fold of the thought experiment and a renewed reading of phenomenological intersubjectivity.

A beginner's course in philosophy

Context of the exercise

Setting

In this example, we want to help beginning or intermediate students develop their capacity to ask questions and to reflect. The teacher helps you out by choosing the subject matter, by orienting your reflection with questions, and by stimulating discussion between you and your classmates through well-chosen interventions.

The overall framework

Suspension

Each session lasts between one and two hours in the usual classroom, usually once a week or every two weeks. The sessions are not isolated moments, but are part of the on-going in-depth study of a theme or an author, stretching out for at least a semester or an academic year. We assume you are there for the duration of the course; this assures a certain constancy in the give-and-take and the going-into-depth.

The stages of the course

Redirection

The teacher gets things going by problematizing a question or a text. You listen and take notes. The teacher's proposal provokes a response in you, but it stays un-expressed at first: questions well up inside you but stay unanswered. You are in a state of uncertainty, instability, and openness. Rather than look for a way to answer the questions you always ask yourself when you're listening with a critical mind, you turn your attention to the way you ask yourself the questions, their logic.

Intuitive completion

Expression

You stop searching and an inner work of maturation or sedimentation begins, letting you find the right way of asking the question. Suddenly, a trigger is pulled, and you have got it, you have got the question that has been hiding from you! Carried away by a sense of urgency, you interrupt the teacher, reversing the usual order of things in the classroom, begin an exchange. Now is the chance for the other students to intervene, either to ask another question on the same path or to return to the first discussion. In the best of cases, you all begin to discuss among yourselves, and the teacher steps back behind the debate (s)he helped start.

After-effects

Once things start to heat up in class, you often find yourself continuing the discussion in the corridors or in a bar or café, with or without the teacher being there.