

**COGITO ERGO SUM – 1st working visit of the project “Common Europe – Common Values”, 4-8 November 2019, Public Primary School no. 34 in Radom, Poland**

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**Topic of the lesson: Senses or reason? How to discover the truth about the reality that surrounds us?**

**School subjects:** history / philosophy / lessons with a form teacher

**Ages: 12-15 (actually may be any)**

**Methods:** brainstorming, work under the guidance of the teacher, a didactic game, a visualization

**Didactic materials:**

something to cover one’s eyes (e.g a scarf or a piece of cloth)

a box and the same types of fruit (e.g. pears, apples, oranges)

**Objectives of the lesson:**

Participants of the project will:

* gain knowledge about Descartes;
* explain the meaning of *senses*;
* explain the meaning of *cogito ergo sum;*
* learn how to pose questions;
* develop skills connected with drawing conclusions and logical thinking;
* realize the relevance of Descartes’ ideas;
* learn to look for ways leading to a better understanding of the truth and learn how to use philosophical reflection in everyday life;
* shape a critical approach to the reality and shape moral sensitivity;
* realize how important it is to base one’s life on the truth.

**Lesson activities**

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| 1. The teacher informs the children that during the class they are going to grasp the meaning of the words used by Descartes, a philosopher, namely *I think, therefore I am.*  The teacher explains what **the term philosophy** means – the most general, basic, critical knowledge of everything that exists, i.e. science dealing with reflections regarding the essence of being, sources of knowledge.  The teacher gives **general information about Descartes**. The teacher emphasizes that he was a French philosopher, physicist and mathematician; one of the most revolutionary minds in the 17th century, the so-called father of modern philosophy.  The teacher chooses a volunteer in order to do an experiment.  The volunteer gets his/her eyes covered with for example a scarf or a piece of cloth. The teacher explains that the volunteer is Homer – a blind man and then the teacher quietly chooses another volunteer. The teacher asks the second volunteer to come over to Homer. | Relying solely on his sense of touch, Homer tries to guess who the second volunteer is.  At the end of the experiment, Homer evaluates whether the task he has been given is easy. Homer points out what is difficult when it comes to the task. |
| The teacher sums up the experiment. The teacher emphasises the role of senses in the perception of the world by people. | The students enumerate different kinds of senses, try to realize how difficult it is to function without a particular sense. They provide examples of constraints. |
| The teacher carries out the second experiment. In this experiment, the teacher needs fruit, such as two apples, pears or oranges. The teacher takes out one fruit from the box. The teacher asks questions: What is it? How do you know if it is a particular type of fruit? Isn’t it a fake / a toy? Then, the teacher asks students to look closely at the fruit and describe it. | The students answer the questions and later they hold the fruit in their hands for a moment and examine it by means of the senses. They cannot leave any marks on the fruit. |
| The teacher asks the students if they think that the senses provide us with the whole truth about the fruit they are looking at? | The students answer the teacher’s question. |
| The teacher takes out the second fruit and gives it to the students. Then, the teacher puts it in the box.  The teacher takes out the fruit for the third time. It is the fruit no.1 – used and examined once again. After this round, the teacher puts the apple in the box again. | Some volunteers examine the fruit in the second and the third round. |
| The teacher asks a question: How many apples are there in the box? | The students, one by one, raise their hands if they think that:  a) there is only one fruit  b) there are two fruit  c) there are three fruit |
| The teacher summarizes the experiment:  1. If someone thinks **there is only one fruit**, then his/her conclusion is undeniably based on **rational thinking**. In this way, the students rely on their rational experience instead of a sensory one. Although the apples are different, the reason gives the students a hint that the teacher wants to deliberately mislead the class and he/she shows the same apple three times in a row.  2. If someone thinks **there are two fruit**,then his/her conclusion is based on **experience**. The students find out by means of the sense of sight that the apples are different. Their reason confirms this.  3. If someone thinks **there are three fruit**, then their senses and rational thinking fail – seeing two different apples in three rounds, the students come to the conclusion that there are three apples in the box.  The teacher pays attention to the issues such as the size of the fruit, their colour, visible marks etc. | The students listen and make comments. |
| The teacher informs the students that, according to Descartes, the thinking process plays an important role in searching for the truth. Even though it is difficult to explore the world with impaired senses, it is also very difficult to perceive the reality clearly without logical thinking. The teacher asks the students to get into pairs and come up with a slogan – the main theme of the lesson. Moreover, the teacher asks the students to think of a piece of advice on how to deal with various information that we receive on a daily basis. | The students write down the slogans – advice on how to look for the truth in life, e.g.:  Before you judge – think!  Before you take a decision – think it over! etc. |