



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

**“Teaching innovatively (with focus on ICT)
and its impact on the quality of
education”**

Teaching activity n°3

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| Title | PLATO |
| Nation | ITALY |
| Subject | PHILOSOPHY |

Learning objectives for the lesson

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| Objective 1 | Students to have knowledge of what happens in the analogy of the cave. |
| Objective 2 | Students to understand what is represented by various aspects of the analogy. |

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| Step 1 | <p>Remind students of introductory materials and explain the significance of Plato. Write A.N. Whitehead's quote on the board: 'The history of western Philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato.'</p> <p>Video clip: if available, show an extract from the film <i>The Matrix</i>, ideally from where Neo goes to work to where he is freed from the Matrix (an alternative film clip could be from <i>The Truman Show</i>).</p> <p>Invite students to explain the plot of <i>The Matrix</i>.</p> <p>An alternative activity could be to get students to discuss <i>Big Brother</i>. What if the housemates had always been in the house and didn't think there was anything outside the house? What might happen if one of them got out? Explain that Plato's ideas are similar in that he believes that there is a deeper dimension to reality.</p> |
| Step 2 | <p>Introducing Plato's cave: a visual diagram of Plato's cave will be helpful on the interactive whiteboard (easily obtained on internet). Explain the condition of the prisoners and their view of reality; what would happen if one prisoner escaped? What happens when the prisoner leaves the cave and what happens upon re-entry? A different way of doing this in a room with good blackout might be via guided role-play using a light (torch?) from the back of the room. Ask pupils to imagine they have lived all their life in this room and are chained so that they have to face forwards. Teacher encourages students to describe their condition.</p> |
| Step3 | <p>Student activity: students begin to work through worksheet 1.1 drawing and labelling a sketch of the cave and using the prompts to re-tell the story. Some more able students may wish to use the translation of the <i>Republic</i>, available on the CD-ROM. This worksheet will be completed during the next lesson, after the card-sort activity in worksheet 1.2 and discussion of the meaning of the analogy.</p> |
| Step 4 | <p>WRITTEN TEST</p> |

TEST

1. Summarise the story of the cave in two or three paragraphs. You could use the following prompts to help you if you like (you will need to put them in order first):
 - a) They are unable to move their heads...
 - b) Gradually his sight adjusts...

- c) Imagine a group of prisoners chained since birth.
 - d) He decides to return to the cave...
 - e) One of the prisoners is set free...
 - f) His ability to predict the shadows is diminished.
 - g) They threaten to kill him...
 - h) They believe the shadows to be real...
 - i) The sounds and shadows are made by...
2. Make a list of features of the story that are allegorical. (Use the glossary in the textbook if you cannot remember what an allegory is.) Produce a table showing the features and their meaning.
3. What is meant by 'eikasia'?
- retch and challenge:**
In the story of the cave, Plato is summing up his philosophy. There are clues as to his views on metaphysics, epistemology and politics. Find out what these words mean then write two or three sentences explaining how the analogy of the cave links to each of these topics.
4. Below is a visual representation of Plato's Divided Line. This directly precedes the analogy of the cave. Can you see why Plato has linked the two ideas?

KNOWLEDGE

(Intelligible realm)

Dialectical

Philosophy

Illusion

OPINION

(Visible Physical Realm)

Mathematical Reasoning

Belief