

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING IN LIFELONG LEARNING: The use of aesthetic experience

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A positive attitude towards the five of the eight key competences involves a disposition to:

- critical dialogue
- critical appreciation and curiosity
- critical reflection

(European Reference Framework, 2007)

Dominant View

Critical thinking is a “good”, integral mode of thinking (precision, definiteness, consistency, cohesion and justification of the arguments)

Dewey's View

Critical thinking involves:

- evaluation of the recourses and the influences out of which our assumptions have emanated
- investigation of the consequences of each taken for granted assumption that we have adopted

Mezirow's View

Transformative Learning is a “rationally based, adult dimension procedure, involving the validation and reformulation of meaning structures”

Techniques that promote the development of critical thinking

- class discussion
- debate
- crisis-decision simulations
- problem-posing
- observation of a certain practice
- critical questioning
- critical incident exercises
- criteria analysis
- critical analysis of interviews, etc.

Gardner's View on Aesthetic Experience

Contact with art familiarizes us with interpreting complicated and ambiguous issues, by drawing meaning from various situations, and allows us to be receptive in alternative views, beyond what is considered as a given.

The method

“Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience”

... has already been implemented in various settings of Adult Education in Greece
(Second Chance Schools, Vocational Training Centers, Prisons, Enterprises)

STAGES OF THE METHOD

Stage 1:

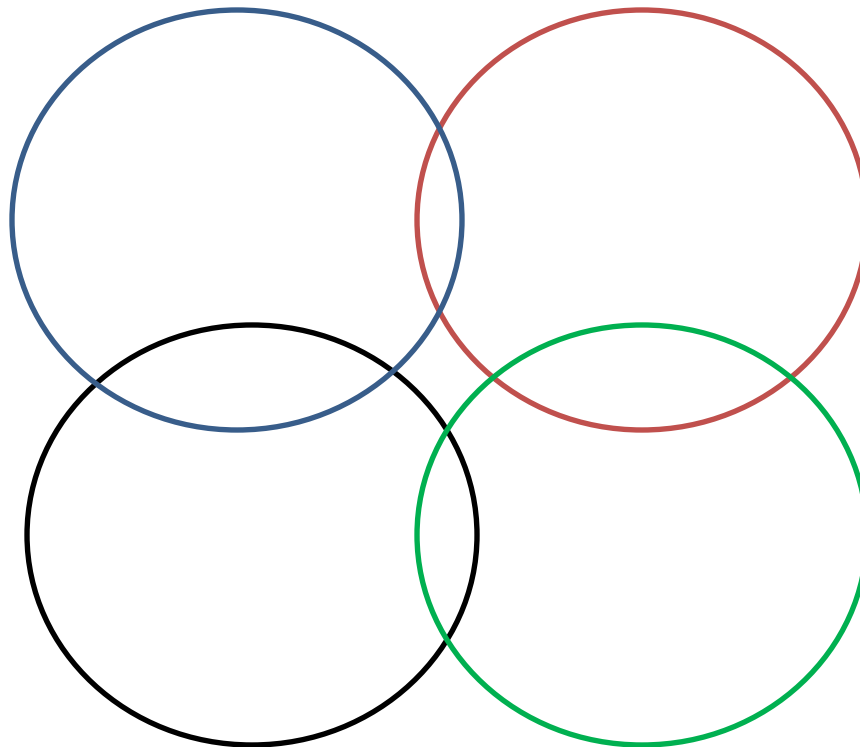
**Determination of the taken for granted,
stereotyped assumptions concerning a
certain issue**

Stage 2:

**The participants express their opinions
about the issue**

Stage 3:

The educator examines the answers and identifies the sub-issues that should be approached holistically and critically



Example on stage 3:

Identification of the sub-issues of the issue

“Characteristics and attitudes of a thinker”

1. Which is his/her inner disposition?
2. How does he/she learn? (mainly from books?)
3. How does he/she relates to others? To the society?
4. Which are the “dangers” and the “rewards” of being a thinker nowadays?

Stage 4:

The educator identifies several works of art as stimuli for the elaboration of the sub-issues

(the works of art are related to the sub-issues)

Use of works of art:

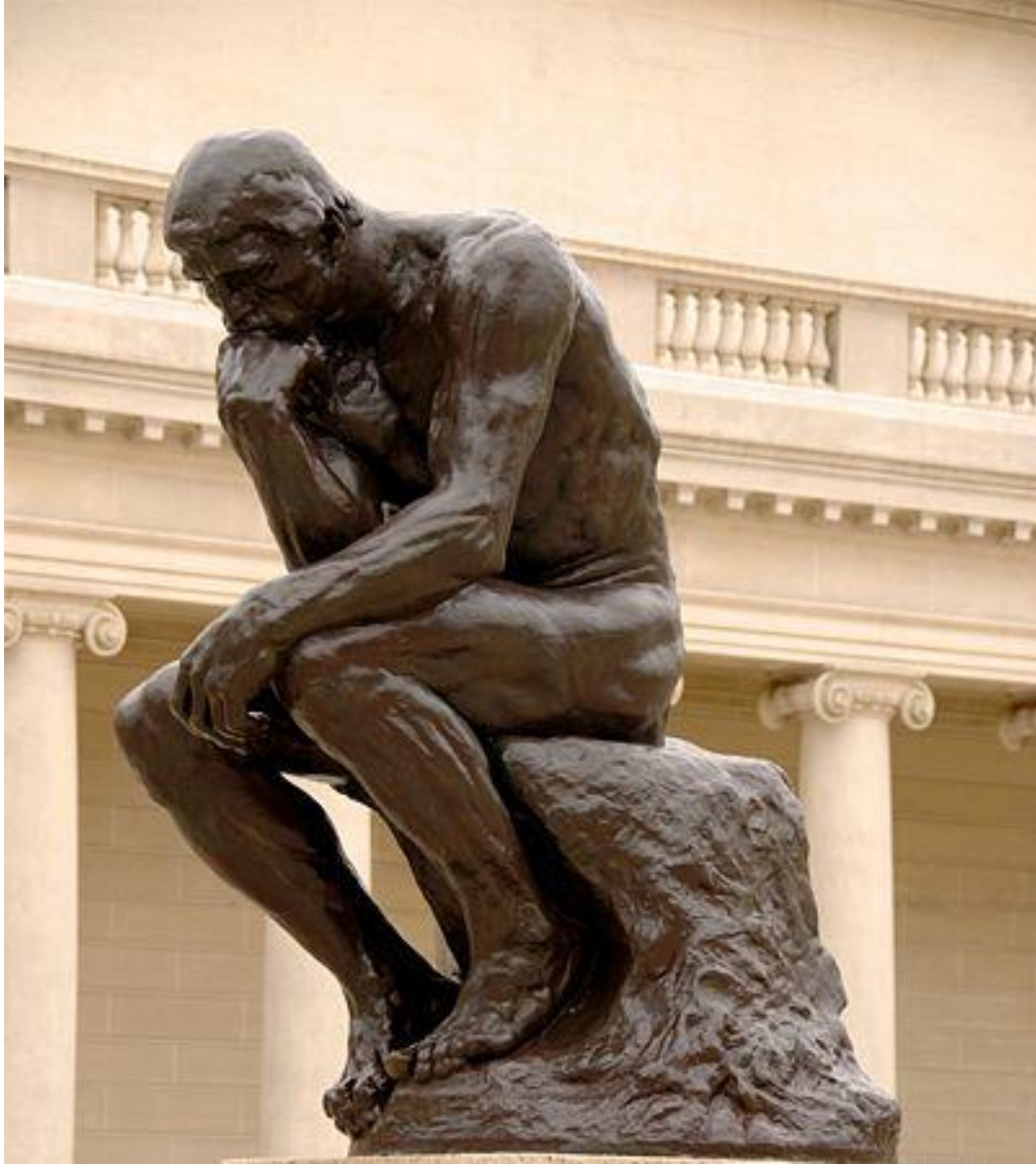
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Photography
- Literature, poetry
- Theater
- Cinema
- Dance
- Music
- etc.

Stage 5:

- Consecutive presentation of the artworks
- Each artwork is analysed and critically connected to the related sub-issues
- Each participant expresses his/her experiences, feelings and thoughts



**Rembrandt,
“The thinker
in his study”**



**Rodin,
“The thinker”**

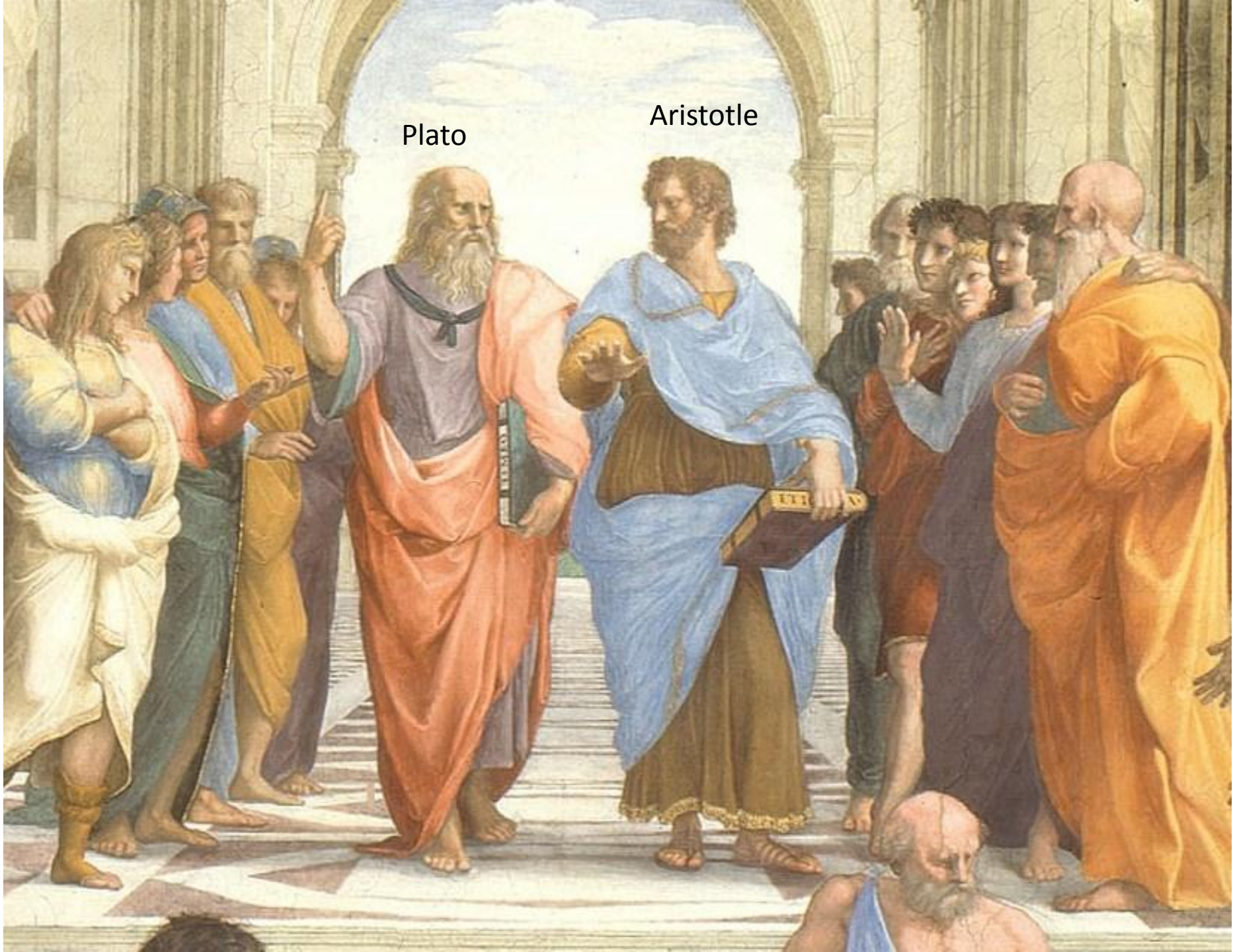


**Fresco from
Pompeii:**

“A thinker”



Raffaello, "The School of Athens"



Plato

Aristotle



Parmenides

Pythagoras



Euclid

Stage 6:

- Critical review and enrichment of the participants initial opinions
- Comparison of the participants initial opinions with those resulting from the discourse
- Synthesis / Inferences