

The use of moral dilemmas

The use of the dilemma method in a lot of different contexts demonstrated that it can contribute to promoting not only moral development, but also some cognitive, communicative and affective capacities that are basic to a democratic discourse and culture, focusing on multiplicity of values, tolerance, negotiation, avoidance of conflict.

While hypothetical dilemmas of a Kolberg's kind focus attention to the moral-cognitive dimension in a more disengaged and abstract way, dilemmas specific to the family or/and school context can be used to highlight the whole set of moral implications together with clear factual information and background knowledge about the context, causes and developments, possible alternative courses of action, institutional solutions, etc.

In that way, the method can help:

- Becoming aware of and reflecting on one's own sense of values, norms and motives
- Expressing and justifying arguments
- Recognising social conflicts, value and norm conflicts, and the competing demands accompanying them
- Coming to terms with dissent and controversy
- Questioning the premises and implications of the relationship between actions, decisions and their justifications
- Comparing positions, actions and decisions and evaluating them against credible criteria
- Being aware of and taking into account the effects on the others
- Experiencing the efficiency of discursive strategies of resolving conflicts in a democratic way.