictures that "speak" to them the most, accordingly to the meaning the pictures must illustrate. The teacher circulates between the groups, assuring that everyone participates and reminding them that there is no expected "right" choice. Each group shares its pictures (online or by printing) and, in turn, exposes its findings to the class. N.B.: Several options are available to collect the images: printing, pasting on digital documents (Word, Powerpoint, collaborative online canvas or boards like Padlet), sending the pictures through an online form… The following elements should be attached to each image: • Group name. • Image title (from Europeana). • Image location (European URL). • Keywords used to search and find the image • Short description of the picture and elements of context (a few lines). A good piece of advice to the students is to ask them to describe and contextualise the image to someone who could not see it. • Explanation of how the picture illustrates the philosophical idea. This is an interpretation of the picture.	30'

Sharing and discussion	**Communication of results by groups and discussions.**	35'
	The teacher reminds the procedure and the time constraints so that everyone can present their images. Circa 5-10 minutes per group.	

Each group presents to the class his images and explains:
- what is seen in the image (**denotation**), with also some elements of context;
- what is meant by the image (**connotation**): how each image illustrates the philosophical meaning of the term;
- what questions each illustration opens.

The students/groups then challenge the presenting student/group by asking questions ("*how come this visual element is present?*", "*Couldn't we interpret this differently?*", etc.).

Example of pictures illustrating various meanings of the term "law".

Meaning	*Illustration*	*Questions*
1. All the rules of a society	• Button. Women against apartheid	• *Are the rules always equals in society?* • *Can the law be contested or criticised?* • *Why do we need to fight for the laws?* • *…*
2. The study of the rules of a society, or the practice of being a lawyer.	• A doctor of law and medicine in traditional costume, Lombardy. Pencil drawing by the librarian of the University of Padua 1915.	• *Why does a specialist of the law (lawyer, judge...) has often to be dressed in a peculiar way?* • *Can one study the law and be also critical towards the law?* • *…*
3. The body of divine commandments as expressed in a religious text.	• God giving the Tablets of the Law from BL Royal 3 E I, f. 112.	• *Can a "revealed" law be universal?* • *Can we contest we transcendence of "revealed" law? Aren't they just historical and local laws?* • *Can we believe one man (e.g. Moses) to be God's messenger?* • *…*
4. (In science) a rule that says that under certain conditions certain things always happen	• Joseph Jules Dejerine. Photograph.	• *Why do we need to observe the reality to understand natural laws?* • *Can the natural law be contested or criticised?* • *…*

Conclusion	Debriefing and summary. This time of analysis and reflection allows the appropriation and deepening of the work that has just been done. The teacher proposes a summary of the meanings and the questions or asks the students to write this down individually. The teacher can also ask the students how they experienced this work with images, what it meant for them and how it happened.	10'

Assessment

The students can be asked to summarise the findings.

If students were asked individually, before the activity, to define the studied idea, they could be asked after the activity to revise their prior answer.

***************************** AFTER IMPLEMENTATION *****************************

Student feedback

The teacher can create an online form to collect students' feedback, using a Lickert-type scale to assess the activity.

The feedback can target the experience of image search on Europeana, and the experience of the learning scenario's tasks.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

Europeana is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

European Schoolnet (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.