

Title: Children's Philosophical Abilities: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry Into Children's Ability To Practice Philosophy.

Author: Abou Khalil, Charbel

Supervisor: Maesschalck, Marc

Academic year: 2020-2021

Title of the study programme: Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in French and German Philosophies: Contemporary Challenges.

Abstract:

Is the child capable of philosophising? The doxa answers in the negative. In fact, childhood has long been equated with intellectual immaturity. According to the work of Jean Piaget, which continues to guide many current pedagogical practices, philosophy, requiring inner dialogue, abstraction, and formal logic, is inaccessible to children whose thinking is egocentric, concrete and irrational. Yet, since the 1970s, we have witnessed the emergence of new pedagogical practices, designed for the philosophical education of children from the age of five: Philosophy for Children (P4C), advocated by Matthew Lipman, is based on the principle of educational interventionism, and seeks to challenge the child's reason in order to discover its dormant cognitive potential. With its theoretical foundations in John Dewey's pragmatism and Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism, it opposes the Piagetian conception of cognitive development and challenges the three characteristics of the child's thinking already mentioned. In addition to latent cognitive abilities, at the foundation of this practice of philosophical education is the natural affinity of the child's mind towards the philosophical dimensions of the world. In fact, the child's attitude is an original attitude that shows a maximum of openness to philosophical problems that come from the depths of the human condition in which the child participates par excellence.

Language: French

Keywords: Philosophy for children; Jean Piaget; genetic epistemology; Matthew Lipman; generative epistemology