



Microensayo

What is the Socratic Method, what are some of its most important features, and how can it be used to conduct everyday dialogues?

¿Qué es el Método Socrático, cuáles son algunas de sus características más importantes y cómo se puede utilizar para llevar a cabo diálogos cotidianos?

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Abstract

The Socratic Method, very commonly used as a tool in teaching, is where there is an interactive dialogue between the teacher and the student in which a series of questions are asked to reach further understanding on a certain topic. In this text it is shown how the Socratic Method helps to the development and improvement of learning and reasoning techniques through dialogue and argumentation in teaching and learning. The types of questions usually used in this method would be clarification questions, questions about an initial question or issue, assumption questions, reason and evidence questions, origin or source questions, implication and consequence questions and viewpoint questions. Socrates would ask these questions to his

students to force them into opening their minds and extending their ability to develop new knowledge.

Keywords: Socratic method, teaching, Socrates, dialogue, argument, questions.

Resumen

El Método Socrático, muy utilizado como herramienta de enseñanza, se basa en un diálogo interactivo entre profesor y alumno, en el que se plantean una serie de preguntas para profundizar en un tema. En este texto se muestra cómo el Método Socrático contribuye al desarrollo y la mejora del aprendizaje y las técnicas de razonamiento mediante el diálogo y la argumentación. Los tipos de preguntas que se suelen utilizar en este método son: preguntas de aclaración, preguntas sobre una pregunta o cuestión inicial, preguntas de suposiciones, preguntas de razonamiento y evidencia, preguntas sobre el origen o la fuente, preguntas de implicación y consecuencia, y preguntas sobre el punto de vista. Sócrates formulaba estas preguntas a sus alumnos para impulsarlos a abrir sus mentes y ampliar su capacidad de desarrollar nuevos conocimientos.

Palabras clave: Método Socrático, enseñanza, Sócrates, diálogo, argumentación, preguntas.

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In our everyday life, we often come up with questions and conflicts about our surroundings and the ways society works, but now and then we can't find an answer or we have a different way of thinking than others about a certain topic. That is when we found ourselves in conflict

with other people for having a different opinion or perception about something.

People often have arguments about conflicting topics with the objective of proving the other person wrong, others just dialogue to know which perspective is the one that makes more sense or is closer to reality. Dialogue is the best strategy to learn about a topic, but many people don't know how to carry it out, the best way possible to take the most advantage of all the knowledge that can be acquired from it. In the text "Critón" from Plato, Socrates and Crito are having a conversation about the escape way from prison Socrates should take, and while Socrates is against it, Crito repeatedly tells him that he should consider it. They then proceed to have a long discussion about it, in which, superficially, they are just talking about rather escaping or not from prison, but in reality, Socrates is letting Crito discover which decision is the best for the situation they are in through a sequence of well-structured questions that help Crito understand the context and guide him into taking a decision. This kind of questioning is actually very common in teaching and learning; it is called the Socratic Method.

"Accordingly he asked questions, letting the other man do most of the talking, but keeping the course of the conversation under his control." (Schiller as cited by Delić & Bećirović, 2016) The process is simple but precise for developing new skills of argumentation and critical thinking. As already said, while in an argument, Socrates would ask a series of questions to guide the other person through the dialogue to force them to open their minds and question everything they thought they knew. In this way, people experience kind of like a reset of their knowledge and beliefs to leave space for new knowledge and reasoning. This is important because people can get blocked on a topic due to their beliefs and information that they have heard from other sources and they usually avoid thinking much further in the topic since they think they already know about it. These kinds of questions can be classified in: Clarification questions, questions about an initial question or issue, assumption questions, reason and evidence questions, origin or source questions, implication and consequence questions and finally, viewpoint questions.

The Socratic Method is commonly used as an approach for teaching and it cares about the development and improvement of learning and reasoning techniques through dialogue and argumentation, and to partially modify the students' original arguments. It involves

interactive dialogue between the teacher and the student, “first driving his collocutors into self-contradiction and thus freeing them of their false preconceptions and then helping them deliver the true knowledge (Knezic cited by DeliĆ & Bećirović, 2016).

So in everyday dialogues, where the purpose of argumentation is to find out the truth on something, the Socratic Method is ideal to extend your own capacity of knowledge and be able to identify valid arguments by your own, instead of just hearing someone pour information into your mind.

References

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