

Kant and the Act of Philosophizing: The Impact of Philosophizing on Students in Algerian Schools within the Competency-Based Approach

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المخلص: تستكشف هذه الدراسة آراء إيمانويل كانط حول فعل التفلسف وأهميته في التعليم الحديث في الجزائر. يدافع كانط عن التفكير الفلسفي بدلاً من مجرد دراسة تاريخ الفلسفة، مع التركيز على التفكير النقدي والمستقل. في سياق الجزائر وتطبيق المقاربة بالكفاءات (CBA)، يتماشى هذا مع الأهداف الأساسية مثل تعزيز حل المشكلات والتفكير النقدي. تقوم الدراسة بمراجعة نقدية للأدبيات لتقييم كيف يمكن لمنهج كانط أن يعزز المقاربة بالكفاءات من خلال تشجيع التأمل الذاتي والتفكير المستقل. تشير النتائج إلى أن دمج التفلسف في المقاربة بالكفاءات يمكن أن يعمق القدرات المعرفية للطلاب الجزائريين ويؤهلهم بشكل أفضل لمواجهة تحديات الواقع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم الجزائري؛ المقاربة بالكفاءات؛ التفكير النقدي؛ كانط؛ التفلسف.

Abstract:

This study explores Immanuel Kant's views on the act of philosophizing and its relevance to modern education in Algeria. Kant advocates philosophical thinking over merely studying philosophy's history, focusing on critical and independent thought. In the context of Algeria and the implementation of Competency-Based Approach (CBA), this aligns with key goals like enhancing problem-solving and critical thinking. The study conducts a critical literature review to assess how Kant's approach could enhance CBA by encouraging self-reflection and independent thinking. Findings suggest that integrating philosophizing into CBA can deepen Algerian students' cognitive abilities and better prepare them for real-world challenges.

Keywords: Algerian education; CBA, critical thinking; Kant; philosophizing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scholars have varied visions about issues related to philosophy and the lesson of philosophy in general. This has attracted philosophical practitioners' attention specifically those who are interested in the possibility to teach learners to philosophize. They discussed in depth the challenges these practices require in relation to the Enlightenment philosopher Emmanuel Kant's perspectives. Thus, this paper is a brief review of some of his controversial thoughts seeking to understand the threshold where the critical mind attempted to revise and criticize the classical thinking including the philosophical thinking. Kant accordingly aimed at establishing the values of modernity based on the independence of reason in the era that caused a revolution in the history of the philosophical thinking. He questioned philosophy itself as a type of human thinking and what resulted from it so as reason will be able to direct it in parallel with its goal. He discussed the ability to teach and learn the real act of philosophizing and devoted a solid ground for real philosophizing practices. Thus, the study attempts to answer the following question:

- Is there a possibility that allows learners to indulge in the act of philosophizing far from the ready-made philosophical thinking according to Kant?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Kant Diagnosis of the State of Philosophy

In his book 'Logique', Kant stated his perspective to the meaning of 'Philosophy'. He considered it as "The thought of complete and perfect wisdom that determines the ultimate goals of human mind" ¹. It is one pattern of human thinking and cognitive knowledge that reveals the goals of human existence. Besides, he differentiated between philosophy as knowledge, an idea of a complete system, and a possibility for learning and between

philosophy as something different from what it is and cannot be learned and taught. Eventually this is what the true act of philosophizing requires according to him. Thus, the act of thinking is the free use of the faculty of reason based on the principle of freedom ². As a result, learning in this way is granting the mind freedom and profitability in thinking. What can be learned is not philosophy itself but rather the most effective use of knowledge and its integration as tools that determine the basic goals of the human mind. He justified his stand for philosopher's mission is "To be able to determine first: the source of human knowledge, and second: the extent of the possible and useful use of each knowledge and finally the limits of reason" ³. This last task is essential and unreachable because actual philosophizing is the ability to use reason freely and without the constraints of its binding. Accordingly, "No one can call himself a philosopher if he cannot philosophize." ⁴.

Engaging with the question of philosophy as practice of the act of philosophizing, that is in a free and subjective manner, requires critical practices in order to achieve its solid structure. Kant emphasized the need to revolutionize philosophy from within to harmonize it and adapt it to the time it represents. He opposed philosophy to be separated from the era of scientific rationality and enlightenment. Therefore, Kant attempted to draw attention to the deteriorating situation that philosophy has reached, where its presence has become completely contradictory to the era to which it belongs. The main reason for this situation is due to its attachment to illusion and metaphysics. Kant was not reflecting in his judgement his completely dissatisfaction of metaphysics but rather his aim is to carry out a Copernican revolution in it, and this is what we mentioned previously. He seeks to transcend the lazy philosophy that resides within illusions as he confirmed that in his statement: "The invocation of immaterial principles is a refuge for lazy philosophy, so it is necessary, as much as possible, to avoid using this pattern in methods of interpretation." ⁵.

Philosophy became mere nonsense as metaphysics distances it from certainty. From this Kantian interpretation of the status of philosophy in the modern era, we find out that the Kantian justification in his description of the Enlightenment as an era that is advancing towards Enlightenment as an urgent necessity. From here, Kant was fully aware that criticizing the internal mechanisms by which the mind philosophizes is a necessary condition for establishing a philosophical rationale that does not withdraw towards illusions and superstitions. Thus, Kant objected with all objection that philosophy accordingly is a pasture for dreams, dogmatism, and mental bigotry. Here, specifically, Kant criticized the logical concepts on the basis of which the dogmatic tendency built metaphysical subjects. He also thought of freeing philosophy and the process of teaching it from the illusions that calcified within the mind that claims to possess a true philosophy and refusing to subject it to conditions different from those that philosophy freely chose for it. To the extent that he criticized the philosophy of his time, he searched for a reasonable and critical foundation that would make philosophy in confrontation with itself. And here lies the modern form of philosophy as self- review. Therefore, philosophy needs to renew its principles, including metaphysics, and must be purified of the foundations on which it was built.

Considering Kant's educational views, this study attempts to make some reflections in line with teaching philosophy to learners. In his book related to this aspect 'Meditation on Education', he stressed and confirmed that : "...in educating the child, we should strive to gradually link knowledge and abilities...The child must also learn to distinguish knowledge from mere conjecture and belief." ⁶. This is what true philosophizing calls for as a higher mental activity. It is the ability to acquire knowledge and activate it the form of a practice assigned and directed to the higher mental faculties of memory, imagination, and perception within complex and intricate mental processes: "...and in everything that is likely to mourn the understanding, there are rules that must be present. It would be very useful to strip away

the rules so that the understanding does not work purely divinely, but consciously of the rule”⁷.

It is more useful to adopt the method of teaching philosophy as philosophizing, that is as a possibility to perceive principles, causes, and goals. The teacher’s task is to make the learner suffers from reasoning, thinking, and philosophizing and subjugate knowledge to the service of philosophizing in order to analyze it. Here lies the spirit of successful and effective philosophizing because it is an organized intellectual structure that must be understood and respected. Kant also emphasized the adoption of the Socratic method in education and limited it specifically to the effectiveness of philosophizing, since: “...Socrates, who called himself the generator of knowledge, gives his listeners in his dialogues...examples of the way in which he can direct the student to extract many things from his own mind...But here there is caution in teaching them rational knowledge, but instead learners should work to extract by themselves.”⁸. The Socratic generative dialogical method that Kant referred to is intended to lead the learners to discover the truths that they carry within themselves. Through a series of questions, new and different answers will be revealed. This way, the learners will be challenged intellectually and be aware of their learning in a way knowledge will be integrated gradually in new concepts one leading to the other.

Kant also provided general instructions for learners, especially those related to their moral and humanistic dimensions. He stated:

We must develop the love of human beings in the relationship with others, and after that the love of the entire universe...and then there is no harm in raising interest in the common virtues. And we must accustom children to this interest and make it a habit rejoicing in doing common good deeds.⁹

This is what the act of philosophizing requires which is to achieve this goal. It is the goal of humanity in starting with good upbringing of children and seeking to invest in the nature of the human mind as a thinking and philosophizing engine.

2.2 Competency-Based Approach in Algeria

This approach to education was first introduced in the United States in the 1950s after World War II with the background of military competition between the Soviet Union and the USA ¹⁰. In the late 1960's, it thrived in vocational education for the urgent solution of economic demands for more competent and autonomous individuals able to solve real-world problems. After 1990, various programs using a competency-based approach at all levels of education appeared. It attempts to bridge the gap between academic learning and practical application ¹¹. In the 21st century, CBA has been implemented and researched extensively in many different countries.

CBA in the 1970s and in the 21st century shares some similarities, including personalized instruction and the application of mixed learning media. CBA in the 1970s aimed to make higher education more efficient, life and work relevant, and help students develop competencies required by the workforce. While contemporary CBA focuses on developing life skills such as critical thinking and lifelong learning that help function in society and create more opportunities for learning efficiency with the advancement of technology, online resources, and adaptive learning technology. Although mixed theories can shape the design of CBA course like behaviourism, contemporary CBA went beyond the concept of knowledge and skills and instead emphasized metacognitive and higher-order thinking skills.

Competency, in the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, is defined as the synonym of "competence" or "a specific area of competence". The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) made it clear:

The concept of competency implies more than just the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it involves the mobilization of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands.¹²

It is the ability to do something successfully and effectively. Competencies are dynamic, evolving continuously with different times and contexts.

Different educational organizations have proposed different core competencies for education in their respective contexts¹³. For example, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan announced nine core competencies grouped into three dimensions: (1) spontaneity: for developing autonomy; (2) communication: for interacting with the world; and (3) social participation: for seeking the common good. In Russia, five sets of professional competencies were introduced: (1) cognitive; (2) functional; (3) personal; (4) ethical; and (5) meta-competences. The European Union in 2019 indicated eight key competencies for lifelong learning, including literacy, multilingual, mathematic, digital, personal/social/learning to learn, citizenship, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness/expression competencies.

To summarize the aforementioned core competencies and others, at least three sets of competencies are considered crucial: (1) strategies (for being independent); (2) communication (for reaching out to the world); and (3) social abilities (for interdependent needs)¹⁴.

According to a meta- analysis study conducted on the different current reviews of CBA between 2010 to 2020 to find out what is CBA and its principles, five features of CBA are elaborated¹⁵:

1. **“performance”** refers to how students move on to the next level only when they demonstrate evidence for specific competencies. The emphasis of CBA on mastery learning and individualized learning has made the learners the center of instruction.
2. Identifying meaningful **“objectives”** is essential in CBA. Unlike the traditional focus

on what the teacher teaches or what the school provides (the input), CBA has shifted its focus to learning outcomes (the output). The CBA objectives need to be explicit, observable, measurable, and transferable. CBA puts emphasis on learning outcomes that meet the objectives.

3. **“assessment”** in CBA needs to be an observable performance with explicit assessment criteria and, at the same time, meaningful and positive learning experience for students. CBA assessments are authentic with an emphasis on actual demonstration of the targeted competencies. CBA share two key components with the backward design: (1) meaningful learning outcomes and (2) performance-based assessment.
4. **“support”** in CBA refers to providing additional individualized support and resources during the learning process. New technology development makes it more possible than ever to achieve individualized and adaptive learning. In addition to learning resources, formative assessments and effective feedback are also strong support in CBA.
5. **“real-life training”** means that CBA training is based on real-life needs, and the training process engages learners in solving problems in real-life scenarios. Addressing real-life needs is a feature that has remained consistent throughout CBA history. It is one of the key factors that distinguishes CBA from other mastery learning approaches.

Competency- Based Approach was introduced in Algeria in 2002 as a result of the educational reform in the primary, middle and secondary schools. This approach is characterized by the following:

- It is action-oriented in that it gears language learning to the acquisition of know-how embedded in functions and skills.

➤ It is a problem-solving approach in that it places learners in situations that test/check their capacity to overcome obstacles and problems. It is

➤ social-constructivist in that it regards learning as occurring through social interaction with other people. In other words, learning is not conceived of as the transmission of predetermined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in-vitro but as a creative use of newly-constructed knowledge through the process of social interaction with other learners.

➤ Finally, and most importantly, the Competency-Based Approach is a cognitive approach. It is indeed indebted to Bloom's taxonomy. Bloom has claimed that all educational objectives can be classified as:

- "cognitive"(to do with information):
- and "affective"(to do with attitudes, values and emotions)
- or "psychomotor"(to do with bodily movements, such as setting up some apparatus.

In principle, CBA approach focuses less on what learners know about the topic than what they can do with it. It follows, therefore, that a curriculum whose goals are defined in terms of competencies is more functional than one that is based around a list of discrete items.

3. Discussion and Recommendations

No one can deny the virtue of criticism in its theoretical and practical dimensions. Kant's originality emerged in his boldness in confronting what was prevalent in his time. This enlightenment philosopher lived for the sake of enlightenment in the Age of Enlightenment, " Which is the emergence of man from his shortcomings for which he is responsible, his shortcomings in his inability to use his mind because its cause does not lie in the defect of reason but the lack of decision and boldness in using one's mind" ¹⁶. Kant is considered "...as a model of an enlightenment philosopher not only in Germany but in all of Europe and the

world”¹⁷ . Thus, the defiance of using the special understanding of reason and transcending its short comings allowed for the multiplicity of viewpoints and the emergence of postmodernist trends that acknowledge the thought of difference. This thought is free from any dissociative pressure, and this is what he stated: “I preceded my time by a century with my writings (i.e. my philosophy) and it is necessary that you wait a hundred years for a good and deep understanding of my works and studies. Then, you will realize its value”¹⁸ .

This is what actually happened and as an embodiment of what Kant predicted with the philosophical trends of neo- Kantinism (Neo- criticism) or the new technique that calls for a return to the essence of Kant’s philosophy especially the German philosopher Otto Liebmann who is considered the first to call for the necessity of reflecting on Kant’s thoughts in his book ‘Kant and the Imitators’. He believed in the possibility of establishing a critical metaphysics and confronting the traditional metaphysical doctrines. This intellectual movement believed in the transmission of philosophy through surrealism of science acquiring its characteristics by attributing it to the Kantian critical method. However, the Kantian perspective in its critical dimension remains secondary in the text of metaphysics because it did not go beyond the boundaries of subjectivity and dualistic thought. This is what Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida criticized through the demolition, undermining, and dismantling of Kant’s metaphysical thesis.

Concerning the philosophical lesson, its discourse consists of diverse aspects: at the level of concepts, at the level of problems, or at the level of argumentation. Thus, the philosophical lesson focuses on an organized theoretical abstract subject in which the teacher is cautious in moving from the sensible to the rational aspects, and from the simple to the complex one. It also relies on the mechanisms of integration instead of fragmentation and dispersion. As a result, philosophy, as a mode of thought, seeks to harmonize the common knowledge as a complete system that supports the mind to achieve its ultimate

goals. It is a universal concept and an organized system of the highest principles for the effective use of the mind. It should be treated not as a scholastic concept sought for its own sake, but rather as a critical practice that allows the learner to be autonomous. At that phase, the learner will be able to question ideas from the realm of potential existence to the realm of actual existence as persistent and active skills and abilities for investigating facts and establishing new knowledge keeping with the era to which it belongs.

It can be said that what Kant was aspiring to regarding the ways of philosophizing among children as a theory can be reflected on the pedagogical practice in the Algerian schools as far as the CBA is concerned. These practices can be summarized as recommendations for curricula designers and teachers:

- ❖ Giving children opportunities to manifest their inner abilities and experiences in the real world.
- ❖ Mobilizing the learners' readiness and attracting it in the directions that are compatible to their nature as humans at the first place.
- ❖ Training the learner on the skill of thinking, specifically the philosophical divergent one, to connect between varied types of knowledge while solving certain problems, discussing an issue, or facing a tough situation.
- ❖ Integrating diverse acquired competencies in realistic contexts.
- ❖ Developing the ability of learners to search facts in an accurate way, and investigate inference truth to write a quality research.
- ❖ Training learners to have insights and awareness of what surrounds them: what they see, hear, or read.
- ❖ Looking at life and lived reality with a critical vision as an end and not as a means to approach the facts. Besides, they should be open to opinions that differ from the prevailing and familiar ones based on individual and intellectual freedom.

- ❖ Since philosophy is the basis of questioning, its importance does not include only teaching it but also employing it in practical and public life, and even incorporating it into public behavior.
- ❖ The actual philosophizing of learners, specifically in its critical dimension, makes them familiar with some different philosophical ideas. It is imbued with a critical spirit and persuades learners to develop their personality in a balanced way to ensure their independence and uniqueness of opinion and enable them to bear responsibility and make the right decisions.

These recommendations are suggested to policy-makers and curricula designers to reshape the way philosophy is approached and even integrate the act of philosophizing as an interdisciplinary competence so as to equip learners with higher order thinking processes that are of high demand in the 21st century.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, what can be deduced from this discussion about the issue of teaching philosophy and ways of philosophizing with children from Kant's perspective can reflect two aspects. On the one hand, the Copernican revolution that Kant brought about in the field of epistemology about his questioning of reason itself by highlighting its limitations without detracting from its value was mainly to highlight its fertility in a broad way. Besides, he considered metaphysics as a philosophical issue in itself. He thought about the necessity of rescuing it and being careful not to disable or destroy it, but rather to work on leading it forward towards science and universality.

On the other hand, as for what is related to philosophizing as a possibility for children according to Kant, he emphasized that there is no point in teaching and presenting them ready-made ideas, but rather making them learn to think as a mechanism and as a personal practice in the free use of thought with all boldness and audacity. Thus, philosophy

is not limited to just filling in historical knowledge , but it is knowledge of the principles that it contains. This is the requirement of philosophizing as a specificity of philosophical thought that can be learned. Learning to think as an intrinsic faculty not indoctrinating contents. The role of the teacher, accordingly, is a guide, an advisor, and a companion in the teaching-learning process not the guardian of learners' minds. Thus, the learner is an active participant in the whole process.

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