



В поисках стратегии преподавания философии: русский и мировой опыт

In Search of a Strategy for Teaching Philosophy: Russian and World Experience

<https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2025-29-4-963-977>


EDN: IABLUV

Research Article / Научная статья

The Role of Philosophy in the Education System of Bulgaria

Elena Lavrentsova  

Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

 elena.lavrentsova@trakia-uni.bg

Abstract. The research is devoted to the analysis and understanding of the role of philosophy in the modern system of Bulgarian education. The problem of the relevance of philosophy to education, the special significance and value of studying philosophy for the formation of education is considered on the basis of the views of the metacognitive foundation, which provides this mental activity for the expansion of human knowledge, in addition, it is refracted through the prism of two fundamental patterns, accepted in the modern scientific discourse, which aim to reaffirm the usefulness and effectiveness of applying of philosophy in the educational continuum in the conditions of the modern socio-cultural situation. The main focus is placed on tracing the features of the implementation of philosophy in the field of education in Bulgaria, which is undoubtedly determined by the peculiarity of the historical way of the country's development, its educational traditions and the specificity of the socio-cultural context. The potential of philosophy in the Bulgarian educational system is assessed through the prism of the development of key competencies.

Keywords: critical thinking, understanding, subjectivity, competence

Conflict of interest. The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement. I am grateful for invaluable assistance in preparing this article from Associate Professor of Faculty of Philosophy of Lomonosov Moscow State Elena Vladimirovna Bryzgalina.

© Lavrentsova E., 2025



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

Article history:

The article was submitted on 31.07.2025


The article was accepted on 09.10.2025

For citation: Lavrentsova E. The Role of Philosophy in the Education System of Bulgaria. *RUDN Journal of Philosophy*. 2025;29(4):963–977. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2025-29-4-963-977>

Роль философии в системе образования Болгарии

Е. Лавренцова  

Тракийский университет, Стара Загора, Болгария

 elena.lavrentsova@trakia-uni.bg

Аннотация. Исследование посвящено анализу и осмыслению роли философии в современной системе болгарского образования. Проблема релевантности философии образованию, особой значимости и ценности изучения философии для формирования образования рассматривается на основе взглядов о метакогнитивном фундаменте, который обеспечивает данную мыслительную деятельность для расширения человеческого познания, а также преломляется через призму двух фундаментальных моделей, принятых в современном научном дискурсе, которые призваны переподтвердить полезность и эффективность использования философии в образовательном континууме в условиях современной социокультурной ситуации. Основное внимание уделяется прослеживанию особенностей внедрения философии в лоно образования Болгарии, что, несомненно, обусловлено своеобразием исторического пути развития страны, ее образовательными традициями и спецификой социокультурного контекста. Потенциал философии в болгарской образовательной системе оценивается через призму развития ключевых компетенций.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, понимание, субъектность, компетентность

Конфликт интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Благодарности. Благодарю за неоценимую помощь в подготовке данной статьи Елену Владимировну Брызгалину, доцента философского факультета МГУ имени М.В. Ломоносова.

История статьи:

Статья поступила 31.07.2025

Статья принята к публикации 09.10.2025

Для цитирования: Lavrentsova E. The Role of Philosophy in the Education System of Bulgaria // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Философия. 2025. Т. 29. № 4. С. 963–977. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2025-29-4-963-977>

Introduction

The question of the role of philosophy in the contemporary educational system often falls within the focus of scientific discourse, becoming the object of intense debates and discussions. It gives rise to new attempts to “refract” philosophical

knowledge through its deep meaning-generating foundations in light of the challenges and risks inherent in today's sociocultural situation, characterized by progressive technological aspirations and scientific expectations, the hyperdynamism of the changes occurring in the event-thread of individual life, and the accelerated transformation of the societal system as a whole under the sign of total digitalization. The actualization of the philosophical inquiry within the multiparadigmatic nature of the philosophical tradition, and its inscription within the expanding circle of problems and crisis states accompanying the movement of contemporary society, inevitably presupposes the reflection on the place occupied by philosophy within the field of education in its various dimensions – religious and secular, traditional and modern, regional, national, or global, taking into account both the general tendencies in the functioning and development of the institutional nature of education and its contextual specificity.

Philosophy in the field of education

In relation to the generalized framework of the relevance of philosophy to education, the particular significance and value of engaging with philosophy for the formation of knowledge and education arise from the understanding of a metacognitive foundation, which provides this intellectual activity for the expansion of human knowledge. The idea of philosophy as the foundation of education emerged long ago: already in the ancient world, philosophy was associated with the development of reason and the accumulation of knowledge using the rational way of building theories and logical conclusions based on certain rules. In the consciousness of the ancient Greeks, philosophy was not perceived as a spontaneous cognitive process producing chaotic thought-images and accidental epistemological constructions, but rather as a form of reasoning which, being a natural manifestation and unfolding of the human capacity for thought, leads toward truth.

This type of reasoning is based on logical-rational procedures, necessarily implies the construction of concepts, and is impossible without operating with abstractions. Moreover, correct reasoning in itself usually does not dissolve into the pure formalism of logical operations, but implies much broader projections into the fabric of social reality, in multiple forms of the “birth of truth” as a result of the enriching interaction teacher – student, teacher – students – school, as an actualization of the dialogical principle and an expression of prudence, contributing to the development of all other virtues and the self-disclosure of the personal modus of human existence.

Despite its centuries-long epistemological evolution, its conceptual, systemic, and structural expansion, and the emergence of numerous schools, approaches, paradigms, worldviews, and stylistics of professional thought, philosophy has not altered its mission and purpose regarding the teleological nature of educational influence and pedagogical practices. Even today, when speaking of philosophy, it is often said that its goal is to cultivate thinking [1. P. 165]. This refers to living thinking – not speculative or abstracted, but active and socially oriented, endowed

with a powerful critical and creative charge. The development of such critical and creative thinking contributes to the preservation of the human in the human being, supports the safeguarding of their genuine anthropogenic essence, clarifies the deep dimensions of their existence, and aids in comprehending the ambivalent character of contemporary social processes that are reflected within the field of education.

The critical nature of thinking protects against dogmatism and blind submission to authority, constitutes the foundation of personal autonomy, and enables the comprehension of the nonlinear directionality of civilizational change through the grasping not only of the constructive aspects of the ongoing social transformation (related to the further development of information and communication technologies and the operation with massive data sets, the emergence of new channels and forms of communication granting it a mass character, and the implementation of innovative, effective methods of teaching and learning), but also of its negative, destructive impulses (identity crisis, unification and dehumanization of the cultural space, formalization and deindividualization of education, growth of social disorientation, autistic withdrawal, and anomic states).

The cultivation of thinking through the additional imparting of criticality, divergence, and creativity to mental processes, and the development of the capacity for attentive listening to the world and to the other – for living with others through the continuous search for sacred existential meanings and the invention of optimal strategies for counteracting destructive social tendencies – all this, as the quintessence of philosophical knowledge, remains relevant today. Moreover, it corresponds to the deeply rooted and immanently inherent need of society for the effective socialization of the younger generation, which faces particularly serious challenges and risks within the new socio-cultural conditions. Achieving successful socialization – primarily through the formation of thinking, traditionally engaged by education – can, in this sense, be significantly strengthened by a deeper involvement of philosophy within the orbit of the educational system.

However, this line of reasoning, seeking to highlight the important role of philosophical knowledge within the field of education, is far from uncontested. Against the backdrop of narrow-minded pragmatism, scientism, and the extreme focus on the practical applicability of acquired knowledge and skills, doubts regarding the necessity of implementing philosophy in education – both at school and university levels – have been increasingly and publicly articulated in recent decades. The alleged uselessness and lack of substance of philosophical discourse are openly proclaimed, as well as its incapacity to lead to concrete, empirically substantiated, and verifiable knowledge. Radical calls for the total elimination of philosophy from curricula and educational programs have also been voiced.

The question of the role of philosophy in contemporary education thus proves to be inextricably linked both with the articulation of arguments that question its significance in a highly technologized educational environment (claiming a complete de-ideologization of the educational space, with references to the total dominance of natural-scientific knowledge and the narrowly defined competences marked by technological procedurality, applicability, and transversality), and with

the establishment of argumentative approaches aiming to find sufficiently solid confirmation of the usefulness and effectiveness of employing philosophy in the classroom or university auditorium. The latter generally form two fundamental patterns, indicatively represented in the corresponding research data.

Proponents of the first view argue that philosophical engagement enhances cognitive abilities and improves academic achievement. The evidential basis here rests on specific forms of reasoning that reflect cognition and can be subjected to testing or measurement. Evidence of improvement in cognitive abilities and academic performance is associated with the results of both internal and, most importantly, external academic assessments based on the curriculum-highlighting the positive dynamics observed in the measurement of IQ scores, and in improved results from Cognitive Ability Testing (CAT), among others. Within this framework, particular attention has been devoted to the diverse applications of the P4C (Philosophy for Children) method in primary and secondary schools across different socio-cultural contexts. The obtained data and results from controlled studies are summarized and systematized, including through meta-analysis, confirming the high effectiveness of this program [2]. It is emphasized that the key significance of teaching philosophy in schools lies in the fact that, compared to other school subjects, it is far better positioned to develop metacognitive abilities and to cultivate the individual as a metacognitive subject, capable of exercising independent and autonomous learning [3. P. 83]. The development of the cognitive capacity for reasoned analysis, logically sound argumentation, and inquiry – best cultivated by philosophy – is of primary importance in preparing children to face the problems encountered in adult life, especially the problems of justifying adherence to moral, political, and religious standards [4. P. 18].

The second conceptual pattern is mainly influenced by the idea that philosophy, through its openness toward the world – implying the intentional directedness of human consciousness outward toward the object in its material-substratum, eventual, or subjective essence, and its immersion in the structures of lived experience – contributes to achieving the art of living well together with others. Researchers who share this vision argue that philosophy, in its ceaseless epistemological movement toward ever-deeper approaches to and understanding of the world, aims to cultivate and exercise understanding. This understanding presupposes the constant problematization and questioning of various aspects of reality, the translation and sharing of one's own views and perceptions of the surrounding reality in its diverse manifestations within a dialogical mode, while simultaneously practicing a reduction of evaluative judgments within a tolerant intersubjective discourse and respectful interactions.

In this sense, engaging with philosophy encourages: careful and patient listening; joint involvement and cooperation with others; social sensitivity; confidence in expressing one's own position and viewpoint; intensive exchange of ideas and opinions; the ability to perceive and fairly treat opposing conceptions; mental openness and reciprocity.

The expected result of such a philosophical discourse is not a total purification of personal features toward absolute transcendental subjectivity, but rather a holistic

personal transformation of the individual. This transformation is not an attempt to reshape the “inner self” in the terms of Cartesian understandings and classical notions of the purity of universal reason, but rather a transformation of the ways we approach, perceive, and respond to the world of others; the modes of interaction with otherness; as well as the ways we grasp and make sense of our own self through reflection in the eyes of others – through the prism of their images and representations.

This opens the path not only toward a change in the personal mode of existence but also toward the transformation of the social space of interactions. The proclamation of the “indivisibility of our flesh from the flesh of the world” [5. P. 146] and of our fully impregnated, embodied self, incorporated into the deep layers of being, expresses a line of thought shared by many authors [6–8].

Such transformation affects both students and teachers and – due to its nature – extends into our interactions in other spheres of life, since we learn from each other, mediated by the world [6. P. 80]. The numerous pieces of evidence regarding philosophy’s impact on processes of personal and social transformation are based on extensive data from studies encompassing teachers, school leaders, parents, and students themselves.

Projections of philosophy in the Bulgarian secondary education system: a historical perspective

From a purely strategic standpoint, the definition of the mission and place of philosophy within the Bulgarian educational system largely corresponds to the Global Objectives of the Intersectoral Strategy for Philosophy outlined in the Paris Declaration of 1995: to serve as a laboratory of ideas; to act as a catalyst for cooperation in the field of philosophical dialogue, teaching, and research; to contribute ...to the debate on current global issues... and to function as a catalyst and facilitator of dialogue among civilizations. Both the strategy and a number of Bulgarian publications on the subject emphasize that the issues addressed by philosophy are universal problems of human life and existence; that philosophical reflection can and should contribute to the understanding and governance of human affairs; and that the practice of philosophy, which excludes no idea from free discussion, enables every individual to learn thinking independently. Furthermore, philosophy teaching encourages openness, civic responsibility, mutual understanding, and tolerance among individuals and groups¹.

At the same time, the role of philosophy within Bulgarian education is undoubtedly conditioned by the particularities of the country’s historical development, its educational traditions, especially in relation to the place of the humanities within the national educational system, and the specific socio-cultural

¹ Paris Declaration for Philosophy, adopted during the International Study Days on “Philosophy and Democracy in the World,” organized by UNESCO in Paris on 15–16 February 1995. UNESCO, 171 EX/12, annex II. Available from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000138673> (accessed: 01.07.2025).

context. Today, philosophy in Bulgaria is taught in secondary schools in accordance with state educational standards and officially adopted criteria for assessing students' performance. Bulgaria, as a whole, reflects the situation in most continental European countries, where philosophy is included in secondary education, albeit with noticeable variability in terms of form and extent. Certain regional specificities within the EU are mainly determined by the degree of centralization / decentralization of education in individual member states and the correlation between religion and philosophy, characteristic of one or another socio-cultural tradition, with multiple projections of the relationship between them within the bosom of the educational system.

In Bulgaria, philosophy as a separate school subject has a very long, almost century-old tradition. Ethics was taught regularly in secondary education even before 1944. During the socialist period, "Foundations of Communism" was taught for several decades, later replaced by a unified subject titled "Social Studies" (Obshchestvoznanie), comprising three parts. The curriculum coincided with the textbook and was intended for instruction in the 10th grade with a total of two class hours per week. The textbook covered 50 topics or lesson units. Its structure was as follows: after an introductory preface explaining the emergence and essence of Marxism (two class hours), four sections followed: 1. Dialectical Materialism; 2. Historical Materialism; 3. Marxist Political Economy: Capitalism; 4. Socialism [9].

Since 1991, following the collapse of the socialist bloc and Bulgaria's transition toward a new economic and socio-political order, profound transformations have occurred in education and training. These reflect newly developed national educational policies aimed at achieving full de-ideologization and the elimination of all elements of Marxist-Leninist doctrine from the domain of the social sciences – most notably philosophy. At the same time, there has been a clear commitment to preserve philosophy within school education, resulting in the development and introduction of a Philosophical Cycle of disciplines.

The most significant change came in 2000, with the adoption of State Educational Requirements for Curriculum Content, implemented from the 1999/2000 school year onward. At that time, the Philosophical Cycle was formally established, consisting of: 1. Psychology and Logic – Grade 9; 2. Ethics and Law – Grade 10; 3. Philosophy – Grade 11 Additionally; 4. Civic Education was incorporated as a separate subject under the title World and Personality (Svyat i lichnost) for Grade 12.

The training that is conducted according to these requirements implies the implementation of a cognitive process by the students themselves, rather than teaching lessons. This, in turn, requires a change in the criteria and forms of assessment. Students are expected to understand, orient themselves, analyze, argue, become aware, apply, and so forth. At this point, two problems of substantial importance become evident. The first concerns the objectification of knowledge, which is a dominant attitude in the teaching process. The second is related to the meaning and possibilities of knowledge in relation to the change in philosophy that

the new education system uses... All this occurs as a development of the student himself as a subject of knowledge. The traditional education system does not have the opportunity to link learning with knowledge and practice. Within this system, knowledge is taught to students in the form of definitions, formulas, rules... The results of knowledge are studied through text as objective facts and circumstances, independent of the student – or the acquisition of thinking skills by the student coincides with the mastery of the logic of the subject [9].

Under the new approach, the student is placed in an active, autonomous position within the learning process, capable through his or her genuine subjectivity, of co-producing knowledge in the act of manifesting creative activity. In the respective requirements of 2000, learning is described as a process refracted through the prism of subject–subject interaction from the students' perspective, including orientation, recognition, comprehension, and interpretation. In this regard, it is notable that the mentioned Cycle of Philosophical Disciplines is very well constructed: the constituent subject blocks are characterized by strict logical sequencing and coherent structuring, and essentially represent an expanded image of a philosophical subject field encompassing certain related disciplines. This effectively contributes to shaping and crystallizing the personal dimension of the individual under the conditions of the social transformations in the new Bulgaria.

In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria launched a large-scale project aimed at improving the educational subject panel “Philosophical Cycle”, which was transformed into the subject Philosophy with three parts in the compulsory module (first phase) of secondary education: Philosophy for Grade 8, Philosophy for Grade 9, and Philosophy for Grade 10. In the second module (Grades 11 and 12), philosophical courses are of an elective nature. At the same time, educational reform led to the introduction of new educational requirements, primarily oriented toward the Eight Key Competences developed by the European Commission. The new programs emphasize the formation of transferable competences, especially valuable for philosophical education: discussion and debate, text analysis, text creation, case solving, public presentation and project work (independent research).

However, alongside the positive developments, certain negative changes also occurred. These are mainly associated with a drastic reduction in teaching hours. Furthermore, the adopted educational panel also contains some controversial elements, the most significant of which is the inclusion of psychological knowledge within the subject field of philosophy – something that clearly does not correspond to the established distinctions and boundaries of the fields within the modern system of social sciences. As a result of this modeling, additional difficulties arise, disrupting the internal logic of constructing the mental space inherent to every science as a self-organizing system and the boundaries of scientific inquiry. As a result, there is unjustified thematic mixing, there are conceptual, semantic and structural aberrations both in individual lesson units and in entire thematic sections.

Other limitations can be highlighted, reflecting, for example, an implicitly set conceptual focus of the philosophy curriculum. Critically colored claims that the

educational panel outlines a conceptual framework for philosophy that not only dominates, but also practically excludes the others are largely justified: it is characterized by Eurocentrism, and is mainly inscribed in the continental European philosophical tradition. Analytical philosophy is not presented. The piety towards ancient thinkers and European philosophical classics pushes the theories and concepts of contemporary philosophy out of the orbit of the curricula. As a continuation of such an intention, non-European and non-Western models of philosophical thinking are excluded from the curriculum.

The question here is not limited to the way of constructing the subject-thematic field of philosophy courses in Bulgarian school education, reflecting certain didactic and methodological approaches and does not concern only the formal-content dimensions of the new educational standards. It is about understanding the role of philosophy in much broader terms – in the context of the oppositions: West – East, historical – contemporary. And here a contradiction arises: the initially postulated openness of philosophy to the world coincides in a strange way with the outlines of the Western world, and the reflections on the engagement of philosophy with contemporary themes and problems, including in its own meta-subject field, find their expression in historicism, and not only in a purely methodological sense.

Place of philosophy in the higher education of Bulgaria

The indicated contradictions that philosophy faces in the space of school education reflect the situation in higher education. In Bulgarian universities in recent decades, the historical-philosophical line has prevailed within the framework of philosophical education, which, under the sign of historicism, merges philosophy (anthropology, ethics, social philosophy, etc.) with the history of philosophy. Often, this does not imply active listening and dialogical interaction with tradition in the context of tracing the evolution and bizarre metamorphoses of the leading philosophical ideas, sometimes reaching their complete semantic reversal in the new cultural and historical conditions, but turns into extensive quoting of the original sources with commenting on one or another passage. Such a historicist attitude detaches philosophy from the living vibration of life, from problem situations and the emerging new meanings that are happening here and now.

Additionally, the situation is influenced by the rethinking of the place of philosophy in the field of higher education in the country after 1991: it is not only removed from the circle of obligatory disciplines, but in a number of cases it is completely deleted from the curricula even in the training of humanitarian specialties. Currently, there are no mandatory standards in the higher education system in Bulgaria regarding the training of philosophy. Under the influence of the processes of autonomization and decentralization, philosophy courses are often dropped, since it is considered that they do not fit into the new curricula adopted in the training of the relevant specialties and professional directions in one or another bachelor's and master's programs. In their place appear both subjects somewhat close and derived from philosophy (sociology, political science), and disciplines

from very distant subject areas such as, for example, “Corporate Culture” or “Public Relations”.

In these universities, where philosophy remains in one form or another (in the overwhelming majority of cases as an elective or optional course with a seriously reduced number of hours), there is an extremely diverse palette of philosophical disciplines taught, and despite everything, there are clear preferences for some areas of philosophical knowledge. There are numerous lecture courses on “History of Philosophy”, relatively well represented in the student curricula are the disciplines “Philosophy of History” and “Philosophical Anthropology”, to some extent also “Ethics”, but in most cases transformed into “Professional Ethics” or “Scientific Ethics”. At the same time, such traditional philosophical disciplines as “Epistemology”, “Aesthetics” or “Logic” are very rarely taught, the situation is similar with a number of newer sections in philosophy such as “Philosophy of Science” or “Philosophy of Technology”.

Another important feature that affects the range of philosophical disciplines taught in Bulgarian universities can be noted: there is a significant number of undifferentiated lecture courses, included in a large group of general knowledge courses, which are offered as part of the basic education of students of various specialties during the first two years of their studies. They are more of a propaedeutic nature and bear such general names as, for example, “Introduction to Philosophy” or “Fundamentals of Philosophy”. Probably, each of these courses is distinguished by a certain originality and reflects the author’s vision in illuminating and interpreting the selected philosophical issues, but in most cases the historical-philosophical perspective prevails in their content, and in addition, it becomes difficult to justify their upgrading and profiling nature in relation to the course taught at school.

Philosophical discourse in Bulgarian education – between tradition and modernity

Both in the teaching of philosophy in higher education and in the school course, there is often a significant limitation. It manifests itself in the noninclusion in the thematic space of the taught philosophy courses of such questions and problems that concern both the state of modern science, technology and engineering, and the state of modern society in the crisis conditions of global civilization. In order to achieve maximum relevance of the changes occurring in the current socio-cultural situation, especially those related to the technical and technological side of public life, it is expedient for philosophy in the Bulgarian educational system to offer more up-to-date content and to include topics from bioethics, robotics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, philosophy of science, reflecting the development of modern scientific research and technological innovations. It is good to know the history of great ideas, but it cannot replace and solve the problems of today’s freedom and responsibility, today’s role of technology in our lives, today’s discoveries that are changing the place of machines

in the world of people, today's opportunities for developing, but also manipulating, the human body [10. P. 17].

A stronger emphasis on the philosophical foundations and problems of modern science and technology within the framework of philosophy education is capable of generating, in addition to the modernization of the subject content, another additional effect: increased interest in the very method, process and mechanism that creates knowledge – research. Stimulating interest in research activity here should not be perceived in its purely scientific nature as a desire for direct reproduction or a kind of copying of scientific research, but rather as such a type of constructive cognitive activity of the student, which in its imitative and, together with this, creative effort manages to get closer to the true self-disclosure of subjectivity and thereby resemble in some essential, key aspects of the inspiring acts of scientific creativity, objectifying them in student project developments or mini-research. In this sense, the introduction of game, game modeling and case-study technologies in philosophy is most appropriate.

By focusing on research activity using interactive approaches and game models, a strong emphasis is placed on the idea of the autonomous thinking student, immersed in a process of independent research, who does not seek to obtain ready-made knowledge, but is aimed at its creation, re- or co-generation. In this regard, the ideological and conceptual understanding of class as the “research community”, which is developed historically by E. Vardzhiyska, has gained wide popularity in the Bulgarian pedagogical and philosophical-didactic literature. In the author's opinion, the research community provides an opportunity for a non-dogmatic, non-relativist, intersubjective (supra-individualistic, “congregational”) justification of knowledge. It is a form of progressive education that can contribute to social change through interaction between the individual and the community. In its conceptual essence, the research community expresses a constructive relationship between philosophy and didactics, providing an opportunity for philosophical justification of the principle of interactivity in education [11. P. 13].

The focus on interactivity and gaming technologies in building the research community is not only justified, it is desirable in view of the changing needs of students in the conditions of the global virtual civilization and the market-consumer society. The modern student, both in Bulgaria and in a number of other countries, is shaped by two main characteristics of today's world, which have a profound impact on his perception of learning and the world as a whole. First of all, he is a total “visual”, a product of virtual culture, raised in a digital environment where information is easily accessible, hyper-fragmented and highly visualized. The culture of reading turns out to be totally changed: works of mass literature, short texts and the dominance of images (photos, videos, diagrams, infographics) prevail, which displace high, text-saturated literature with a large volume, such as philosophy. This creates a serious challenge for a discipline that traditionally relies on deep, slow and careful reading and the analysis of complex, abstract texts with high conceptual density.

Secondly, from the earliest years, the student absorbs the spirit of consumerism, generated by the post-industrial society. He often not only strives to demonstrate a higher level of consumption, but also a significant dose of instrumentalism and pragmatism in his thinking and attitude towards people and life, being strongly influenced by market logic and instrumental reason. As a result of these two characteristics, young people begin to perceive the world and learning through the prism of entertainment and a playful principle. With such an attitude, one can easily expect a deep internal resistance to philosophical knowledge as an unnecessary and useless activity, because everything that is not attractive, intriguing, interactive and at the same time useful-practical is rejected as boring, archaic or useless.

Taking into account such a social transformation and the changing attitudes of the younger generation, it is important to look for ways to impregnate philosophical knowledge in the bright, figurative-kaleidoscopic field of modern visual and digital culture, as well as to implement game and interactive forms in the educational technological potential of philosophy. However, one should not forget that the role of philosophy is not serving, but elevating the spirit and actualizing the highest existential aspirations of the personality. The very immersion in the game principle and interactive activities should not reduce philosophy to a superficial entertainment, empty intellectual entertainment and undermine the academic standard and high criteria.

Potential of philosophy in Bulgarian education for the development of competencies

Philosophy in Bulgarian education was and remains one of the most significant intellectual spaces in which the thinking, linguistic culture and social maturity of young people are formed. It is not just a subject that must be passed and forgotten after the end of the school year, but a cultural and spiritual practice that develops the fundamental ability for in-depth reasoning, for asking meaningful, existential, ethical and epistemological questions, for searching for truth, and above all for substantiating one's own, autonomous position in complex moral, social and political dilemmas. It is not reduced to passive transfer and mechanical learning of ready-made philosophical fragments and knowledge, but represents an active process of discovery, critical rethinking and construction of meaning by the learner.

Philosophy in the modern educational system of Bulgaria, despite a number of difficulties and limitations, internal-contextual contradictions and external dilemmas and challenges, strives to contribute to the comprehensive development of the linguistic, cognitive, communicative and social competences of adolescents and young people, which are vital for their successful adaptation in modern society. First of all, it is related to the exercise of linguistic competences and the clarification of the meaning of the linguistic constructions used, which aims to develop and apply strict criteria for the meaningfulness of statements, distinguishing clearly formulated theses from vague or meaningless statements. Words acquire a clearly

delineated meaning only when they are specified and have become a product of consensus, which is impossible without analytical activity.

Analysis thus serves as a tool for orientation in the modern environment. The latter is quasi-linguistic; relevant direct biological stimuli no longer dominate everyday life. The modern individual navigates primarily through linguistic stimuli – from choosing whom to vote for, to deciding what to eat. The analytical tools that philosophy provides can serve to clarify and filter these linguistic stimuli and, consequently, to adaptively modify behavior. In this way, seemingly abstract philosophical problems of the academy and tradition can make a substantial contribution to the ability of young people to orient themselves in the world – by virtue of the methods through which such problems are formulated, elucidated, and presumably resolved. This is possible because the language of philosophy is, to a large extent, the language of everyday life [12. P. 89].

Philosophy should not be reduced to the mere reproduction or retelling of classical philosophical texts, the memorization of biographies, or the rote learning of definitions of philosophical concepts. Rather, it must become a spiritually productive activity through which learners actively exercise their thinking and critical capacities. Since thinking, as an inner subjective process, cannot be directly observed or measured by simple tests, it becomes objectified only through language, which makes philosophical linguistic analysis of concepts and statements absolutely essential for the formation of clear and coherent thought. In this way, philosophical discourse turns into a kind of laboratory for linguistic and logical precision, in which questions are clarified such as: how exactly a given term is used, what its limits of applicability are, and what logical consequences follow from one statement or another. Philosophy thus assists in the struggle against linguistic chaos and inaccuracy characteristic of everyday communication, and proves especially useful in today's environment of social media, where language is often emotionally charged, ambiguous, and confusing, leading to constant misunderstandings and conflicts.

Secondly, the specific role of philosophy is expressed in the fact that in its original dialogic and discursive nature it creates the necessary prerequisites for the full development of the argumentative skills of the students, especially valuable in the conditions of constantly growing organizational complexity of the Bulgarian society and the increasing dynamism and contradictions of the processes taking place in various spheres of social life. This is expressed in the ability to justify one's own position and, which is even more important for intellectual development, to change this position on the basis of rational study of the presented arguments, facts and logic. Dialogue, in its innermost Socratic sense, where different opinions and points of view collide in order to discover the truth, is the core of philosophical practice. It directs the student to defend his thesis not simply with emotionally expressive reactions, with arguments based on arbitrary personal preferences or authoritative opinion, but with logically sustained reasoning and relevant examples.

This ability to justify is key to the formation of autonomous thinking, which does not accept other people's opinions "blindly", without critical weighing and

reflection, and does not succumb to irrational manipulation. More importantly, philosophical dialogue teaches intellectual modesty and flexibility, enabling the learner to admit a logical error or weakness in the argumentative moves taken and to change his point of view when faced with a stronger, rationally sustained argument, which is a distinctive feature of the mature, critical and thinking individual. Philosophy, through dialogue, encourages openness to different perspectives and explores the boundaries of one's own knowledge, thus becoming the most effective means against dogmatism, ideological encapsulation and intellectual rigidity, which are common challenges in youth.

The third specific feature of philosophy in Bulgarian education is that, as a socially significant discipline, it develops communicative skills to an exceptional extent, which turns it into a special type of cultural technique. This “cultural technique” or “cultural dialogue” without analogue in any other academic discipline [13. P. 62] is the result of the successful integration of linguistic precision and argumentative ability in an active social context. It allows the learner to actively participate, adequately and effectively, in complex social, moral and political discussions, to understand the context in which they are conducted, and to apply abstract philosophical principles to specific life situations. Philosophy thus lays the foundations for realizing the goals of civic education in the modern Bulgarian school, contributing to the formation of social and civic competencies, where respect for other people's opinions, empathetic openness to positive interaction with others, is combined with the requirement for rational justification of one's own position. The ability for meaningful dialogue and rational debate is fundamental to the functioning of any democratic society, and philosophy prepares future citizens of Bulgaria not to be passive consumers of political slogans and media propaganda, but to become active, informed, critical and socially responsible participants in the public and civil-political life of the country.

Conclusion

The understanding of the role of philosophy within the Bulgarian educational system outlines a trajectory of a complex and ambiguous movement that characterizes attempts to implement philosophical knowledge in the space of Bulgarian education. On the one hand, it reflects the ideas and concepts common to the scientific and philosophical discourse regarding the purposeful and functional positioning of philosophy in relation to educational processes and educational practices, and on the other hand, it reveals the specificity of the national quest towards redefining this role in the conditions of the contemporary socio-cultural situation. The new role of philosophy is mostly associated with the development of the qualities and attitudes necessary for rational and critical thinking, empathetic feeling and socially responsible action in cooperation with others, with care for society, with the aim of a good life together.

There is an aspiration to keep philosophy alive, relevant to the acute problems, collisions and challenges of contemporary society and capable of solving problems of knowledge related to today's scientific and subject areas and their boundaries.

The purpose and strategic importance of philosophy in the field of Bulgarian education is thought of in terms of understanding the connections between knowledge from major areas such as natural sciences and humanities, in terms of understanding acute problems such as ethics, science and technology and in terms of orienting students in social, legal, moral and cultural realities.

References

- [1] Dewey J. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. Delhi: Aakar Books; 2004.
- [2] Trickey S, Topping KJ. Philosophy for Children: A systematic review. *Research Papers in Education*. 2004;19(3):365–380.
- [3] Worley P. Plato, metacognition and philosophy in schools. *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*. 2018;5(1):76–91.
- [4] Hand M. On the distinctive educational value of philosophy. *Journal of Philosophy in Schools*. 2018;5(1):4–19.
- [5] Merleau-Ponty M. *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press; 1968.
- [6] Freire P. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum; 1970.
- [7] Gallagher S. *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 2005.
- [8] MacIntyre A. *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. London: Duckworth; 2009.
- [9] Mitrentseva M. *Philosophy of Change. Philosophical Disciplines in School after 1991*. Varna: LiterNet; 2015. Available from: <https://litenet.bg/publish30/maia-mitrenceva/filosofia/content.htm> (accessed: 01.07.2025).
- [10] Gerdjikov S. *Methodology of Philosophy Teaching*. Ekstrem; 2019. (In Bulgarian).
- [11] Vardzhiyska E. *The Research Community. Philosophical and Didactic Transformations of a Concept from American Pragmatism in Contemporary German Philosophy (Karl-Otto Appel, Jürgen Habermas) and Didactics of Philosophy*: dissertation abstract; 2014. (In Bulgarian).
- [12] Elchinov D, Nikolova N. Functions of Philosophy in Secondary Education in Bulgaria. *Philosophy*. 2017;26(1):86–99.
- [13] Karageorgieva A. Philosophy for Children and Socratic Dialog. *Philosophy*. 2005;6:56–62.

About the author:

Lavrentsova Elena – PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor, Vice-Dean for Research and International Cooperation, Faculty of Education, Trakia University, 9 Armejska St., Stara Zagora, 6000, Bulgaria. ORCID: 0000-0002-4920-275X. E-mail: elena.lavrentsova@trakia-uni.bg

Сведения об авторе:

Лавренцова Елена – кандидат философских наук, доцент, заместитель декана по научной работе и международному сотрудничеству, Педагогический факультет, Тракийский университет, Республика Болгария, 6000, Старая Загора, ул. Армейска, д. 9. ORCID: 0000-0002-4920-275X. E-mail: elena.lavrentsova@trakia-uni.bg