

Philosophy in high schools

Business



From Socrates to Sartre, from the Marxist ideal to the underlying values of capitalism, there is no doubt that philosophy has shaped human society. However, as a subject, philosophy is often thought to be arcane and impractical. Few choose to take the rigors of philosophical thought into their undergraduate studies; most people never receive a formal education in philosophy, and, if they did, very few had done so during their high school years, often due to the subject's widespread unavailability. This should not be the case. Education in philosophy should be made readily available to high school students.

To begin with, philosophy trains students to entertain different ideas without accepting them as fact; it is the “ mark of an educated mind”, as stated by Aristotle. This, in turn, would train students to first consider all possible perspectives regarding a problem before arriving, through critical comparison and analysis, at a conclusion. In this day and age, with the unreliability of media outlets and the bias of the opinions of authoritative figures around them, the ability of critical thought is essential for our adolescents to possess. Furthermore, though many would argue that philosophy is of little practical use, it is not the case. For instance, if you wish to become a doctor, you may take a philosophy of medicine course, law students may take philosophy of law, and quantum physics students may take philosophy of quantum physics, and so on. From the wide range of subjects which employ this fundamental style of thinking, it is clear to see that philosophy is applicable to nearly all subject areas and fields.

As well, philosophy majors routinely top the acceptance rates for graduate programs such as law, medicine, and business. In addition, philosophy has

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the ability provide students with a sense of spiritual enlightenment; at every conclusion the student reaches as a result of this constant and passionate drive for wisdom, they feel a sense of satisfying accomplishment. Not only that, but they are then encouraged to further their philosophical studies, thus continuing to reap all the aforementioned benefits this course of study entails. Some might argue that philosophy is recondite, too difficult, and that most high school students would not be interested in the subject. I would argue that essentially, philosophy is critical thought and analysis driven by the innate curiosity all humans are born with, and thus can be approached by most anyone. Although I cannot speak for all high school students, I myself have reached a stage in my life where I desire to ponder, and think, and form my own values, ideologies, and philosophies, and I am sure many of my fellow classmates feel the same.

We are growing up, and the world around us is becoming smaller. We argue; we disagree with our parents, and sometimes even our teachers. We refuse to be spoon-fed ideas from singular sources like toddlers. We refuse to be driven around like a herd of sheep, with the sheppard screaming in our ears all the while that this is how things are and how they can only be. We want to be exposed to different ideas, even ones that challenge our own, so we may form better ones with which to shape a better society.

Imagine yourself back in high school, trying to find direction in the turbulent waves your life has now become. Would you not be happy to be offered the stability, self-identity, and deeper understanding of the world through the means of philosophical exploration? Or, perhaps you had a liberal family, one who exposed you to a variety of different worldviews. However, this is not

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the case for everyone. Had you passed your adolescence being forcibly taught the constraining values of your bigoted guardians, you would understand the importance of available philosophical education. All in all, philosophy is by no means a “dead science”; it is hugely practical, enlightening, approachable, and provides students valuable training in critical thought, so why does the high school curriculum neglect it so? To offer its study to adolescents is to cultivate thousands of brilliant young minds, and, ultimately, a better society.