The Space and Role of Discussion in University Studies in the Context of Socrates' Philosophy of Education

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This article analyses the role of discussion in university studies in the context of Socrates' philosophy of education. The article begins with a discussion of the relevance and continuity of Socrates' ideas on philosophical education in the contemporary educational space and highlights the importance of Socratic discussion in university studies. It is argued that discussion contributes to the development of one of the most essential skills of the 21st century, i.e. critical thinking, which encompasses the totality of analytical, social and personal skills. The paper also points out that Socratic pedagogy of discussions and humanistic education contribute to organising student-centred studies and enable the consolidation of lifelong learning. These competencies and skills are becoming a priority educational objective in the current age when knowledge, technology and the world are constantly changing and renewing.

The second part of the paper deals with the specificities and polarities of the discussion process. The distinction between authentic and inauthentic discussion is made in the context of *Socrates versus the Sophists*. Much attention is paid to highlighting the difference between authentic discussion and inauthentic one as pseudo-discussion to provide pathways and guidelines for the implementation of authentic dialogue in the study process.

Keywords: Socrates, Socrates discussion, critical thinking, lifelong learning, student-centred learning, sophists

INTRODUCTION

The modern world and society need critical and creative thinkers who can engage in a dialogue, evaluate information, and find rational and truthful solutions to the problems they face. Globalisation, the COVID pandemic, the war, climate change, ecological and poverty problems, and many other challenges facing the world in the 21st century confirm the need for socially responsible and critical thinkers. We must agree that the future of the state and well-being of society depend on education, which enables young people to gain intellect, to think freely and independently, and the ability to learn and develop continuously in response to changes in life. Therefore, it is important to educate students about how to participate in

dialogue and equip them with the skills and attitudes to engage in open discussions about controversial issues (Hessc 2008; Schuitema et al. 2018).

Since ancient times, discussion has become the foundation of democracy, an opportunity to improve the state and its society. Famous Greek thinkers like Plato and Aristotle point out the power and importance of intellectual thought. Their predecessor Socrates represents the beginning of a new era of Western European philosophy, in which an individual and his life, his thinking, the power of his mind, and moral attitudes are at the centre. Socrates uses the debate as a means of developing critical thinking to know the truth while at the same time developing the proper virtues of life, thus preparing the young person to participate in daily and social life.

Socrates became an inspiring model of a teacher for many modern educators, and his pedagogical methods are given the name 'Socratic' (Mintz 2014: 736). The Socratic discussion method can be applied from primary and secondary schools to higher education institutions and universities. However, Khong et al. (2023) state that although dialogue is often seen as a learning tool, its use is still limited. Deepening our understanding of dialogue and its potential applications in education can help unlock its power to help teachers learn in different contexts.

E. Wilberdin in his book '*Teach like Socrates*' (2014) points out that the Socratic method is higher-level thinking. Wilberdin in his book quotes Tony Wagner, who is the first Innovation Education Fellow at the Technology and Entrepreneurship Centre at Harvard. Wagner has identified critical thinking and problem-solving as the first survival skill of the 21st century. Technology progresses at an exponential rate, and our world is changing more rapidly than in the past. Certainly, the Socratic method focuses on this immensely important skill – critical thinking [author's remark] (Wilberdin 2014: 1–2). Critical thinking is thus becoming a priority skill to develop in the current age. According to V. Indrašienė et al. (2018), research shows that higher education institutions are increasingly lacking effective curricula, faculty classification, and a supportive academic environment for critical thinking development.

Research shows that discussions facilitate the development of critical and creative skills (Schuitema et al. 2018; Piro et al. 2015) and help to develop students' citizenship and social responsibility (Hussein 2023; Schuitema et al. 2018), effectively promotes students' active learning and self-improvement (Delić et al. 2016). Moreover, discussions encourage students to develop their personal views on moral and social issues, help them to recognise different perspectives, and at the same time improve students' intellectual skills (Overholser et al. 2023; Chinn et al. 2000; Schuitema et al. 2018).This demonstrates the need and necessity for academic discussion in university studies. According to H. Delić and S. Bećirović (2016), teaching by using the Socratic method can increase the quality of learning. All the aspects listed above reveal that the Socratic method can be advantageous and effective in the study process. This article is intended to discuss the characteristics of Socratic discussion as an authentic discussion and the significance of Socratic educational philosophy in shaping the space for productive discussion in university studies. It explores the role of discussion in implementing student-centred learning while at the same time developing the general and most important skill – critical thinking. It is noted that discussion pedagogy is a challenging methodological work, it is not a technical teaching process, and therefore it is difficult to give a defined set of instructions. The second part of the paper *Socrates versus the Sophists* aims to reveal the specificities of authentic debate and the guidelines that would help to open up the space of authentic debate in university studies.

PEDAGOGY OF DISCUSSION: A SOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

Socrates lived in 'Athens in the golden age of Greece' (Knezic et al. 2010) and is one of the great thinkers at the origin of Western European educational ideas. He is called a public philosopher because he taught in the public spaces of Athens and publicly conducted research in search of wisdom (Schultz 2019). Socrates considered the development of young people's ability to engage in discussion to be one of the most important goals of education. The Socrates' discussion reveals the human effort to be guided by a rational mind. At the same time, it is a critical evaluation of personal knowledge and a logical evaluation of knowledge in general.

Tradition reveals that Socrates did not write any works, but there are several well-known works by his disciples Xenophon and Plato. Such works as *The Apology of Socrates, Crito* and *The Republic* have shaped sometimes contradictory interpretations of Socrates' educational philosophy. Socrates is probably the most ambiguous thinker in the history of philosophy, a majestic figure constantly raising the discussion 'Who is the real Socrates?' (Demirc 2012). However, the central key to his educational pedagogy remains evident: the discussions or disciplined dialogues that Socrates himself led. Socrates saw in the human being a great creative potential, a power of reason and thought that could be awakened through discussion.

Defining the Socratic method of discussion is a challenge, as it is not a technical process, but a highly individual learning path. As one of the most important aspects of Socrates' discussion, it can be stressed that it is not a method of imparting knowledge or truth. But a means of encouraging an individual to find the truth for himself, i.e. to help the individual, on the basis of logical reasoning, to self-assess the beliefs he holds and to abandon false ones. The Socratic method itself can be developed between two individuals as a dialogue or within a group of people as a discussion. Socratic debate has stages, a process in which the interlocutor remains a highly active participant. Socrates would start by asking the interlocutor a question to which he would receive an answer; by asking new questions, Socrates would lead the person into contradictions with his own statements, causing the person's beliefs to collapse. In the end, the person came to the right conclusion, which in turn influenced his right behaviour. Socrates himself took the position that once a person finds and learns the truth himself, he can no longer act in an unjust way. Thus, Socratic discussion is a way of teaching – not just a kind of purification of the mind and thinking from error, but also a change in the individual's behaviour, personality and soul.

Plato's philosophical texts serve as some of the best sources to understand the Socrates' discussion method. From Plato's descriptions of Socrates, we can see that the topics/questions raised by Socrates not only developed critical thinking, but also fundamental moral values such as justice, wisdom, goodness, beauty, courage, friendship, etc. (Christopher 2011). One of the crucial virtues that become the foundation of other virtues is moderation, which is a kind of harmony within man; along with moderation, the understanding of justice comes by the attitude of 'doing nothing wrong'. At the same time, it is the ability to be 'strengthened than oneself', since the better side of the soul overcomes the worse part of the human soul, the hidden vices and desires (Rabinowitz 2023). The ethics of Socrates can be broadly divided into three questions: 'What is justice? What is good? What is courage?'.

Socrates and his later followers, Plato and Aristotle, described human education as closely linking the value and intellectual levels. The pedagogy of discussion combines both the theoretical level – intellectual education – and the practical level – moral education – which contributes to the implementation of holistic education, 'the development of the physical, mental, spiritual and moral powers of the human being'. The aspiration to be a physically,

spiritually and socially complete – harmonious personality, which was formed in Antiquity, is still an aspiration in contemporary society' (Gincevičienė et al. 2011: 279). General university education cannot be separated from moral education, which helps to develop a young individual as a socially responsible person guided by the right values. This reveals the necessity to use discussions in the study process to achieve the general goals of education.

What makes Socratic discussion relevant and useful for implementing discussion in university studies today? The book mentioned above, *Teach Like Socrates* (2014), points out that the enduring value and role of Socrates are particularly relevant in the new educational systems of our modern times. 'There is substantial quantitative and qualitative evidence suggesting the positive effects of Socratic dialogue on student learning and memory in educational contexts' (Nouri et al. 2018: 49).

'Socratic classes' are being created, as well as the development of IT technology through the creation of Slack classes, which recommend the practice of the Socratic method in a textual form, resulting in increased student engagement and attendance (Weixu 2022). The Socratic dialogue method can be integrated into various scientific disciplines, not only in the humanities and social sciences, such as law, politics and sociology, but also in the exact sciences. E. Wilberding (2014) presents an adaptation of the Socratic dialogue method models in the exact and social sciences, which has yielded successful and positive results. 'The Socratic dialogue is one of those well-known strategies that has clear and consistent positive effects on student attention' (Nouri et al. 2018: 49). In addition, we could use the Socratic method to develop higher-level critical thinking skills and student learning habits. H. Delić et al. observe that the discussion method helps students to self-monitor and engage in metacognitive activities, sometimes 'step outside' their own thinking process and get a different perspective on an idea. 'The beauty of the Socratic method is that you can incorporate it into the existing curriculum without necessarily taking any more class time' (Delić et al. 2016).

Thus, the dialogical education practised by Socrates in Athens today remains the basis for a meaningful and quality education in the new era of modernity. According to A. Maceina, modern pedagogy 'follows the path of Socrates' (Maceina 1990: 493). Socrates' philosophy of education rejects education as a purely technical teaching process where the teacher only passively transmits knowledge, but in the learning process, it is essential to encourage the active and conscious involvement of the students themselves in the process of finding knowledge. Socratic discussions are also significant in that they instruct participants in the discussion to look deeply into their own arguments and open up a space for self-reflection. Thus, in the context of Socrates' philosophy of education, the discussion is, at the same time, a process of inner self-examination, self-knowledge and inner dialogue. In discussion, it is important to develop attention to logic and reasoned speech, to reflect *on why I think the way I do and how I am able to justify it all*. Nana Ariel (2022), in the context of '*think before you speak*,' analyses how thoughts are formed in inner dialogue. The author makes a link between self-talk, critical thinking and interpersonal dialogue: self-talk creates an internal dialogue that can promote meta-cognitive skills and critical thinking (Ariel 2022).

The questions thus encourage students to reflect internally on their own thoughts and arguments in order to express them rationally and comprehensibly in verbal language to the other group members later in the discussion. This also develops thinking skills and public speaking skills. Critical thinking, in its broadest sense, is observed to encompass skills such as reasoning, analysis, awareness, anticipating and solving problems; independence, initiative, creativity, active participation in the cognitive process; the ability to assess the credibility of

evidence, to analyse arguments, to draw conclusions and to adapt to changing social conditions and circumstances (Indrašienė et al. 2018; Hathcoat et al. 2016; Tolutienė 2010).

All this leads to the conclusion that critical thinking is a general competence, a set of skills, analytical and social skills, and personal qualities that form a mature personality. Other scholars have taken a similar position, pointing to the importance of critical thinking in different disciplines and professional fields. Therefore, critical thinking can be defined both as a general competency that is not discipline-specific and as a specific competency that can be linked to a particular field of activity (Indrašienė et al. 2018; Hathcoat et al. 2016; Tolutienė 2010).

Thus, Socrates was a wise and insightful pedagogical thinker, already in the origins of ancient humanistic thinking, who paid particular attention to these competencies. In addition to critical thinking, another important aspect on which discussion pedagogy focuses is student-centred study and lifelong learning. Socrates considered education to be learning rather than teaching and to be an active process since the process of personal and intellectual development continues until death. According to F. Demirci (2012), an educational idea of Socrates is based on an eternal desire for learning and a perpetual search for truth.

The organisation of student-centred learning implies, at the same time, the active intellectual activity of the students, their active participation, and involvement in the activities organised by the teacher. One of the most famous statements attributed to Socrates, '*I know that I know nothing*,' refers to the fact that man is a being who must constantly improve and complete himself. The German existentialist philosopher Karl Jaspers (1998) emphasises the questioning state of human nature: wonder, doubt and suffering lead to questioning and the search for truth, which is the source of constant and ongoing dialogue. Another important representative of the dialogical movement, Martin Buber (1998), speaks of the dialogical human being, pointing out that dialogue is a natural human need and necessity in the journey towards the self and other knowledge. Therefore, the goal of university studies is to develop lifelong learning that encourages continuous improvement and the pursuit of knowledge. F. Demirci (2012: 4481) points out that the Socratic method is in line with the principles of lifelong learning, which is why she refers to '*Socrates as the Prophet of Lifelong Learning*'. Lifelong learning allows the individual to be the master of his or her decisions and life. In this context, interpreting Socrates, it is the position of the wise man in life, as opposed to the foolish man who is passive, who thinks that he already knows it all, and who does not look any further, does not improve or change.

'Socrates visited the issue of human-centred education for the first time in the history of philosophy as an issue that is never out of date' (Demirc 2012: 4482). *The 2030 UNESCO Education Programme* states that 'lifelong learning is a key principle of UNESCO education and learning. Knowledge, skills, and concepts acquired at school or university are not sufficient for a lifetime. Lifelong learning enables people to adapt to a changing environment and new technologies.' It is clear that the need for lifelong learning is beneficial not only for the individual but also for institutions and the progress of society.

AUTHENTIC AND INAUTHENTIC DISCUSSION

The quality of the discussions is important and is related to the quality of the study process (Nucci et al. 2015; Schuitema et al. 2011). In order to shed light on how the dialogic approach has a positive impact on student engagement and learning, in his book E. Wilberdin (2014) proposes guidelines for the planning and implementation of effective dialogue in different educational settings. Thus, in the context of Socratic education, we see that not every discussion

can be equally effective as an educational tool. Discussion pedagogy is a methodological work that poses many challenges, as it is quite difficult to provide specific instructions or techniques for this process. The features of the Socratic discussion that combine both aspects should be considered. From the Socratic discussion, it can be seen that the teacher's role is significant in making the discussion a source of learning and educational opportunities.

The teacher is a moderator of discussion and a participant in the discussion at the same time, who guides the discussion towards the ultimate aim of analysis and the discovery of knowledge while at the same time giving freedom and space to the student's creativity and initiative. The way the teacher leads the discussion in the classroom influences the degree to which the discussion will be methodologically effective and will achieve the learning objectives. J. S. Piro et al. (2015: 4), in exploring the characteristics of discussion, identify '10 key polarities in a discussion: Dialoguing/Questioning; Autonomy/Open-mindedness; Scholarliness/Personal Experience; Structured/Unstructured; Relational Knowledge/Metacognitive Knowledge; Process and Product and others' pointing out that 'both sides of the polarity are desirable for an effective discussion with students'. Thus, the authors seek to highlight the polarity and paradoxical nature of the discussions: 'discussions may highlight non-reductionist thought that focuses on whole and part, conscious and unconscious, autonomous and collaborative, scholarly and experiential' (Piro et al. 2015: 9). The polarity of the discussions contains certain contradictions that cannot be eliminated in the discussion process, so it is important for the teacher to be able to manage it by avoiding any extremes: polarity management focuses on sustaining contradictions rather than avoiding ambiguity by valuing the paradoxes, rather than ignoring or downplaying them' (Piro et al. 2015: 9). From the point of view of Socrates, he was a disputant who did not avoid raising controversies with his opponents, but in a provocative way, encouraged the expression of different opinions or arguments: 'the questions of the Socratic method can be provocative but it is not to cause the perplexity but to help people realize the deficiencies in their knowledge' (Boghossian 2012; Delić at al. 2016).

Socrates was able to handle the controversies that arose during the discussions in a methodical way by means of questions, by using the dialectical method to steer the discussion in the right direction to help the participants in the discussion realise the fallacy of their own beliefs. In this context, we can thus speak of disciplining the discussion as a kind of art of disputation. Socrates guides the shared investigation through inductive questioning. He suggests analogies, examples, counterexamples and applications. In this way, he embarks on an inductive cycle of analysis, application and evaluation. In this process, both the questions and the answers are brief and incisive' (Wilberdin 2014: 22).

To understand the methodological characteristics of the Socratic discussion, this article will use a comparative analysis of the sophists, the greatest opponents of Socrates. *Socrates versus the Sophists* helps to highlight the distinction between authentic and inauthentic discussion. The sophists referred to their professional teachers as teachers who charged money for tuition and thus participated in the knowledge market. Socrates, in contrast, sought to show that education is not and cannot be governed by a market-exchange model. However, by intrinsic motivation, the pursuit of the good, and general cooperation between the teacher and pupils, it 'can be understood as a gift exchange rather than a market exchange. <…> Socrates does not deny teaching, but he clearly distinguishes himself from sophists in that he does his teaching without reward, as a gift, freely' (Mintz 2014: 737).

If we ask what unites these two contradictory philosophical trends, it is essentially a humanistic, life-centred way of thinking. 'This is the main reason why even Socrates was seen

as a sophist. However, Socrates shared the ideas of the sophists only in being human-centred and refusing traditional knowledge sources of Ancient Greece, such as mythology. They had no common features except for the mentioned' (Demirci 2012: 4482).

The opposition *Socrates versus the Sophists* is revealed in the defence speech by Socrates in the Apology of Socrates. According to A. I. Mintz (2014: 736), the definition of Socrates shows the intersection of two different educational oppositions: the new education in the person of Socrates and the traditional Greek education in the teachings of the sophists. Socrates is not only different from the sophists, but in a sense he is superior to the sophists because he proposed new educational alternatives and methods that were still little understood by the Athenians: the path of the young person's free self-determination, critical thinking, and moral education, a conscious and active path of lifelong learning. But '<…> Athenians have failed to recognize that there were various types among the new educators of fifth century Athens: orators, sophists, natural philosophers and, perhaps, a philosopher like Socrates' (Mintz 2014).

Sophism combined several things: scepticism about objective knowledge and values, pragmatism, relativism and sensualism. If truth is subjective and its criterion is pragmatism, then for sophists, a particularly important skill to learn is rhetoric or public speaking. Sophists see language as 'the proof of one's power' (Christopher 2012). Sophistic teaching emerged from a desire to influence state decisions and business. This is why in Antiquity there were many rich people willing to pay the sophists. People with rhetorical skills can persuade and change the thinking and perceptions of others to their advantage. By denying the analytical nature of philosophy, the sophists erased the criteria between truth and lies. 'If knowledge and truth are illusory, then, or so it seemed to the sophists, the only things worth teaching were useful skills that would facilitate the taking care of one's own affairs and enable one to influence the business of the state' (Johnson 1998).

Whereas the sophists did not believe in the possibility of absolute knowledge, Socrates believed that truth and knowledge are universal. Knowledge is objective and is based on rigorous intellectual activity and the application of logic. Socrates names universal knowledge as the *episteme* that we could differentiate from sophistic *doxa*, and the aim of Socratic questioning is reaching *the episteme* and avoiding *the doxa* (Demirci 2012). Plato, a disciple of Socrates, founded the Academy in the belief that the pursuit of knowledge was the highest and most valuable intellectual activity of all human activities. Knowledge is the highest good because knowledge helps to protect a person from mistakes and to be happy: which means virtue equals knowledge. In other words, a wise person is virtuous because knowledge is like a road map that shows a person what is right and what is wrong' (Demirci 2012: 4484).

In the context of *Socrates versus the Sophists*, it is revealed that the sophists and Socrates are incompatible, both at the gnoseological and the value level of the discussions. The claim of the sophist Protagoras that a '*human being is the measure of all things*' focuses on the body and practical benefits. Socrates teaches us to beware of sophistry where the competitive nature of the discussion dominates, encouraging participants to engage in manipulative or selective use of information and rhetoric of words in order to win over the competitor to control others (Burbules 1993; Schuitema et al. 2011). In addition, this fragment by Protagoras shows that on every subject there are two speeches or arguments opposed to one another (Nathan 2010).

Sophistic discussions filter information and accept only those premises that are consistent with the desired position and are helpful. This shows that the sophists used the debate as a means to achieve their goals. In this context, it can be seen that sophisticated discussion is more of a pseudo-discussion since it is not seeking the truth itself but a 'beneficial truth'

by imposing one's own opinion and is therefore not open to dialogue. 'In *Phaedrus* casting the sophists as charlatans, Socrates argues that a facile use of language without a love of truth endangers society' (Prottas 2023).

Socratic discussion, on the other hand, is an authentic discussion because it is open to truth, goodness and 'dialogical interaction'. Here, according to D. Hess et al. (2008), everyone can participate on an equal footing and express their opinions, which means that in the process of discussion, the original premise/idea can be transformed depending on the arguments and counter-arguments. The aim of an authentic discussion is not only to win over the opponent, but also to come to the truth and find knowledge. In order to highlight the distinctive features of authentic and inauthentic discussion, we can refer to P. Scott et al. (2006), who, in their analysis of the differences between dialogic and authoritative interaction in the classroom, note that authoritative interaction focuses on one particular position, dominated by a single person/one opinion. Dialogical interaction, which focusses on understanding and analytical exploration of other perspectives, promotes cooperation, learning from each other, and exchanging arguments and statements. J. Stewart and J. K. Kellas (2020) note that collaboration is 'building together', i.e. pursuing a common goal rather than an individual one. Interestingly, in addition to the primary (teacher) and secondary (student) voices, there may also be a third voice in the dialogue, such as cultural norms, values, the national curriculum or school policies (Gillies 2023; Cheyne et al. 1999).

Another important aspect to consider when designing the discussion space in the study process is the quality of the content of the discussions. Regarding the quality of the content, the discussions should be disciplined, rational and critical. J. S. Piro et al. (2015) observe that two opposite poles are possible in the discussion process – structured and unstructured. On the one hand, the strict format and structure of the discussion process lead to too much student control, resulting in a lack of spontaneity, indecisiveness and inflexibility. In addition, the tight structure of the content of the discussion runs the risk that the dialogue starts to resemble a declaration of knowledge, with no opportunity for independent knowledge search and analysis. On the other hand, the absence of a structure for the discussion leads to the lack of clarity and rationality and the loss of a clear and logical direction, which makes the discussion methodically unproductive and ineffective. This calls for guidance/control in the study process, but it must be indirect. The maieutic method of Socrates (method of midwifery) can be seen as a model for this control. The teacher provides support in the discussion process through questions, but all the initiative is left to the students.

B. F. Skinner, in his book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (2002), points out the superiority of the Socrates' 'midwifery' approach, as strict control in the educational process prevents the young person's growth and development, as their will is weakened by being 'guided' and prevented from exercising initiative. It is open discussions that develop people's creative freedom and autonomy and their ability to receive and evaluate information. Rather than analysing just one problem, discussion helps students solve problems, understand common approaches and apply specific models of solutions. According to R. Gillies et al. (2023), learning, one of the most important activities in human life, can be seen as rooted in participation in the dialogue. The only appropriate form of verbal expression of authentic human life is open dialogue. Life is a dialogue by its very nature. To live is to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to hear, to answer, to agree, etc.

Thus, an analysis of authentic and inauthentic pseudo-discussions can help teachers to become more aware of the particularities of discussion as a learning method and, in accordance

with Socrates, to better understand the way to go in order to open up the space for an effective discussion during the studies. To this aim, a balance must be struck between a strict formal discussion structure and no structure at all. Thus, on the one hand, the lecturer must limit his or her authoritarian control (the discussion space is a space for the students to speak), and, on the other hand, in order to ensure the quality of the content of the discussion, the teacher must not leave it to its own resources but must moderate and discipline the discussion process by asking pertinent and targeted questions.

CONCLUSIONS

Exploring the philosophical ideas of Socrates, the founder of ancient humanistic education in the contemporary context of education highlights their importance and relevance to achieving critical educational goals. The method of Socrates can be integrated into various scientific disciplines, that is, not only in the humanities and social sciences, but also in exact sciences. When integrated into the study process in a purposeful way, the Socratic method opens opportunities for active learning in university studies. It contributes to the effective implementation of holistic education, as well as to the development of value judgments and intellectual skills.

Discussions build lifelong learning skills that are important to prepare the younger generation to participate in social, cultural and democratic life. It is impossible to learn everything, but it is vital that universities pass on to the younger generation the skill of learning and the pursuit of knowledge to the younger generation and awaken the innate need to question, explore, create and discover. It is difficult to predict the technological and cultural changes of the future and what kind of professionals will be most needed in the market ten years from now. However, young people with broad horizons, education, and critical thinking skills are also needed.

Analysis of the characteristics of Socratic discussion also reveals that not every discussion becomes a learning tool, which also determines the quality of the study. Discussion pedagogy is a challenging methodological work. There can be no standard practice or methodological technique for organising discussions; it is a highly individual and student-oriented educational process. The discussion is polar, combining opposing ideas and poles, and is indirectly controlled by the teacher. The essence of Socratic discussion pedagogy is the ability to keep contradictions and to create meanings and implications, which shape student holistic thinking.

In the context of *Socrates versus the Sophists*, we can distinguish between authentic and inauthentic discussion. Authentic discussion is an exploratory discussion, an active method that encourages collaboration between students themselves and allows them to learn from each other by exchanging arguments and statements, which broadens the field of vision of the problem. Thus, educational ideas improve dialogue understanding of the practice of dialogue and the application of this method to the improvement of contemporary educational systems and to the achievement of individual and general educational goals.

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Diskusijų erdvė ir vaidmuo universitetinėse studijose Sokrato ugdymo filosofijos kontekste

Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas diskusijų vaidmuo universitetinėse studijose Sokrato ugdymo filosofijos kontekste. Straipsnio pradžioje aptariama Sokrato filosofinio ugdymo idėjų aktualumas ir tąsa šiuolaikinėje edukacinėje erdvėje bei išryškinama sokratinės diskusijos reikšmė studijose. Teigiama, kad diskusijos padeda ugdyti vieną svarbiausių XXI a. įgūdžių – kritinį mąstymą, apimantį analitinių, socialinių ir asmeninių gebėjimų visumą. Straipsnyje taip pat atkreipiamas dėmesys, kad Sokrato diskusijų pedagogika ir humanistinis ugdymas padeda organizuoti į studentą orientuotas studijas bei sudaro galimybes įtvirtinti mokymosi visą gyvenimą nuostatą. Šios kompetencijos ir įgūdžiai tampa prioritetiniais švietimo tikslais dabartiniame amžiuje, kada žinios, technologijos ir pasaulis nuolat kinta ir atsinaujina.

Antroje straipsnio dalyje nagrinėjami diskusijų proceso ypatumai ir poliariškumas. Sokratas *versus* sofistai kontekste išskiriama autentiškos ir neautentiškos diskusijos perskyra. Didelis dėmesys skiriamas išryškinti autentiškos ir neautentiškos, kaip pseudo-diskusijos, skirtingumą, siekiant pateikti kelius ir orientyrus autentiškam dialogui įgyvendinti studijų procese.

Raktažodžiai: Sokratas, Sokrato diskusijų pedagogika, kritinis mąstymas, mokymosi visą gyvenimą nuostata, į studentą orientuotas mokymas, sofistai