

Ethik entdecken mit Philo 1/2, ed. by Eva Marsal, Bamberg: Buchner 2014

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For teachers of the school subject "Ethics", now established in most federal states in Germany, high-quality textbooks are essential tools, especially for many teachers who have no teaching diploma for this subject. A textbook like *Ethik entdecken mit Philo 1/2* (Discovering Ethics With Philo) with many colorful photos, children's drawings, other convincing illustrations, and reader-friendly writing, seems to be appropriate. This textbook promises to teach children philosophy with the rat named "Philo". For this purpose six treasures on six islands are to be discovered. The figure on page 3 is a good example for this: "Discovering one's own culture and other cultures - knowing and recognizing oneself - appreciating oneself and others - philosophizing with five tools - admiring, caring for and protecting nature - there is music in it".

The introductory chapter deals with Ekkehard Martens' integrative method paradigm - in short "five-finger method". Since the claim is made to apply this paradigm throughout the textbook, it is repeated here in its original version (translated): "1. Phenomenological method: starting from everyday experiences that have become fragile and taking empirical data into account or: describing in a differentiated and comprehensive manner what I observe, experience, perceive or think about myself, as well as taking into account the results of the particular sciences...; 2. hermeneutic method: use doctrinal opinions and interpretations or knowledge of the history of ideas and one's own views or patterns of interpretation, or read (not only philosophical) texts on how we can understand our observations etc. or which patterns of interpretation ("ideas") exist in history; 3. analytical method: highlight and examine central concepts and arguments, or: uncover and examine premises, contradictions, or definitions that are too narrow or too broad; 4. dialectical method: sharpen and weigh up different positions or: perceive an offer of dialogue (conversations and texts), discuss the pros and cons, and endure aporia; 5. speculative (intuitive-creative) method: allow unprotected ideas and fantasies and playfully test them or: use new ideas or hypotheses.

The following examples illustrate how these methods are understood and applied in *Ethik entdecken mit Philo 1/2*:

For the first method:

(1) "Paint yourself and all the family members around you whom you are similar to. You can also paint them as symbols, for example as a plant or animal" (p. 29) - Comment: Is it an observation, if e.g. the father is "painted" as a symbol?

(2) "Describe how you were as a baby, infant and kindergarten child" (p. 30) - Comment: I can only tell how I was as a baby etc. from stories of others. However, the phenomenological method is oriented towards one's own observations and perceptions.

For the second method:

(3) Added to an illustrated text: "Put yourself into Frederik and name his feelings" (p. 34) - Comment: I cannot know and name his feelings. At best, I only can imagine what feelings he

might have. It is dishonest and irresponsible to teach children that they can look into another person and know what they think and feel. It would be sufficient to use the subjunctive: 'say what Frederik might feel'.

(4) "Tell of situations in which you feel exactly like the children in this picture" (p. 82) - Comment: How should I know exactly how the children in the picture feel? Only they know how they feel. Moreover, it is certainly not enough to cover the hermeneutic approach by naming feelings. Tasks to change perspectives or to take over perspectives of others would be necessary for that.

For the third method:

(5) "Name the rules of the game that you have to follow in team games" (p. 45); and about a sequence of pictures: "Find out how the giraffe tries to settle the dispute with the wolf" (p. 55) - Comment: Which central terms and arguments are examined here? What should an analysis consist of beyond the repetition of the contents of the speech bubbles?

For the fourth method:

(6) "Examine what constitutes a team." (p. 60) - Comment: What is to be examined in this task? What is to be worked on dialectically?

(7) "Examine why it is better to settle a dispute" (p. 61) - Comment: If the result is already known from the outset, a dialectical procedure is unnecessary.

For the fifth method:

(8) "Think of similar situations in which there are disputes. Try to settle the dispute as the giraffe demonstrates" (p. 55) - Comment: If the solution is already given, why should the children still be worried?

(9) "Paint or write a guidebook to one of the animals: 'In such a way I care for my pet'" (p. 96) - Comment: Is this really an example of an application of the speculative method of philosophizing?

In the introductory presentation of the treasures on the islands, the areas of content, methods and incentives are arranged rather arbitrarily. It is ignored that the "names" of the "islands" belong to different logical levels. However, of a textbook focusing in ethics, it can be expected that it is logically consistent. To what extent the promise to "discover" "ethics" is philosophically justifiable may be answered by the reader; it is, to say the least, an unusual way of expressing oneself, analogous to "discovering" epistemology. To discover in the sense of finding something existing cannot be identified with philosophizing in terms of an independent methodically guided thinking about life problems. One elementary aspect of philosophy is the clarification of concepts. In view of the above-mentioned inconsistencies, however, *Ethik entdecken mit Philo 1/2* seems to attach little importance to specify this. The tasks also lack indispensable caution in philosophizing to distinguish descriptions from ascriptions. A comparison of Martens' theory and its application in this book shows a clear discrepancy.

Ethik entdecken mit Philo 1/2 as a textbook for ethics education? Apart from the content, if already suggestions for the clarification of concepts, argumentation and reflection remain deficient, the claims raised for a textbook in ethics are clearly not fulfilled.

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