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GRADO EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL – MENCIÓN EN INGLÉS

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING IN AN INFANT EDUCATION
CLASSROOM USING PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS"

"EL DESARROLLO DEL PENSAMIENTO CRÍTICO A TRAVÉS DE MÉTODOS
FILOSÓFICOS EN UNA CLASE DE EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL"

Autor: Pablo Ortega Manuel

Tutora académica: Patricia San José Rico

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Abstract

The objective of this document is to create an efficacious method for fostering critical thinking within the curriculum of Infant Education through a variety of philosophical approaches that facilitate the development of significant learning. This methodology is founded upon a number of philosophical aspects, including curiosity, enquiry, and dialogue.

In order to develop an effective method that can be evaluated, during the document different definitions of critical thinking are considered and the different skills and attitudes that the definitions involve. Once these attitudes and skills have been defined, I investigate the advantages of different philosophical methods developed by great thinkers, with the aim of indentifying the most effective links that can facilitate the development of critical thinking. Then, a table will be elaborated in which the development of different curricular contents can be facilitated through critical thinking.

The use of philosophical methods for the acquisition of curricular content through critical thinking will facilitate the development of essential attitudes in children such as the appreciation of learning from diverse perspectives, the consideration of alternative ideas, the evaluation of different information sources, and the active pursuit of knowledge through the lens of curiosity and enquiry.

Key words: critical thinking, philosophical methods, infant education, philosophy.

Resumen

A través de este trabajo de fin de grado se pretende elaborar un método efectivo para el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico dentro del marco curricular de la educación infantil a través de diferentes métodos filosóficos que permitan dar un sentido completo al aprendizaje, basándonos en principios filosóficos básicos como la curiosidad, la investigación o el diálogo.

Para conseguir que sea un método efectivo y pueda ser evaluado, durante el documento se consideran diferentes definiciones de pensamiento crítico y las diferentes habilidades y actitudes que son necesarias para lograr tener desarrollada esta competencia. Una vez especificadas las habilidades y actitudes necesarias, estudio las posibilidades de diferentes métodos filosóficos desarrollados por grandes pensadores con el fin de encontrar

las conexiones que puedan ayudar a mejorar el pensamiento crítico. Una vez investigado, elaboraré una plantilla en la que, a través del pensamiento crítico, se puedan desarrollar diferentes contenidos curriculares.

El uso de métodos filosóficos para desarrollar el pensamiento crítico y comprender contenidos curriculares supone desarrollar actitudes que permitan valorar el aprendizaje desde diferentes perspectivas, tener en cuenta las ideas de los demás, valorar las fuentes de información y aprender activamente a través de la curiosidad y la investigación.

Palabras clave: pensamiento crítico, métodos filosóficos, educación infantil, filosofía.

Introduction

Society is experiencing a shift in values, skills and mindsets as a result of the development of new technologies, socio-political conflicts and the nature of interpersonal relationships. The free publication of information to a certain extent leads to a constant influx of data, often of dubious validity, resulting in the creation of hoaxes and fake news, which often become part of the foundations of the population's thinking. The way in which these messages are understood, combined with the ability to follow populist discourses, leads to a generalised increase in radical thinking among citizens.

Far from the closeness that the new technologies should bring us to the world, people are getting distant. Following a misunderstood message of power and improvement of our own condition, we avoid looking at our reality, disengaged from problems that do not concern us at the moment.

In addition, a utilitarian society makes us see as valid only that which is tangible and whose results can be evaluated almost immediately and numerically. Maximum productivity and efficiency are sought in industry, business and even education, and we move away from the value of people, thought and reason.

On the other hand, the constant creation of new needs, the overstimulation that comes from social media and the idealisation of distant and unrealistic reference points are creating feelings of dissatisfaction, dislocation and hopelessness among the population, making mental health one of the main issues of these days and suicide one of the main causes of death among young people around the world.

Although the overall picture does not look optimistic, the hope resides in what can be achieved for the future, which can only be achieved through education and, above all, the development of critical thinking.

Through the development of critical thinking in childhood we can make children aware of their own needs as a part of the society that we form, leading to self-awareness about children's needs, abilities and desires, but also bearing in mind that the rights and needs of others also exist, making possible a peaceful existence where everyone has their place.

With this document I try to find a way for the development of critical thinking through philosophy, at a time when philosophy has lost its value to the point of being unknown to the new generations. I will browse among the methods of great thinkers and philosophers to create an educative method that can be used as a motor for the development of critical thinking in school, so that it can be developed in a structured and progressive way, starting from curiosity and discovery.

Main Objectives

- To assess how philosophical methods can be integrated into the infant education curriculum to develop critical thinking skills through the development of a didactical proposal.

To achieve this first objective, I focus on the next two smaller aims:

- To discuss the importance of developing critical thinking in Infant Education children.
- To analyse the usefulness of philosophical methods for the development of critical thinking in an Infant Education classroom.

By researching and reading the perspectives of different authors, I reach to different conclusions, which will later be shown in the theoretical framework, in order to fulfil these objectives.

- To develop assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of a particular method of promoting critical thinking, taking into account the curriculum.

To achieve this goal, I have defined critical thinking in a specific way based on different authors, I have selected the necessary skills and attitudes of a critical thinker, and I have developed rubrics with specific criteria for an effective assessment of critical thinking.

- To analyse the use of different activities for the development of critical thinking skills.

To analyse activities that can develop critical thinking, I have put some of them into practice with favourable conclusions.

Links with the Degree's Objectives

The elaboration of this document allows me to demonstrate and put into practice the acquisition of the knowledge that the Infant Education degree with a major in English Language aims to develop in its students.

Throughout the document I demonstrate the dominance of the following aspects:

- To be able to express oneself orally and in writing in English (level C1).

I have demonstrated the achievement of this objective through the writing of the document and, later, I will demonstrate it through the resulting presentation of the document in English.

- To design, develop and evaluate didactic proposals that use reading and drama in the approach to English in Infant Education.

To do this I have developed a didactic proposal and sequence that includes parts of reading and related activities that also improve children's critical thinking.

- To know the main methodological trends in foreign language teaching and their application to the learning of English at the different levels established in the curriculum.

To achieve this, I have used different teaching techniques that involve language learning, such as reading stories or using the language in everyday situations.

- To encourage a sense of initiative and an attitude of innovation and creativity in the practice of their profession.

I believe that I have achieved this objective by developing an original and innovative didactic proposal that combines different knowledge and seeks to achieve specific solutions and objectives.

These are some of the objectives and competences that I demonstrate through the elaboration of the following document.

Theoretical Framework

1. Critical Thinking.

1.1. A General Overview. Importance, Definitions and Skills

To begin the report, this section aims to give a general sense of the meaning of Critical Thinking (CT), first by considering its importance for education and for society, secondly by gathering various authors' definitions and skills in relation to CT, and finally by creating my own definition of CT, taking into account all the aspects that have been seen.

1.1.1. Importance

To consider the importance of critical thinking (CT) is necessary to know that society is changing in every way, and it will never stop changing. Nowadays, social and economic issues are the main goal for the growth of the nation, new technologies are being created that somehow improve the quality of life, but also change the roles that people have in society, as workers and as people (Enciso et al., 2017, p.81).

Moreover, this social era is characterised by the huge quantity of information that people have access to, where opinions and data are confronted, and the information is not always valid or true (Da Silva Almeida & Franco, 2011, p.178).

The relevance of CT is big, not only in the future, but in the present of the people too. At the same time that children start becoming aware of the amount of information that is accessible to them and know how to apprehend it, in the school context they are capable of develop autonomy to assess their tasks and consider others too (Da Silva Almeida & Franco, 2011, p.190).

Progress in today's society depends, among other things, on the ability to adapt to change, to cope with new technologies and the vast amount of information, and to think and reason coherently. All these aspects are related to CT, and its development offers great opportunities for children in the future and in the present.

If children are able to acquire CT from the school, they will be able to respond to future challenges that may arise in their lives. The society needs people who are capable of making decisions and solving problems, so in that way, it will be possible to have an impact on people's lives. That is why CT must be the essential resource for achieving a real

democracy, because people must think for themselves, taking the rest into account in a global world (Da Silva Almeida & Franco, 2011).

Following this we can recognise that critical thinking is important in the future, but also in the immediate present. The importance of CT for the future of society must be reflected in the present of education, as a basis for the development of different knowledge, starting from thinking. Some authors, like Brookfield, defend the development of CT as the main goal of education, as it helps the students to adapt to the social changes and to solve their problems and doubts (quoted from Enciso et al., 2017, p.82).

It is true that the development of CT appears in the curricula of different countries as a way for students to acquire competences for self-learning and for analysing own desires. Spanish curriculum defines CT as “a tool to make what has been learned work in real time, to generate new ideas, new theories, new products and new knowledge” (Decreto37/2022, de 29 de septiembre, p.48211, own translation).

But, once into practice, the implementation of a methodology that really emphasises on CT is not real, as there are not clear ways to assess and evaluate it (Enciso et al., 2017, p.82). That is why in education CT is a term that appears in the law but does not have more ways to be assessed or to be put into practice, or it is blurred between content and competences, and loses its real value.

So, a good implementation of the CT in the daily life of schools can help children to avoid some failures in common actions that people do almost every day, for example: taking decisions, solving common problems or comparing and contrasting information (Swartz R, 2018, p.15).

1.1.2. What is Critical Thinking?

Now that we have an idea of its importance, we need to know what critical thinking really is. It is possible that the lack of real implementation of CT and the absence of continuous and coherent assessment of CT in formal education has its origin in the lack of agreement on a common definition of CT, as it has different meanings and involves different skills depending on the definition used. Here are some of these definitions and approaches to the term.

The approach to CT has been done from different areas, as it includes a wide variety of knowledge and thinking skills, and it can be analysed from different perspectives. Philosophy, Psychology and Education have offered different definitions about the concept of CT including some of the skills that are related to their area.

Some of the philosophical approaches that Lai (2011, p.6) collected in her report come from some ideal ways of thinking in certain situations, and define CT thinking as: “a responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it relies upon criteria, is self-correcting and is sensitive to context,” (p.6) “a responsible thinking that is focused on deciding on what to believe or do” (p.6) or a “thinking aimed at forming a judgment where the thinking itself meets standards of adequacy and accuracy.” (p.6)

In contrast, the psychological approach definitions come from the way in which people process information in reality. Some of them define CT as (Lai, 2011, p.8): “the mental processes, strategies, and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts” or “the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome” (p.8).

The educational perspective on CT, derived from classroom context experiences, has led to the development of some taxonomies and ways of classifying the strategies of information processing have been developed, based on the ways that children have to organise and establish new knowledge (Lai, 2011, p.9). One of the examples is Bloom’s Taxonomy, which is a classification of the educational goals and skills for students and it is organised in a hierarchical way, as it underscores the acquisition of foundational skills and knowledge before some complex knowledge is developed (Aznar et al., 2012).

As we have seen in the previous definitions, CT is a way of thinking that involves a person’s thinking and that also takes into account the rest. Ruiz (2019, p.158) integrates these viewpoints, as he believes that CT is an innate ability that everyone has in order to understand themselves and the others, but requires cultivation. He emphasises the importance of the two main aspects that he believes are needed to understand CT: the circumstances and the context. Circumstances are everything that is part of people and cannot be chosen by them, and the context is the environment in which thinking is being developed and must be taken into account. (Ruiz, 2019, p.69)

All of the definitions that have been taken involve different skills to be defined, and this is the basis for Elder & Elder's definition of CT (quoted in Murawski, 2014, p.30): "Critical thinking is the mode of thinking about any subject, content or problem in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilful analyzing, assessing and reconstructing it." In conclusion, he believes that CT is a way of improving simple thinking because it involves some specific skills, such as analysis or evaluation.

Conversely, other authors reduce the meaning of CT as a means of approaching new ideas and situations logically and rationally (Murawski, 2014, p.28), focusing on the acquisition of new data rather than the depth of thought analysis.

This lack of an agreed definition of CT led me to search for the main skills that a critical thinker should have in order to be considered as such. To do this, it is necessary to analyse the previous definitions in detail and to get to the deeper meanings of all of them.

1.1.3. What Skills and Attitudes Are Involved in Critical Thinking?

No precise definition of CT has been developed as each of them take into account different aspects or skills that a person with a developed CT should have. In view of this, through this section I am going to gather the different skills or conditions that some authors believe important in a critical thinker so that I may find the way to improve them through different philosophical methods.

The skills that CT involves depend on the point of view that some authors have of this competence because, as I said, there is no specific way to define CT. Some of the definitions claim that thinking skills are developed from the arrival of new ideas or data and gain complexity as they are processed. Facione (2011) is one of the authors who think this way, and he identifies a set of core skills and their sub-skills that critical thinkers should have (p.5):

- Interpretation skill includes categorisation, decoding significance and clarifying meaning sub-skills in order to understand and explain ideas, data or beliefs.
- Analysis skill includes examining ideas, detecting arguments and analysing arguments as sub-skills to relate statements, questions or concepts.

- Evaluation skill as a way to assess the credibility of different statements coming from people's ideas and experiences, and as way to find the logical links between statements.
- Inference skill seeks to join the different elements needed in order to elaborate own hypotheses, consider important data and foresee consequences. Its sub-skills are consults of evidence, looking for alternatives and thinking about conclusions.
- Explanation skill means to be coherent and convincing when talking about our own ideas and reasoning. The sub-skills that explanation includes are justification, defending with a good reasoning the explanations and the use of description.

Following this line of thinking and skills progression, Swartz (2019), one of the creators of the Thinking Based Learning (TBL) methodology, identifies some key thinking skills that teachers should be teaching in a good way (p.18):

- Synthesis: generating ideas. This is the main basis for developing creativity, creating new things or solving everyday problems in different ways.
- Analysing: clarifying ideas. Analysing ideas is the basis for understanding. It starts with comparing and contrasting different ideas, then classifying and finally ranking and sequencing of what we have. Once this is achieved, it is possible to analyse arguments by finding reasons and conclusions.
- Evaluation: assessing the reasonableness of the ideas. It is used to distinguish between what it is true and what is not. First, it is important to train children to check the validity of the basic information through observation and the veracity of the information sources. Then, it is important to develop in them the ability to make inferences through prediction, analogy or generalisation. Finally, it is important for the children to develop action-oriented thinking which involves decision making and problem solving.

In addition to these skills, Alsaleh (2020, p.26) collects some authors' studies and finds some other skills that teachers should work on with children in order to be critical thinkers. Some of them are related to those mentioned by the previous authors. Verbal reasoning skills, assessing and analysing own ideas, argument analysis skills or decision making and problem solving skills are some of them.

Besides of the skills I have outlined above, various theorists have agreed that being a critical thinker involves more than that, as it also depends on different attitudes and habits that a person tends to use. For example, Gosner (2022) believes that CT also depends on the curiosity, open-mindedness, self-awareness, empathy, and persistence that a person possesses.

These important attitudes should also be included in the meaning of CT, as it is necessary that they are developed and strengthened in children in order to form CT. Alsaleh (2020, p.26) describes some of them:

- Open-mindedness as an attitude that implies accepting changes in one's thinking position after accepting better ideas through a reasoning process.
- Thinking and deciding through probability of success and uncertainty. This implies taking decisions and solving problems, skills shown above.

In conclusion, although there is no precise definition of CT, there is an agreement that all these skills and attitudes have an impact on the development of CT, so it is important to work on them in order to get children to think critically. Thus, if we educate and teach children with these skills and attitudes in mind, we will be teaching them in a way that they will develop CT. So, having identified the most important skills and attitudes, I will use philosophical methods to train them in the following sections.

SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Analysis • Evaluation • Inference • Explanation • Decision-making • Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence • Self-awareness • Curiosity • Open-mindedness • Empathy • Thinking through probability and uncertainty

Table 1. Skills and attitudes that need to be trained in order to develop CT. Own elaboration

1.1.4. Own Definition of CT

Once that I have gone through the importance of CT, the main definitions and the most important skills and attitudes, I will gather the most important aspects that I have found to create my own definition of CT that justifies the following sections and didactic proposal.

Based on the read documents, the importance that CT has, the skills and abilities that CT involves, and my own beliefs, my own definition is the following:

Critical thinking is the ability that enables a person to revise and change information, ideas and arguments, by assessing them through reasoning and questioning. In addition, the person is curious and persistent and, most importantly, acts on the basis of this reasoning, taking into account oneself, the others and the context of each.

In this way, through this definition, I want to emphasise the fact that CT requires both skills and attitudes, and also that to be a critical thinker it is important to have self-awareness at the same time as taking into account the context in which the person lives.

1.2.How to Improve Critical Thinking

The aim of this section is to analyse some important aspects that need to be taken into account in order to develop CT, for example the way to develop CT in a classroom or the materials that are important to use. The conclusions I draw will be used in the didactic proposal so that it can have a real impact in a classroom.

The debate surrounding the teaching and development of CT in children has yet to reach a clear conclusion. Some of the controversial points revolve around how and when to develop CT. On the one hand, some studies and authors, such as Kuek, believe that children can acquire a higher level of CT when it is taught as a separate subject, with a focus on both theoretical and practical aspects (quoted in Alsaleh, 2020, p.24). On the other hand, some other studies suggest that CT skills should be applicable in various contexts and situations, making CT a goal in each of them (p.23).

The assumption that CT should be developed individually and in isolation from other subjects clashes with the idea that it is a general competence for evaluating and interpreting one's own and others' knowledge, information and ideas, and as such should be included in all learning and as part of different subject areas (Lai, 2011, p.11).

After various studies and experiments, Swartz (2019) arrived at a way of mixing the CT skills with the curriculum content that children were learning, challenging the students through initial motivations that implied teaching them to think (p.74, own translation). He also came to other great conclusions about how to develop children's thinking (Swartz, 2019):

- The use of graphic organisers. These materials help children to organise their thinking, guide them through different thinking strategies and give them the opportunity to express their thinking and to ask their questions (p.29, own translation).
- Collaborative thinking in the classroom. It is useful to learn to listen to the others and helps the children to think that big questions need collaborative work. It develops reasoning skills and empathy in children (p.37, own translation).

In conclusion, it is important to develop CT in children while combining it with the curriculum content so that they would be able to learn by thinking rather than repetition and, more importantly, to train their thinking. The way to help children to develop it is through the use of graphic organisers so that children will have a guide to organise their ideas and a way to express their thinking. It is also important to develop CT in groups so that different ways of thinking are mixed and ideas can improve on each other.

2. Philosophy at School. A Way to Develop Critical Thinking

In the following section, I will explain why I find in philosophy and the methods of many of great thinkers to be an optimal way to develop CT in children. I will go through the meaning of philosophy and its importance, what is needed for children to do philosophy, and how philosophical methods can be used.

2.1. What Is Philosophy?

For centuries, mankind has been searching for answers to everything that happens to human beings and their environment. In the course of time, questions and thought were focused on different issues: nature, the human being and his existence, God, good and evil, and other big questions. Great thinkers used their thinking and reasoning in order to find a

valid explanation for these questions, and had to use reason as a way to confront earlier thinkers or contemporaries who were far removed from their thoughts.

The progress of science has led to the arrival of proven and undeniable solutions, putting an end to many of the ideas of the past (for example, we now know that rain does not depend on the sacrifices to the gods, but depends on the water cycle). However, many questions remain unanswered because science has not been able to reach to their answers or solutions. There are some questions that cannot be found in encyclopaedias because they have never been solved, for example those that talk about the existence of God, or about the way we should live, and each person has to create their own beliefs taking into account previous ones (Gaarder, 2011, p.27).

Taking this into account, philosophy appears as a way to try to find the answers or solutions to some of the human curiosities and concerns, and also to the issues that enclose the others and the world in which we live. “Philosophy is an activity people undertake when they seek to understand fundamental truths about themselves, the world in which they live, and their relationships to the world and to each other.” (DePauw University, n. d.).

Following this, the aim of philosophy is not only to find the answers, but also to find out whether the arguments are good and the reasoning is true (DePauw University, n. d.). So, it is important the way in which we try to get to those solutions, and the use of reason and self-thinking is what really matters in a society that just tries to find quick answers.

All these reasons lead us to think that philosophy is a way to find solutions in a logical way, to seek for new knowledge, to base one’s beliefs on reason and evidence, and to accept other beliefs that have been previously reasoned in a logical way (DePauw University, n. d.).

2.2.Can Children Do Philosophy?

It has sometimes been taken for granted that children at an early age have not yet reached the development necessary for a philosophical attitude because they may not have a sophisticated capacity for reasoning, or they may lack of training in some of the skills needed to express and communicate arguments in a reasonable and developed way. All these skills will be developed if they are trained, and it is important to know that it is up to the teachers to make children have a philosophical attitude towards this learning.

Teachers should encourage children to think for themselves and to provide the necessary conditions, paying attention to the group, the pedagogical moments and the didactic goals and requirements (Unesco, 2007). Furthermore, it is not important if children do not have a huge philosophical background, what is important is to provide them with the opportunity to discuss in a focused way and to guide them in the choices they have (Gaut & Gaut, 2012, p.2).

Philosophy is based on three fundamental axes: curiosity, wonder and the ability to question. All of these axes are innately present in the child (Ruiz, 2019,p. 81, own translation). Starting from this main reason, children have the main skills needed to do philosophy. Children's ability to ask questions about things that are happening around them provides to the teacher many possibilities to create a meaningful context to learn through questioning, discovery and own experiences, and these are some of the characteristics of some philosophical methods.

Besides, it is important to know that for the development of a philosophical thinking in children, social interaction is of great importance in all children's contexts, which is why the classroom is a great opportunity. It is necessary to introduce children to the habits of dialogue by paying attention to them and guiding the conversation through questions (Ruiz, 2019, p.65, own translation). In this way, children will develop their thinking taking into account the context in which they live and they will make decisions with others in mind.

The aim is not to turn the children into philosophers. The aim is to take advantage of the philosophical capacities that they have simply because they are children and to develop them rather than hide them. Through these capacities, it is necessary to teach them to order their thinking and to give them the necessary tools to communicate it (Ruiz, 2019, p.121, own translation).

In this way, we can see numerous advantages of using philosophical methods in the classroom. Learning different curricular content through philosophical enquiry develops children's ability to think and reason with others, builds their confidence and makes them more active learners through the stimuli that teachers present to them (Gaut & Gaut, 2012, p.3).

Thus, once that they have developed some philosophical skills, although they are still children, they will be able to organise their thoughts, listen attentively to the people next to

them, express their own ideas in an understandable way, and above all, question about the world in which they live.

2.3. Philosophical Methods. A Way to Apply them to develop Critical Thinking.

The passage of time changes the circumstances of citizenship: new concerns about politics emerge; people's religious beliefs change, ethics and the organisation of society find new ways. As people's views of things and issues change, so do the ways of finding truth or solutions to these concerns. The evolution of society leads to the emergence of new ideas (Studocu, n. d.). These changes originate in different ways of thinking and revive the rethinking of questions from the past. Thinkers use and refine past methods to arrive at knowledge, and in turn some new methods are created.

Next, I will analyse some of the most important methods used by philosophers to develop their knowledge, and to relate them to a possible educational implication for the improvement of CT skills. Some of the methods that have marked the history of thinking and will be used in this document are the following.

2.3.1. Mayeutic and Plato Dialectics Method. Socrates and Plato.

In the third and fourth century B.C., this method was originated by Socrates and it was later used and improved by Plato. It is based on the idea that the way to the truth is an opposition not of different opinions, but of an opinion and the criticism of it. That is why it should start from a first hypothesis that will be improved by the dialogue which carries the criticisms by exchanging affirmations and negations (Romero, 2019, p. 145)

This method consisted of two different parts. The first part consisted of questions and interjections to arouse people's interest in the topic that was being discussed. During the second part, once the topic was known, the master would throw questions and answers about the topic to the point where people realised that they did not have that level of knowledge about the topic. Finally, the "mayeutic construction" consisted of arriving at a universal truth or solution about the subject, but most of the time this was not achieved because of the complexity of the issues being discussed (Serna & Agudelo, 2006, p.4).

The importance of the method as a philosophy in itself was to create the path to knowledge through questioning and one's own search, with guidance from a master, rather

than to provide the truth (Smith, 2022, n. p.). Dialogue was used as a way of bringing different points of view closer together and as an intellectual enrichment for all those involved in the dialogues.

Considering the development of thinking through this method, questioning children's thinking under the guidance of a master can help to develop some of the following CT skills:

Explanation. This method is based on answering questions based on what children say, so it will help children to think and argue in a better way, filling their explanations with a thought process that lead them to reasonable arguments.

Verbal reasoning skills. The use of questions and arguments that clash with children's ideas can be used as a way for children to look for a justification for their answers, allowing and stimulating new ways of expressing their knowledge.

Persistence. Constant questioning and answering of questions with the aim of reaching to a conclusion, even if it is not always found, can help the children to persist in what they want to know or do, knowing that sometimes it will not be possible, but valuing the learning process.

Self-awareness. An important part of this method is to make learners aware about their lack of knowledge as the first premise for building new learning. Asking children questions about different topics can make them argue about their own thinking and rethink ideas from a reasoning perspective.

2.3.2. Rationalist- Empirical Method, Aristotelian Logic. Aristotle

Aristotle, one of the main followers of Plato's Academy, developed his own way of thinking. Aristotle's logic is a general theory of deduction, which deals with principles that come through valid reasoning (Parry & Hacker, 1991, p. 3). This method is based on observing and approaching nature as a way of understanding, so it tries to explain the experience through reason (Ayala, 2020, n. p.).

For Aristotle, every reason has two main elements: propositions and notions, which, when they are combined, create complex reasoning. For example: When it rains (proposition), the street gets wet (notion). So that we can deduce that when it is raining, the street gets wet (Parry & Hacker, 1991, p. 100).

In conclusion, observing and reasoning about what we can see in the nature is the seed for making logical deductions about what is happening. These aspects of experience can help to develop the following CT skills:

Interpretation. Children's observations of what is happening around their context and the use of simple deductions can lead them to better categorise and decode the meaning of their context.

Inference. The use of this method can help children to make simple and empirical deductions about what they experience every day, so that over time they will be able to make more complex deductions not only about what they see, but also about what they perceive through other senses.

2.3.3. Empirical Method. David Hume.

In the sixteenth century, Francis Bacon started a new trend, which defended that the development of any science comes from experience and observation. After a few years and thinkers such as John Locke, the most representative author of this current appeared: David Hume.

This method defends that knowledge comes from experience, which can be external experience (that which comes from the senses) or internal experience (that which comes from one's own interiority and reflection) (Rábade, 2005, p.217)

These experiences that we receive in a direct way (through senses or through reflection) are called impressions. When the perceptions are derived from a previous impression, they mix with the memories of previous experiences and they are called ideas. Hume says that every idea is derived from some impressions, and the idea has meaning only if it has a clear representation of the experiences and impression (Hume, 2004, p.67).

With this in mind, we will emphasise the importance of one's own experience, exploration and senses as the main way to gain new knowledge, and these are key aspects in developing some of the following CT skills:

Curiosity. Giving children the opportunity to have as many experiences in the nature as possible is the key to developing their curiosity, as nature is a way of continuous learning. Curiosity is only developed if it is constantly used, so it is important to guide children and

give them opportunities to work through their innate curiosity and let them explore their context.

Decision making. It is important to know that the quantity of experiences that children have will go into their minds in the form of ideas, so this will give children the opportunity to make decisions based on what they have felt or noticed in previous experiences. In this way, if children have a lot of experiences, they will find it easier to come up with solutions that are likely to work for them or the rest.

2.3.4. Methodical Doubt. René Descartes.

In the seventeenth century, René Descartes introduced a radical vision on the understanding of knowledge and the truth, as he established the doubt as the most important way to obtain a valid knowledge. He believed that the doubt could finish with the falsity and error of arguments and find the truth, and he tried to find a method that could arrive to the philosophical truth in a similar way that science started arriving to the scientific truth with the scientific method some years before (Aguilar, 2010, p.764).

This method of doubt is based on some rules or steps that must be followed in order to find the truth in a certain way. Matos et al. (2021) analysed Descartes' work and simplified the method of doubt method into several rules or steps, ordering them in the following way:

- Search for obvious truth. This aspect refers to the importance or not of accepting everything as true, but not as false. It is necessary to investigate and be completely sure before accepting anything as true. This is an essential skill of a thinker or investigator (p.978)
- The need to analyse. This step talks about the need to break down the different aspects as much as possible to get the simplest elements, so that it will be easier to review the small elements (p.978).
- The need to synthesise. This precept emphasises the importance of ordering the different elements in a way that goes from the simplest to the most complex (p.979).
- Principle of numbering and revision. The last part of the method is based on the importance of checking all of the previous steps, making sure that nothing is left out or done wrong, in a strict way (p.979).

In conclusion, this method is still inspiring CT and making sense about today's debates, as the scepticism that it applies generates a detailed analysis, leading to a personal growth and knowledge of the world.

This way to analyse everything in a very detailed mode through specific steps can help the low-aged children to separate issues and questions into smaller and more understandable parts, promoting the improvement of understanding and CT skills such as:

Analysis. The methodical doubt allows the children to follow the rules so that they can divide what they want to analyse into smaller aspects that are more understandable to them, thus improving their analysing skill.

Evaluation. Using the rules of different methods can help the children to develop an objective evaluation through a real observation, and learn the differences about true or false arguments, or reasonable and non-reasonable solutions.

Problem-solving. The use of the methodical doubt as a way of finding the main reasons and truths can help the children to improve their problem-solving skills, as they will try to find the truth of what is happening in order to reach a solution.

2.3.5. Alterity. Emmanuel Levinas

In the twentieth century, the figure of Emmanuel Lévinas emerged as a part of contemporaneous philosophy. His experience in a concentration camp during the Second World War formed the basis of his philosophical work, which is based on ethics and human relations.

The idea of alterity is one of his most contemporary contributions to philosophy and is born from the idea that the first thing to think about in philosophy is the relationship with others, because in this relation we can find everything we need to progress and learn (Martínez, 2019, n. p.).

Otherness is based on being aware of ourselves and taking into account the similarities and differences that we have with others, trying to understand the others by understanding ourselves. Others are so important that alterity begins when I establish a dialogue with other people and ideas are exchanged (Reynolds, 2002, p.65). The other is not an object or something to be possessed or dominated or controlled, but it is, first and

foremost, another who deserves my respect and whose freedom I must defend as much as I defend my own freedom.

Taking all this into account will allow us to respect the others and create strong affective relationships, while having our own opinions. In this way we can develop respect, tolerance and freedom. In a children's classroom, this idea should be the basis for the interactions and for healthy relationships. That is why I believe in the implementation of alterity in a classroom as a way to develop several CT skills, such as:

Evaluation. Taking into account the other people's circumstances and understanding the reason for their actions through dialogue can help the children to evaluate in a complete social context.

Open-mindedness. The use of dialogue and the exchange of ideas with other people will give the children a wider view of what is happening around them, making it easier for them to understand their context and to know other people's conditions.

Decision-making. The use of dialogue to know others will allow children to make decisions when the other person's perspective is also included, allowing them to make decisions based on common tolerance and freedom.

Problem-solving. When solving problems, it is important to know the situation of every side of the conflict. In this way, alterity tries to understand the other's situation through dialogue, resulting in tolerance and knowledge before any solution.

Empathy. It is necessary to promote the dialogue with others in order to exchange ideas, allowing the children to know their interests, facilitating the creation of affective relationships between them.

Self-awareness. The use of dialogue with others can be a way for children to know their position on different issues, taking into account the opinions of others.

In conclusion, all these methods have laid the foundations for the thinking of many generations throughout history. The importance of all of them lies in the way in which authors think in order to gain knowledge, using their own ideas, relying on past sources, evaluating information and exercising their minds. In this way, I believe that the methods mentioned above can be of great importance for the development of critical thinking in the

classroom, because, if the teachers take into account the characteristics of the of the students for their use, these thinking methods can be a way for children to think for themselves, evaluate information and develop their own ideas that can be useful to them in the future.

3. Didactic Proposal

3.1. Justification

The aim of the following proposal is to create a sequence of activities to develop CT through the philosophical methods I have explained above, in which curricular contents must be integrated to develop them through thinking. To clarify, the aim is not to teach children methods of philosophy and its thinkers, but to use these methods in order to teach the different contents of the curriculum in the classroom so that the children go through them and develop CT.

One of the main characteristics of this proposal is that it can be applied and related to all contents and areas of the Infant Education, as it presents a sequence where different materials and activities can be adapted to the different development levels. Besides, this proposal presents a specific assessment plan in order to evaluate the development of CT in children, so that it would be possible to be aware of the progress of children in this competence, which, even though it is not considered a key competence in the curriculum, it appears in it.

Moreover, this proposal follows the methodological principles of the Spanish Curriculum for Infant Education (Decreto37/2022, de 29 de septiembre, p.48216), as it:

- Contributes to the integral development of children, taking into account all of their domains (physical, affective, social, cognitive and artistic), in addition to social and civic values.
- Respects the diversity of the children in the group in their learning needs, as it includes options and materials that can be adapted to different learning and development speeds.
- Provides the children with motivating experiences that develop meaningful and significant learning in line with their interests.
- Provides different learning opportunities to acquire knowledge in different ways, from the experience to metacognition, and guides them through their autonomy.
- Is global in that it links different knowledge and involves different areas of development.

To check the validity of the following proposal, it will be presented in two different ways. First, I will present the general sequence to follow in order to get the critical thinking

competences, skills and contents. Then, I will add a specific content from the Spanish curriculum in order to be developed through the critical thinking proposal, so it can be used as an example of its application.

3.2. Contextualisation

The following didactic proposal sequence is designed to be developed in a 5-year-old classroom for Infant Education, regardless of the characteristics of the school or classroom, as it can be adapted to the development and level of knowledge with different materials, and its importance makes it useful in any school context (rural, urban, public, private,...).

3.3. Contents

The use of this sequence will develop some main contents that the Spanish Curriculum for Infant Education gathers. The contents of the Spanish Curriculum for Infant Education are grouped in three different areas: growth in harmony, discovery of the environment and communication and representation of reality. All of these areas should be developed simultaneously, that is why the following proposal has an impact on all of them. The following contents are the most important ones that the general structure and critical thinking proposal can provide to children in each of the areas (Decreto37/2022, de 29 de septiembre, own translation).

The different activities that involve group collaboration for the resolution of tasks, conflict-solving, communication through dialogue and active listening and the achievement of common objectives through understanding and work allow the following contents to be developed:

- Diversity in the classroom: willingness to build tolerant and affective relationships that promote inclusion.
- Tools for the identification, expression, acceptance and progressive control of one's own needs, emotions, feelings, experiences, preferences and interests.
- Strategies for developing listening and respectful attitudes towards others.
- Conflict resolution when interacting with others.
- Teamwork: individual responsibility and cooperative skills.
- Social conventions of linguistic exchange in communicative situations which promote respect and equality: attention, active listening, turn-taking and alternation.

- Oral language in everyday situations: assemblies, conversations in pairs, small and large groups, routines, social interaction games, symbolic play and expression of experiences. Interest in participating, being listened to and respected.

Through the work routines, the graphic organisers of the different sessions, the sequencing of activities and learning based on previous knowledge, the following contents are developed:

- Routines: sequenced planning of actions to solve a task.
- Relations of order, correspondence, classification and comparison according to various criteria.
- Seriousness and logical temporal sequences.
- Strategies for constructing new knowledge: relationships and connections between the known and the new, and between previous and new experiences; scaffolding and quality interactions with adults, peers and the environment.
- Strategies for proposing solutions: creativity, dialogue, imagination and discovery.
- Progressive autonomy and initiative in carrying out tasks.

Through the use of images and texts in different formats, the reading of stories, questioning and dialogue, content related to oral and written comprehension is achieved, as well as initiation in the elaboration of written texts in different formats. The contents included in this sequence are the following:

- Types of texts: Narrative texts (stories, events and anecdotes).
- Other codes of graphic representation: images, pictograms, symbols, numbers.
- Reading animation through different techniques: paper, digital, kamishibai, puppets, puppet theatre and shadow theatre.

3.4.Critical Thinking Development General Sequence

In this section I will present the general sequence and characteristics of the structure of this proposal. This structure is the main basis into which the different contents can fit, so that it can be used to teach all contents through philosophical methods, being possible to learn contents in a way that children develop critical thinking. The following sequence will have different activities involving a specific philosophical method, taking into account the previous knowledge and linking to the next.

Session 1: Mayeutics through storytelling.

JUSTIFICATION	
<p>Students are encouraged to think deeply about the story events and characters in the story and to offer their own interpretations and predictions. The teacher will facilitate a discussion, giving each student the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and respond to their peers. Besides, the teacher will guide the conversation with questions that make children rethink their first beliefs, to make them develop reasons or think new options.</p>	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop critical thinking skills by analysing a story through questions. • To foster comprehension skills by discussing elements of the story and actively participating in discussions. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make predictions about a topic/story. • To engage in a dialogue about the text and the topic of the unit. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayeutics. • Methodical doubt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Verbal reasoning skills • Interpretation • Curiosity • Self-awareness
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>This activity is the introduction to the sequence.</p> <p>During this activity, the teacher will show a selected storybook related to the topic that will be used during the unit. This age-appropriate and engaging storybook will be the starting point for a set of questions (Annex 1). There will be questions that can be asked to the children before, during and after reading, with the aim of getting the children to make their own predictions and develop some curiosity about the topic.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	

Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if:

- Children make questions related to the topic and participate actively.
- Children are able to make predictions about a story through questions and images.
- Children can draw conclusions after reading a story.

Session 2. Our experiences from the Methodical Doubt.

JUSTIFICATION	
<p>The use of the methodical doubt method with children is useful for them so that they can get information through their experiences and take into account the things they could check as true. Guiding experience through doubt develops children's thinking skills and encourages them to question everything they encounter. Through doubt and scepticism, children develop curiosity and a willingness to explore new ideas and perspectives.</p>	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage children to question their experiences and their knowledge. • To develop skills for evaluating evidence and forming individual judgments. • To develop an open and sceptical approach to learning. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate and identify sources of information. • To answer questions taking into account previous experience. • To express their doubts by asking questions about the different experiences and learning they encounter. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodical doubt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Evaluation • Analysis • Persistence • Curiosity • Problem solving
TIMING	
<p>It depends on the activity chosen by the teacher.</p>	

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY
The activity consists of giving the children a series of the questions, doubts and the things that children asked in the previous activity and after the storytelling. In this session they will be given a graphic organiser (Annex 2) where they will verify the answers to the questions they made and the doubts they had after their experiences.
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT
Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children ask doubts about a topic. - Children express orally their doubts in a good way.

Session 3. Exploration through real experience.

JUSTIFICATION	
The aim is to engage the children's senses to explore and interact with the elements of the unit's topic. In this way, the children will be able to solve some of the questions from the previous sessions, develop their curiosity through real experiences and create new knowledge coming from the children's senses.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote new knowledge through direct interaction with the real elements of the topic. • To develop sensory awareness and sense skills. • To stimulate curiosity for learning through real experiences. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe some of the experiences that children have had. • To ask questions about the elements they have seen. • To use their senses to explore the context in which the activity is being developed. • To make basic inferences taking into account previous knowledge. • To verify the things that are true or not through their experience. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical method. • Mayeutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Inference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Decision-making • Curiosity • Open-mindedness
TIMING	
It depends on the experience, as a didactic trip to a farm is not the same as looking for rubbish in the park next to the school.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>This activity involves providing the children with real experiences related to the topic chosen for this unit and that has been started in Session 1. These experiences can take place in the classroom or outdoors, bearing in mind that they must involve real elements.</p> <p>The role of the teacher during this session is to facilitate this experience by guiding the topic and bringing in elements that can be useful for the children to achieve the learning objectives.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
<p>Through the direct observation of the teacher and conversation, we can know if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children explore their context using their senses. - Children communicate the things they found or they learned. - Children make inferences about the aspects they observe. 	

Session 4. Classifying experiences.

JUSTIFICATION
<p>The use of classification following previous experience serves several purposes in developing children's knowledge and critical thinking, as it requires children to organise and categorise information, it is useful in understanding the relationships between different elements, it develops children's problem-solving skills and it encourages them to make decisions. In addition to the necessary explanations of their classifications, this activity encourages children to express their thoughts, ideas and experiences.</p>
LEARNING OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop classification skills by organising materials based on previous

<p>experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage critical thinking by classifying items according to different criteria. • To develop verbal reasoning and explanation skills through discussion about the criteria. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To classify elements according to different criteria. • To explain their reasoning about their classifications using verbal communication. • To identify similarities and differences between different items. • To group elements in different ways according to different criteria. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalist empirical method. • Mayeutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Verbal reasoning skills • Interpretation • Analysis • Inference • Decision-making • Problem solving
TIMING	
1 hour	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>Following the exploration activity, this activity involves classifying and organising the experiences the children have had using different adapted materials provided by the teacher. These analysis materials will have analysis facilitators and elements from their recent exploration. Then children will be guided to categorise and classify according to different aspects such as similarities and differences, colours, and other criteria.</p> <p>All the activity will be led by the teacher, whose main role is to guide their choices and classifications through questions, encouraging the children to express their ideas and justify their decision by reasoning. No answer is wrong if it is well-founded, so the teacher's main aim is to elicit reasoning from children.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
Through the direct observation of the teacher, we can know if:	

- Children classify elements according to different criteria.
- Children explain their reasoning about their classifications using verbal communication.
- Children identify similarities and differences between different items.
- Children group elements in different ways according to different criteria

Session 5. Alterity. A cooperative approach to the unit.

JUSTIFICATION	
Promoting alterity and respect for others is crucial for the social and emotional development of children. This part of the sequence consists of carrying out a group activity related to the topic of the unit in which the pupils can realise that they have different views on the topic in a respectful and sharing way.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop an understanding of the importance of considering the feelings and perspectives of others. • To encourage cooperation and teamwork skills in social interactions. • To enhance communication skills to express thoughts and feelings. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to and value the reasons and perspectives of others. • To work effectively with others to achieve common goals. • To express thoughts, feelings, and perspectives in a variety of social situations. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Interpretation • Evaluation • Open-mindedness • Empathy • Problem solving skills
TIMING	
It depends on the activity chosen by the teacher.	

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

In this activity, the children will engage in different social interactions and cooperative tasks that emphasise the importance of considering others. All of them should take into account the previous sessions of the sequence and the unit, in order to give a general sense to the sequence. Following this, the teacher will guide the children to find what things the class can do to help with the topic and later children will develop an activity related to it.

Some of the activities suggested in this section are:

- Role-playing situations. Some of the elements seen in the previous activities can be included so that the children can represent their knowledge to them and know the opinions of the class.
- Collaborative games. Games where the children have a common goal to achieve and where everyone has a role to play.
- Shared activities. Simple activities that involve shared tasks such as painting simple pictures or doing a craft together.

EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT

Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if:

- Children listen to and value the reasons and perspectives of others.
- Children express thoughts, feelings, and perspectives in a variety of social situations.

Through direct observation and a rubric of cooperative work we can assess if:

- Children work effectively with others to achieve common goals.

Session 6. Mayeutics and alterity to evaluate.

JUSTIFICATION

Evaluating a unit through alterity and mayeutics for children provides a holistic approach to assessment that goes beyond traditional methods. By incorporating alterity (considering other people's perspectives) and mayeutics (questioning), this activity develops critical thinking.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop empathy and understanding of the feelings, thoughts and experiences of others. • To improve communication skills through verbal expression and dialogue. • To promote self-awareness and reflection on personal and collective learning experiences. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider and value the views and contributions of their peers and teachers. • To comment on opinions about other's experiences and work in a respectful way. • To identify some of the learning they have done and different aspects they need to improve. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterity. • Mayeutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation. • Verbal reasoning skills. • Interpretation. • Analysis. • Evaluation. • Self-awareness. • Open-mindedness. • Empathy. • Problem solving.
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>The activity consists of showing different photos that the teacher has taken during the unit, and other photos of some important aspects of the unit. The photos should show moments in which the children appear, so that they can include the process they went through to learn the different things.</p> <p>The photos are shown, collected and pasted up in a corner of the classroom so that the children can collect all of the learning they have gained during the year.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	

Through the direct observation of the teacher, we can know if:

- Children consider and value the views and contributions of their peers and teachers.
- Children comment on opinions about other's experiences and work in a respectful way.
- Children identify some of the learning they have done and different aspects they need to improve.

3.5. Development of an Specific Content through Critical Thinking Sequence

In this section I will use the Critical Thinking Sequence developed above in order to teach a specific content. The aim of this example is to show the applicability of the sequence to teach a specific content while developing CT in children.

In addition to the contents implicit in the sequence and explained above, the following content from the Spanish Infant Education curriculum (Decreto37/2022, de 29 de septiembre, p.48277, own translation), will be used to demonstrate its applicability with the following content:

- Living and inert beings. Similarities and differences. Natural and social environments. The relationships established between them.

Session 1: The nature story.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop critical thinking skills by analysing a story through questions. • To foster comprehension skills by discussing elements of the story and actively participating in discussions. • To understand the meaning of living and inert beings. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make predictions about a topic/story. • To engage in a dialogue about the text and the topic of the unit. • To distinguish some simple characteristics of the leaving beings. • To distinguish some simple characteristics of the inert beings. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayeutics. • Methodical doubt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Verbal reasoning skills • Interpretation • Curiosity • Self-awareness
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>The content of the topic will be introduced through the story: . The teacher will lead a dialogue between the whole class in an assembly. This first dialogue will be based on pre-reading questions to find out what the children know, to develop predictions and to strengthen their imagination.</p> <p>Then, during the story, the teacher will stop at important moments to ask questions related to the course of the story. In this way, the children will be able to establish temporal relationships within the story (first, then, finally...) and they will also be able to check their predictions and reinforce the content.</p> <p>Finally, at the end of the story, the teacher will have a final conversation with the children, asking them questions that will make them draw conclusions and that will arouse their curiosity about the topic and give rise to the rest of the sessions.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
<p>Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children make questions related to the living and inert beings. - Children participate actively. - Children are able to make predictions about the story through questions and images. - Children can draw conclusions after story reading. 	

Session 2. Our questions about living and inert beings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage children to question their experiences and their knowledge. • To develop skills for evaluating evidence and forming individual judgments. • To develop an open and sceptical approach to learning. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate and identify sources of information. • To answer questions taking into account previous experience. • To express their doubts by asking questions about the different experiences and learning they encounter. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodical doubt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Evaluation • Analysis • Persistence • Curiosity • Problem solving
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>For the development of this activity, a poster will be made with drawings and the questions that the children have drawn from the story. Some examples related to this topic could be: Can inert beings grow? Can all living things move?</p> <p>Moreover, a graphic organiser (Annex 2) will be made, in which the children can list the questions and later the answers they got.</p> <p>These activities encourage the search for solutions and the development of the pupils' curiosity and investigative spirit, so that they can test their doubts through their own experience.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
<p>Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children ask doubts about the living and inert beings. - Children express orally their doubts in a good way. 	

Session 3. A walk around the park.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote new knowledge through direct interaction with real elements. • To develop sensory awareness and sense skills. • To stimulate curiosity for learning through real experiences. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate and identify sources of information. • To describe some of the experiences that children have had. • To solve some of the questions about living and inert beings through experience. • To make basic inferences taking into account previous knowledge. • To verify if the doubts about the living and inert beings that are true or not through their experience. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical method. • Mayeutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Inference • Explanation • Decision-making • Curiosity • Open-mindedness
TIMING	
3 hours.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	

This activity will be an educational outing to a park near the school, where they will be able to find real experiences with living and non-living creatures that will help them to find answers and solutions to the questions and doubts raised in class.

The educational trip to the park will have four moments. Firstly, the children will be able to explore the park freely, trying to find physical elements and make first observations to increase their curiosity and autonomy.

Second, the children will be given a booklet with the pictures and questions and the class will be able to tick or cross the answers.

Thirdly, there will be a small assembly where the children will tell what they have seen, so that they can share experiences, compare observations and draw conclusions together.

Finally, in order to use the environment for their enjoyment and to increase their motivation around the topic, two cooperative games will be played.

EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT

Through the direct observation of the teacher and conversation, we can know if:

- Children explore the park using their senses.
- Children communicate the things they found or they learned.
- Children make inferences about the living and inert beings through the aspects they observed.

Session 4. Classifying experiences.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To develop classification skills by organising their ideas and conclusions about the living and inert beings.
- To encourage critical thinking by classifying items according to different criteria.
- To develop verbal reasoning and explanation skills through discussion about the criteria.
- To learn the differences between living and inert beings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To explain their reasoning about their classifications using verbal communication.
- To identify similarities and differences between different items.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To group elements in different ways according to different criteria. • To differentiate between living and inert beings through different classifications. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalist empirical method. • Mayeutics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Verbal reasoning skills • Interpretation • Analysis • Inference • Decision-making • Problem solving
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>For this activity, the children will have three moments to classify elements using graphic organisers (Appendix 4) according to different criteria related to the topic.</p> <p>First, in groups of 4, the children are given a series of pictures of living and inert creatures that they could observe in the park and which they have to paste on the organiser of living and inert creatures.</p> <p>Then, individually, they will have to place three pictures in a common folder with the rest of the class. These pictures will follow the following classification: Living things can... / Inert things can't...</p> <p>Finally, a classification will be made in big group. This classification is based on basic inferences that the children will have developed and responds to the following sentences: Living things have... / Inert beings do not have....</p> <p>With this activity, the children will have responded to three types of classifications, in which they will use graphic organisers to structure their thoughts and experiences on the subject of living and inert beings, encouraging individual and group work with common goals.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
<p>Through the direct observation of the teacher, we can know if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children classify elements according to different criteria. 	

- Children explain their reasoning about their classifications using verbal communication.
- Children identify similarities and differences between different items.
- Children group elements in different ways according to different criteria.

Session 5. Decorating together.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop an understanding of the importance of considering the feelings and perspectives of others. • To encourage cooperation and teamwork skills in social interactions. • To enhance communication skills to express thoughts and feelings. 	
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to and value the reasons and perspectives of others. • To work effectively with others to achieve common goals. • To express thoughts, feelings, and perspectives in a variety of social situations. 	
PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS	SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation • Interpretation • Evaluation • Open-mindedness • Empathy • Problem solving skills
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>This activity consists of using different inert elements to decorate the classroom.</p> <p>Firstly, the children will look around the playground for different inert elements and this will allow them to check in a real way if they have understood and internalised the concepts of the previous sessions.</p> <p>Afterwards, a free craft will be made with these inert elements to decorate the classroom and in this way everyone will be able to be part of a common goal that will benefit them all. An</p>	

example could be painting stones or making puppets with sticks, but the result will be the fruit of their imagination.

EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT

Through the direct observation of the teacher and the dialogues, we can know if:

- Children listen to and value the reasons and perspectives of others.
- Children express thoughts, feelings, and perspectives in a variety of social situations.

Through direct observation and a rubric of cooperative work we can assess if:

- Children work effectively with others to achieve common goals.

Session 6. Our experience in photos!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To develop empathy and understanding of the feelings, thoughts and experiences of others.
- To improve communication skills through verbal expression and dialogue.
- To promote self-awareness and reflection on personal and collective learning experiences.
- To assess in group the living and inert beings experience.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To consider and value the views and contributions of their peers and teachers.
- To comment opinions about others' experiences and work in a respectful way.
- To identify some of the learning they have done and different aspects they need to improve.

PHILOSOPHICAL CURRENTS

- Alterity.
- Mayeutics.

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED

- Explanation.
- Verbal reasoning skills.
- Interpretation.
- Analysis.
- Evaluation.
- Self-awareness.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-mindedness. • Empathy. • Problem solving.
TIMING	
1 hour.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY	
<p>A sequence graphic organiser with arrows (Annex 3) is used for this activity. The teacher will show the pupils different pictures taken during the sessions. The children will decide together and paste them in the order that the children have followed to develop their learning.</p> <p>In addition, the teacher will accompany the activity with a conversation in which the children can explain the sequence they have followed and also remember the basic characteristics and general elements of living and inert beings. They can also talk about what they liked best and least or what they would change.</p> <p>In this way, the children can become aware of the process they have followed, how they have gone from ignorance to a certain knowledge of the subject through different methods such as dialogue, experience or classification.</p>	
EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT	
<p>Through the direct observation of the teacher, we can know if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children consider and value the views and contributions of their peers and teachers. - Children comment opinions about other's experiences and work in a respectful way. - Children identify some of the learning they have done and different aspects they need to improve. 	

3.6.Evaluation

The evaluation of this proposal will seek to specify concrete criteria for the skills and attitudes mentioned throughout the document, so that the assessment of critical thinking can be tangible and real. For these, the critical thinking skills (Annex 4) and the critical thinking attitudes (Annex 5) will be evaluated through a specific rubric. Moreover, it is necessary to assess if children if were able to work as a team with teamwork rubric (Annex 6).

In order for students to be involved in the assessment of their learning and for teachers to have specific tasks in assessment, the following features and differentiations are established.

Self-assessment.

The children will assess themselves in Session 6, when they will follow a trace over their learning and talk about the different things they have learned. Besides, the different activities will provide them different elements in which they will assess their own work.

Teacher assessment.

This assessment will be based on observations of the different types of evidence throughout the proposal and will be systematically reflected in a general rubric at the end of each unit using this proposal. The teacher is responsible for:

- Directly observing the children's attitudes during the sessions.
- Listening to the children's ideas and thoughts, as this can be the key to seeing the progression of their learning.
- Directly observing and guiding the children to their own correction of the graphic organisers used during the different activities.
- Filling in the children's rubric, assessing the pupils by their own example and informing the families about the progress.

In conclusion, this evaluation offers the possibility to see the real development of children's critical thinking while they get different learning.

3.7. Reflections on the Partial Implementation of the Proposal

In the internship period, I have had the opportunity to carry out some of the activities included in the proposal explained about. However, the context in which I have developed my internship has many differences with the Spanish educational context, as I have had the opportunity to do this internship in the Atsiame-Heluvi School, a rural school in Ghana.

Ghana, located in West Africa, has an educational system that has undergone significant changes in recent decades, but it lacks material and professional resources, as the economy means that resources are limited, and the lack of appreciation of the teaching profession in the

country and teacher training means that the educational system remains a traditional model, based on systematic repetition and memorisation.

Comparing the education system in Ghana with that in Spain, several significant differences emerge that may influence the development of critical thinking. For example, there are differences in curriculum and teaching methods require adaptive approaches to promote critical thinking in each context. This must take into account the material possibilities of the classroom, as well as the contextualisation of the learning situations to be developed with the background knowledge of the Ghanaian learners, which is very different from that of the Spanish learners. For example, Ghanaian students have their fine and gross motor skills more developed than Spanish students, because of their developmental background and constant contact with the natural environment. However, due to the lack of methods that allow children to manage themselves in the classroom, they have not interiorised rules of behaviour, creating some difficulties to me and to the teaching I was used to do in Spain.

In addition, differences in access to resources and technology can affect the implementation of strategies to develop critical thinking. While schools in Spain are more likely to have access to updated materials and educational technology, schools in Ghana face limitations in terms of infrastructure and available resources. This calls for alternative approaches, such as the use of low-cost educational materials or the promotion of critical thinking skills through practical and experiential activities.

With this proposal in mind, the implementation of specific activities to promote critical thinking in a school in Ghana has required the adaptation and consideration of several factors. Firstly, it is important to understand the specific needs and characteristics of Ghanaian students. One of these characteristics is a lack of habit for non-repetitive activities. This means that in the first activities, children were afraid to ask questions, converse or put forward ideas. In addition, their context makes their learning much more experiential, and the activities do not allow for long moments of concentration. Therefore, it is important to alternate educational moments quickly, and to combine them with physical movement. Another feature is the clash of languages, as many of the pupils are only fluent in Ewe, the language of the school area, and the communication that I had with them involved a developed non-verbal communication and the use of props such as drawings or pictures to tell stories or understand exercises.

The experience of implementing activities that enable the development of critical thinking in a school in Ghana has provided me with valuable pedagogical and personal lessons and reflections, and has allowed me to assess the functioning of some of the activities in the proposal developed above. Firstly, I have appreciated the simplicity of the material resources presented in the developed proposal. In this way, I was able to carry out some of the planned activities without having to make any changes to the way they were programmed, thus proving that the lack of material and economic resources in the school does not prevent the normal development of the planned proposal.

In addition, the flexibility of the proposal in terms of the topics to be worked on and the context in which it was developed has allowed for easy adaptation and contextualisation of the pedagogical practices to meet the specific needs of the students, as it was possible to work with stories related to their context, thus allowing for a student-centred approach based on their own culture.

One of the activities carried out in the proposal was Session 1. Throughout the internship period I was able to carry out three storytelling activities that included questions and conversations with the class. Through the use of stories and the inclusion of dialogue and questions, I was able to observe several aspects. The first one is that, as the story progresses, the students become more interested in the topic of the story, thus increasing their curiosity and persistence to get answers to their questions. The second aspect of improvement I could observe was in their ability to ask questions: after the first story, the children's questions focused only on the why of what was happening; in the third story, I could observe how they also asked about the characters and their actions, or about the places where the story took place. In this way, I could say that the pupils improved their open-mindedness as well as their ability to analyse facts.

The other activity that I was able to carry out as a result of the proposal was Session 3, which corresponds to exploration and personal experience. In this aspect, I must highlight the privileged position of the school in relation to nature, the absence of physical barriers in the playground, as well as the natural environment of the school, allows for the development of critical thinking.

I also give importance to the need for a holistic approach to the development of critical thinking, including not only cognitive, but also socio-emotional and cultural skills. This

implies the integration of interdisciplinary approaches and the promotion of an inclusive and collaborative learning environment where students feel safe to express their opinions and challenge ideas.

Implementing the activities derived from the proposal to promote critical thinking in a school in Ghana has presented unique challenges due to the differences in educational, socio-economic and cultural context compared to Spain. However, it has given me the opportunity to assess the relevance and effectiveness of some of the activities in the proposal in an environment where traditional schooling based on repetition and memorisation predominates and where individual and critical thinking is not valued and therefore not worked on.

4. Conclusions

The genesis of this document can be attributed to two primary factors. First, from the firm conviction that critical thinking is a crucial competence in a world full of technology, all kind of data, conflicting information, radicalised thinking and a lack of individual thought. Secondly, I have a personal interest in philosophy and all the implications across every aspect of human life. The combination of both has led me to the elaboration of this document, which seeks to develop critical thinking while implementing the methods of great thinkers.

Through investigation and thinking, I have identified a possible way to apply the philosophical methods in an Infant Education classroom in order to develop critical thinking. Additionally, I have identified a possible classification of specific skills and attitudes to improve, which could lead to a realistic assessment and evaluation of the progress of children in critical thinking.

Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from this research are that philosophical methods lay the foundation for lifelong learning in infant education. Encouraging children to ask philosophical questions and engage in imaginative exploration nurtures their natural curiosity and intellectual development. Through storytelling, play, and structured inquiry, educators can develop critical thinking skills from a young age.

Philosophical methods enhance students' capacity for analytical thinking and argumentation. The integration of philosophical methods to develop curricular contents enables students to engage with ethical dilemmas, explore diverse worldviews, and develop informed opinions. By developing students' reasoning abilities and encouraging intellectual autonomy, educators prepare them to navigate the complexities of the modern world. As we navigate the complexities of the twenty-first century, the development of critical thinking through philosophical methods remains essential for the shaping of informed citizens and to promote a culture of curiosity and inquiry.

It has always been my intention as a teacher to foster critical thinking in my students, while simultaneously ensuring their happiness. In this way, children will be able to achieve happiness through personal and collective freedom, they will achieve happiness through sharing ideas with others, and most important, they will achieve happiness through making this world a better place. And for me, I believe that it is possible to achieve this through philosophy, because philosophy, as with childhood, begins with curiosity and amazement.

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193%2C898%2C0%5D.

6. Annexes

6.1. Annex 1. Questions to use in Session 1

Questions before reading the story

1. What do you think this story might be about based on the title and cover?
2. Can you make any predictions about what might happen in the story?
3. Have you ever heard of any similar stories?
4. What do you already know about the characters in the story?
5. What do you think you will learn from reading this story?
6. What questions do you have about the story before we start reading?

Questions during the reading of the story








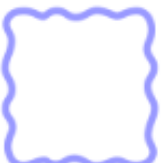












1. What is happening in the story right now?
2. Can you describe how the characters are feeling? Why do you think they feel that way?
3. What do you think will happen next? Why?
4. Can you find any new words or phrases in the story? What do you think they mean?
5. How do you think the story will end?
6. What would you do if you were in the same situation as the characters in the story?

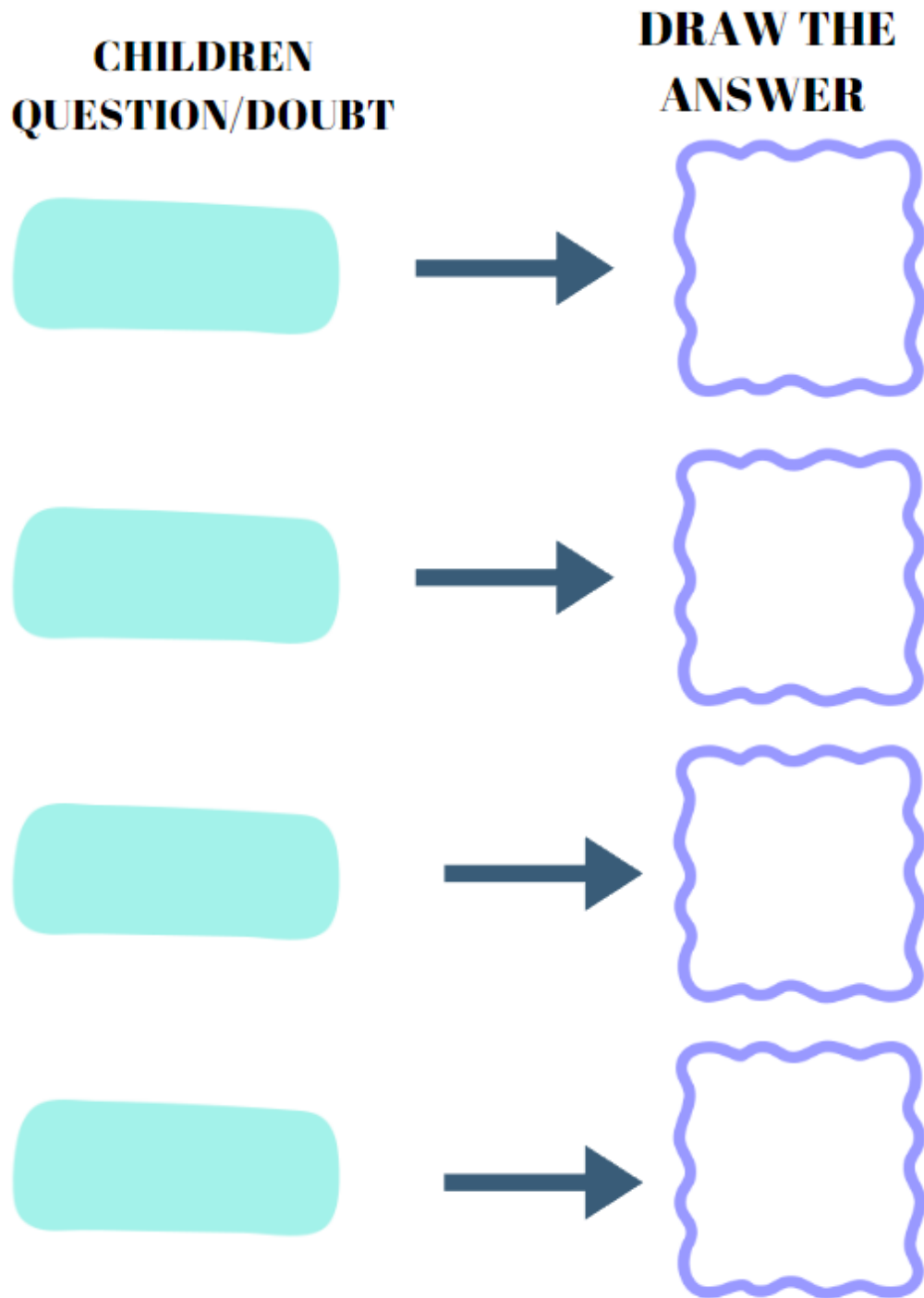
Questions at the end of the story

1. What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
2. Were there any parts of the story that surprised you? Why?
3. Can you summarize what happened in the story in your own words?
4. What lesson have you learned from the story?
5. How do you think the characters might have felt after the story ended?
6. Can you think of a different ending for the story? How would it change the message?
7. What questions do you still have about the story now that we've finished reading?

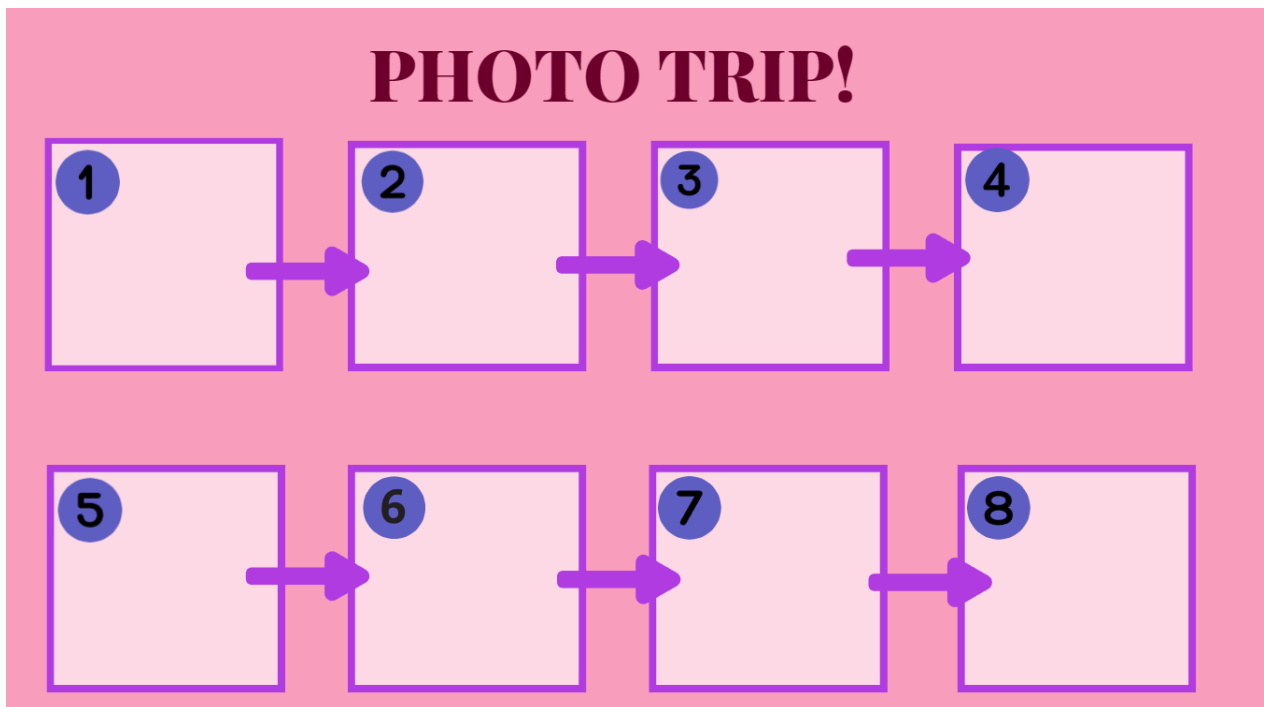
6.2. *Annex 2. Methodological Doubt Graphic Organiser*

QUESTIONS

		✓	✗
			
			
			
			
			



6.3. *Annex 3. Photo Sequence Graphic Organisers*



6.4. *Annex 4. Critical Thinking Skills Development Rubric. Own elaboration.*

ACQUISITION LEVEL	LOW (1)	MEDIUM (2)	HIGH (3)	EXCELLENT (4)
INTERPRETATION	Struggles to connect ideas to personal experiences	Requires support to elaborate on interpretations or make connections	Provides explanations that demonstrate comprehension	Offers insightful interpretations supported by evidence and reasoning.
ANALYSIS	Demonstrate limited ability to break down information into smaller parts.	Requires guidance to break down information into smaller parts.	Breaks down information into smaller parts without help.	Offers reasons and explains how to break information into smaller parts.
EVALUATION	Offers simplistic judgments without considering multiple perspectives.	Requires support to consider alternative viewpoints or criteria.	Provides reasoned justification for evaluations considering multiple perspectives.	Offers well-supported evaluations considering multiple perspectives.
INFERENCE	Struggles to draw conclusions from given information	Requires support to make connections between different information.	Draws accurate conclusions from given information.	Makes sophisticated connections between different pieces of information.
EXPLANATION	Demonstrates limited ability to express thoughts coherently.	Provides basic explanations supported by evidence	Articulates ideas clearly and logically. Express thoughts coherently	Provides comprehensive explanations supported by insightful evidence.
DECISION-MAKING	Relies on impulsive or arbitrary decision-making.	Requires support to evaluate potential consequences.	Considers multiple factors and perspectives when making decisions.	Makes well-reasoned decisions based on different factors, perspectives and taking into account potential consequences.
PROBLEM-SOLVING	Struggles to identify problems or challenges.	Requires support to persevere through challenges and demonstrate basic strategies.	Identifies problems accurately and applies different strategies to solve them in an effective way.	Applies problem-solving strategies effectively and demonstrates resilience and persistence.

6.5. *Annex 5. Critical Thinking Attitudes Rubric*

ACQUISITION LEVEL	LOW (1)	MEDIUM (2)	HIGH (3)	EXCELLENT (4)
PERSISTENCE	Easily gives up on tasks when faced with challenges. Becomes frustrated quickly.	Shows some effort to continue tasks despite challenges. Demonstrates frustration but can be redirected to continue.	Generally persists with tasks. Manages frustration well and remains focused on the task.	Shows determination to complete tasks regardless of difficulty. Demonstrate resilience and positive attitude towards challenge.
SELF-AWARENESS	Struggles to recognize or articulate own emotions. Rarely reflects on personal behaviours.	Can recognize and articulate basic emotions with support.	Recognize a range of emotions independently. Usually reflects on personal actions.	Demonstrate control of emotions towards actions.
CURIOSITY	Does not show interest in new activities or topics. Rarely asks questions or participate actively.	Shows some interest in exploring new topics. Occasionally asks questions.	Demonstrates a strong interest in exploring new topics or activities. Actively participates with questions or information.	Show enthusiasm for exploring new topics or doing new activities. Likes to see out for additional information and also do it outside the classroom.
OPEN-MINDEDNESS	Struggles to listen to others' viewpoints.	Sometimes consider new ideas or perspectives. Listen to others' viewpoints but may need prompting.	Open to consider different ideas. Actively listens and respects others' viewpoints.	Seeks out for different ideas. Listens and values others' viewpoints.
EMPATHY	Struggles to understand others' emotions. Rarely supports to peers.	Show some concern for others. Occasionally support to peers with prompting.	Recognizes a range of emotions in others. Offers help to peers independently.	Understands and responds to emotions in others. Shows concern for others and offers help to peers anticipating their needs.

Table 2. Critical Thinking Attitudes Rubric. Own elaboration

6.6. *Annex 6. Teamwork Rubric*

ACQUISITION LEVEL	LOW (1)	MEDIUM (2)	HIGH (3)	EXCELLENT (4)
PARTICIPATION	Rarely participates in group activities. Disengaged and distracted.	Participates in group activities. Occasionally needs reminders to stay on task.	Actively participates in group activities and contributes regularly.	Engages and encourages others to participate. Take initiative in group activities.
COMMUNICATION	Struggles to communicate with peers. May not share ideas or listen to others.	Communicates with peers but may need prompts to express ideas clearly or listen actively.	Communicates effectively with peers. Express ideas clearly and listens to others.	Communicates well with peers. Articulates ideas clearly and listen actively to others.
RESPECT AND EMPATHY	Shows limited respect for peers' ideas or feelings. May interrupt or ignore others.	Shows basic respect for peer's ideas and feelings.	Demonstrates respect for peers' ideas and feelings. Shows empathy and consideration.	Is respectful and empathetic. Actively supports and values peers' contributions and feelings.
SHARING AND TURN-TAKING	Has difficulty sharing materials and taking turns. May exhibit possessive behaviour.	Usually shares materials and takes turns. May need support to understand the concept of sharing.	Shares materials and takes turns. Understands the concept of sharing.	Shares materials and takes turns effortlessly. Promotes sharing and inclusivity among peers.

Table 3. Teamwork rubric. Own elaboration.