

# **SOCRATIC METHODS IN EDUCATION BASED ON CONFLICT DIALOGUE**

**Akhmedov B.A.**

Chirchik State Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62536/sjehss.v1i3.5>**

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## **Abstract:**

The structure and plot of the Socratic dialogue are analyzed. The primary forms and principles of the method are revealed, and its results are correlated with the requirements of the Republican basic general education for the possible approbation of the method by teachers of humanities.

**Keywords:** humanities, pedagogy, pedagogical methods, Socrates' method, Socrates, Socratic dialogue, philosophy.

## **Introduction:**

Socrates was an ancient Greek philosopher who lived in Athens from 436 to 399 BC. The philosopher Socrates is known as the mentor of Phaedrus, Simon, Theaetetus, Euclid of Megara, Aeschines Socraticus, Antisthenes, Aristippus, Critias, Plato, etc. A true professional (who did not take money from students for tuition), Socrates knew the actual pedagogical way of searching – dialogic. And today, the oldest method, which bears the name of the "barefoot sage", has pedagogical potential.

Socratic dialogue is an active teaching method based on direct interaction between a teacher and a student in a question–and–answer format to form a student's knowledge of a particular concept relatively independently. Such a definition conveys only an eclectic idea of the Socratic method.

The article aims to determine whether it is possible to use the Socrates method at the basic general level of education. Therefore, it is necessary to perform the following tasks: to analyze the structure and plot of the method, to identify the basic principles of the method, to correlate its results with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard of Basic General Education for possible approbation of the method by teachers of humanities.

In pedagogy, there are two main approaches to learning: development and education of students. The first approach (according to Aristotle) implies that the student is an empty vessel that must be filled with the teacher's knowledge. Another approach (according to Plato) calls

the student and the teacher equally filled vessels. According to Plato, the teacher remembers knowledge, but the student does not;

hence, the teacher's main goal is to awaken in the memory of the ward what he actually knows. When choosing the Platonic approach in educational activities, it is rational to use the Socratic method.

The teacher in the Socratic dialogue is a moderator; his role is to pose logically organised questions and moderate the conversation, to help and instruct – and in no case to convey information. The student, in turn, is an active participant in the dialogue tasked with the following tasks: to carry out a semantic analysis of his experience and synthesize knowledge in answers to questions. The common goal of the dialogue should be the search for truth – and, in no case, the victory in the dispute. This is the embodiment of the principle of activity, according to which knowledge is obtained not in a ready-made form, but thanks to the student's own effort.

### **The Socratic method is essentially a subjective dialectic.**

One form of the method is the irony coming from the moderator of the dialogue. Moreover, by "irony", it is necessary to understand the Greek "ironic", which was revealed by the philosopher Phoebe as "a pretence associated with self-diminution in actions and speeches" - this is a slightly different definition, unusual for a native Russian speaker. Aristotle provides a clear illustration of the behaviour of a student and a teacher during a Socratic dialogue: "A braggart shows himself having more than what he has, or knowing what he does not know; the pretender, on the contrary, pretends that he has less than he does, and does not say what he knows, but hides his knowledge." The example of pretence or the definition of untruthfulness that Aristotle gives in *The Great Ethics* accurately shows the teacher's manner when conducting a Socratic dialogue. The first part of Aristotle's statement is similar to the behavior of a student during a Socratic dialogue. Taking into account the Platonic approach to learning, it is necessary to make an amendment. Here, the student pretends to have woken up, as if bragging about memories of knowledge, which in fact (at the beginning of the Socratic dialogue) he has not yet had.

Socratic irony can be found in all the dialogues prescribed by Plato: where the "barefoot sage" is, there is ironic. To draw an objective conclusion that irony is the leading form of the method, let us turn to the early texts of Plato (about the 90s of the IV century BC) and to the texts of the mature period of Plato (70-60 years of the IV century BC).

For example, in a dialogue with Euthyphron about a lawsuit against his father, Socrates says: "So, my friend Euthyphron, explain to me so that I become wiser: what proof do you have that all the gods consider a man to have died innocently, who, while serving for hire, became a murderer and, being bound by the master of the murdered, died in chains before the one who bound him received an order from the exegete, and what do they think is right for the son to be prosecuted and accused of murdering his father because of this? Please try to prove to me

clearly that all the gods consider your behavior the most correct, and if you prove this satisfactorily, I will never stop praising your wisdom."

Let's conduct a hermeneutical analysis of the passage.

Firstly, by addressing Euthyphron as "my friend", Socrates makes it clear to the student that they are on the same hierarchical horizontal during the dialogue. Such a rhetorical technique allows the student to inspire a sense of self-confidence, reduces the anxiety of the interlocutor during the dialogue, and minimizes the problems of phrasing remarks.

Secondly, like his midwife mother, Socrates expresses his thoughts for a long time - but clearly and logically – at the forefront of which is the central question of the dialogue: is it necessary to file a lawsuit against his father from the point of view of morality? Thus, Socrates identifies a problem around which further reflections will be built and develops the student's skill of concentrating on one subject in terms of oral transmission of information.

Thirdly and fourthly, Socrates uses the words with the root "wise" twice. At the beginning of the remark, he pretends that he has no idea about the attitude of the gods to the incident: "explain to me, [student], so that I may become wiser"; and at the end of the phrase, where he sets Euthyphron the task of presenting appropriate arguments, Socrates seems to add: "if you prove this satisfactorily, I will never I will stop praising your wisdom" [Ibid.]. Thus, the teacher uses irony and positive sanction to motivate students to seek the truth.

Socrates also uses irony in a dialogue with Phaedrus when they discuss the text of the Athenian orator Lysias: "It seemed to me, as an ignoramus, that this writer courageously expressed everything that came to his mind. Do you see any need for writers to put everything in such a sequence as Lysias'?" The teacher clarifies to the student that he can analyze the text better than the teacher. And then Phaedrus, one of the youngest students of Socrates, sees the pretense in the teacher: "You are too kind if you think that I am capable of so thoroughly analyzing all the features of his composition." However, Socrates' "Greek" irony does not cause resentment or indignation on the part of the student but only turns his gaze "inside himself".

Pretense – if understood in an Aristotelian way - creates a situation in which the student considers himself a vessel equal to the mentor. The dialogue leader has the opportunity to identify a contradiction through a series of specific questions – without prompting for the right answer – to encourage the student to solve the identified problem and awaken knowledge in him; that is, to form knowledge, and not just transfer it, as didactic teaching tools mainly do. Thus, irony on the part of the teacher in the dialogue motivates the student to independently search for the truth and contributes to the realization of the core principle of Socrates – "know yourself."

Another form of the method is mayeutics (μαϊευτική sc. τέχνη, "midwifery art" [3, p. 475]), which represents several issues that test formal logical thinking and spontaneous creative capabilities of the audience in a situation of increased attention when careful processing of oral

and written information is required, its application in practice to elimination and non-repetition of uncertainty in the definition of the concept.

In addition to the principle of audience activity and mentoring, the leader and the principle of objectivity, the Socratic method must adhere to the principle of discussion. So, the moderator should conduct a dialogue between real answers, end it when the audience qualifies a certain answer as relatively true, and if there are objections, continue the discussion.

The content of the method includes the induction and establishment of genera and types of the concept – definition.

The classical Socratic method, which must be used in school social studies lessons, includes several stages that are closely related to each other.

The Socratic dialogue begins with a discussion of a concept that does not cause any particular difficulties at first glance. Then the student is asked to define "in his own words." The moderator of the dialogue (mentor), applying a number of point questions, leads the ward (audience) to the idea that this definition is incorrect. Next, a series of new definitions of the same term is proposed, followed by the identification of their shortcomings. The solution to the problem remains with the audience or ends with an agreement to accept the only correct definition of the main concept.

Thus, the socratic dialogue consists of five stages, which equally require the utmost concentration on replicas, answers and questions from all participants, intermediate results when moving to the next stage, and truthfulness, i.e. common sense and adequate speech of the participants.

The first stage of the Socratic dialogue is puzzling. The teacher asks the main question, which – like the following ones – implies a short, simple and presumptive answer in order to ensure the continuous presence of the student in the learning process.

The second stage is the hypothesis. The student (class) arrives at a plausible answer from which some conceptually testable hypothetical propositions can be deduced. The wards express their opinions for most of the dialogue, leaving the right to control to the mentor, who has the opportunity to seize the initiative. When the logical chain weakens, the moderator will notice it at the right time.

The third stage is elenchos, a path of questions and answers that refute the hypothesis. The exact definition of Socratic elenchos is given by Plato's disciple, Aristotle, in the work "On Sophistic Refutations": "A [correct] refutation is something that contradicts the same thing – not a name, but an object, and if a name, then not a co-named, but identical; such a refutation proceeds from agreed [premises] and follows [from of necessity (not including what was put in the beginning) in the same respect in relation to the same, in the same way and for the same time, [as the position of the refuted]." In this way, elenchos identifies and eliminates opinions that hinder the establishment of the truth by defining the true contradiction.

At this stage, the thought is divided into semantic segments, which are presented in the form of a question. The teacher identifies inadequate connections. When answering, the student trains critical thinking and changes the layman's view of the world; doubt forces the ward to turn to reflection and motivates him to come to the truth on his own.

The fourth stage is the acceptance or rejection of a new hypothesis. At this stage, one judgment is collected from the general reasoning and a single decision is made.

The fifth stage is to act accordingly. The participants carry out a joint reflection on the subject and the course of the dialogue.

As a result, students develop the ability to identify and overcome incidents, synthesize and resolve incidents, learn to work in a team, and form a sense of responsibility for statements during the dialogue.

Teaching the knowledge that makes up the content of this standard involves the use of the Socratic method as an effective tool for fulfilling an educational task. This is confirmed by the fact that the basis of the standard is a systemically active approach that ensures active educational and cognitive activity of students.

The oldest method of Socrates (Plato) corresponds to the orientation of the standard on the formation of a personality that knows how to conduct a constructive dialogue.

The Socrates method, in which students are asked heuristic questions, contributes to achieving such a personal result as formed communicative competencies in communication and cooperation with peers.

It seems appropriate to use the Socrates method in the process of forming the ability to control one's activities when achieving a result and adjust one's actions in accordance with a changing situation, as well as in the process of forming the ability to evaluate the correctness of completing an educational task, exercise self-control and consciously make a decision in cognitive activity.

### **Conclusion:**

The Socratic method is recommended for use in defining particularly complex concepts of social science. When using this method, as required by the Federal State Educational Standard, the ability to synthesize, establish analogies and cause-effect relationships, build logical reasoning, inference, use various methods (inductive, deductive and by analogy) and draw conclusions is formed.

The practice of conducting a socratic dialogue forms the student's ability to organize joint activities with the teacher and peers; work individually and in a group, formulate, argue and defend their opinions.

Special attention in Socratic dialogue is paid to the conscious use of speech in accordance with the educational task.

Applicable to the subject result of studying the subject "Social Studies", the Socratic method is able to form a cognitive interest in the study of social disciplines.

The orientation of this method towards the formation of a personality who is able to conduct a constructive dialogue is the main reason for its use in social studies lessons.

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