

Teaching How to Think: The Philosophical Foundations of the School Subject ‘The World and I’

Bruno Ćurko

University of Split, Croatia

bcurko@ffst.hr



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Abstract. The article examines the recently introduced school subject, ‘The World and I’. ‘The World and I’ is introduced in the experimental programme ‘Primary School as a Whole Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable System of Education’ in Croatian schools. This subject places an emphasis on developing students’ critical thinking skills rather than simply imparting knowledge. It also integrates logic and philosophy, thus positioning it within the philosophical group of subjects. Both formal and informal logic are of significant importance in the development of reasoning abilities. Formal logic enables students to comprehend the structure of arguments and to avoid fallacies. Informal logic, in contrast, provides them with the capacity to apply reasoning in real-world contexts, thus making them more discerning in evaluating arguments encountered in everyday life. The curriculum is informed by the Socratic method that encourages the practice of reflective thinking and the questioning of assumptions. Furthermore, the curriculum emphasizes metacognition, or the ability to think about one’s own cognitive processes, with the aim of enhancing students’ reasoning abilities. By encouraging self-reflection, students become more independent thinkers, capable of evaluating not only external arguments but also their own thought processes. Furthermore, the article highlights how the subject encourages ethical reflection and social responsibility, prompting students to apply their critical thinking skills to real-world ethical dilemmas. The integration of logic and philosophy within the subject ensures that students develop a comprehensive intellectual and moral framework, equipping them with the capacity to make responsible decisions.

Key Words: critical thinking, logic, philosophy, metacognition, school subject ‘World and I’

Učiti misliti: filozofski temelji šolskega predmeta svet in jaz

Povzetek. Članek obravnava nedavno uvedeni šolski predmet svet in jaz. Svet in jaz je uveden v eksperimentalnem programu Osnovna šola kot celodnevna šola, in sicer v sklopu projekta Uravnotežen, pravičen, učinkovit in trajnosten sistem izobraževanja v hrvaških šolah. Predmet poudarja razvijanje sposobnosti kritičnega mišljenja učencev in se ne osredotoča zgolj na posredovanje znanja. Poudarja tudi kritično mišljenje ter povezuje logiko in filozofijo, s čimer se umešča v filozofsko skupino predmetov. Tako formalna kot neformalna logika sta zelo pomembni za razvoj zmožnosti sklepanja. Formalna logika učencem omogoča, da razumejo strukturo argumentov in se izogibajo zmotam. Neformalna logika pa jim omogoča, da so sposobni uporabljati argumentacijo v resničnem svetu, s čimer postanejo bolj razgledani pri ocenjevanju argumentov, s katerimi se srečujejo v vsakdanjem življenju. Učni načrt temelji na sokratski metodi, ki spodbuja razmišljanje in preizpraševanje predpostavk. Poleg tega poudarja metakognicijo ali sposobnost razmišljanja o lastnih kognitivnih procesih, ki pomaga izboljšati sposobnost razmišljanja učencev. S spodbujanjem samorefleksije učenci postanejo samostojnejši misleci, ki so sposobni ovrednotiti ne le zunanje argumente, temveč tudi lastne miselne procese. Poleg tega je v članku poudarjeno, kako predmet spodbuja etično razmišljanje in družbeno odgovornost, saj učence spodbuja, da svoje sposobnosti kritičnega mišljenja uporabijo pri realnih etičnih dilemah. Vključevanje logike in filozofije v predmet zagotavlja, da učenci razvijejo celovit intelektualni in moralni okvir, ki jim omogoča sprejemanje odgovornih odločitev.

Ključne besede: svet in jaz, šolski predmet, logika, filozofija, metakognicija

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving society, the necessity to provide students with the requisite skills to effectively navigate the challenges of the modern world is becoming increasingly apparent. Technological advancements, and the exponential spread of information, create demands that often exceed the capacities of traditional educational approaches, which are ill-equipped to address these challenges. The subject 'The World and I' addresses a range of complex social and ethical issues, including digital literacy and misinformation, climate change and sustainability, social justice and equality, and privacy in the digital age. These challenges prompt students to engage in critical analysis of the reliability of information, to

recognize their role in environmental responsibility, and to develop empathy for marginalized communities. Furthermore, the subject addresses the ethical implications of personal data security, fostering awareness of privacy in online spaces. Through these themes, students cultivate both critical thinking and a robust ethical foundation for responsible decision-making in contemporary society. Nevertheless, educational systems tend to evolve at a relatively slow pace in response to new developments, which has led to the emergence of non-formal education as a means of maintaining some degree of alignment with these changes.

In some countries, there have been notable shifts in the curriculum, with the inclusion of subjects from the philosophical discipline. For example, in France, philosophy is a compulsory subject for students in their final year of secondary education, with a curriculum encompassing ethical, epistemological and political philosophical themes. Spain also incorporates philosophy in its secondary education curriculum, including critical thinking, logic, and moral philosophy. In Croatia, philosophy is a mandatory subject in the fourth year of high school (gymnasium), with logic included in the third year. Furthermore, ethics is available as an elective in all secondary schools for students who do not attend religious education classes. Ethics is becoming more prevalent in high school educational programmes. These subjects have historically been the preserve of secondary education.

However, with the advent of philosophy for children, as pioneered by Matthew Lipman, and the subsequent expansion of various approaches within this field, philosophy with children has emerged as a distinct area of study. This approach is designed to cultivate critical and creative thinking in children. In the realm of non-formal education, there are numerous iterations of philosophy with children, and recently, subjects aimed at developing critical and creative thinking skills have been increasingly introduced into primary schools. This trend underscores the necessity for the design of educational programmes that will equip children with the ability to effectively navigate the intellectual, social, and moral challenges of the contemporary world.

The School Subject ‘The World and I’

The school subject ‘The World and I’ is designed to foster the development of students’ critical thinking skills, which are considered to be key competencies in the twenty-first century and form an integral part of life-long learning. In an environment characterized by rapid change and tech-

nological advancement, students are confronted with a vast array of information from a multitude of sources, frequently lacking in veracity. The subject provides students with the tools to critically assess and evaluate the information they encounter, as well as to devise creative solutions to the numerous challenges they face (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 1):

The subject 'The World and I' occupies this space by focusing on the individual (student) who critically reflects on both themselves and the world, to act as a bridge between these two realms – the external (the world of facts) and the internal (the world of values).

The subject 'The World and I' is delivered with an annual allocation of 70 hours. It is recommended that the lessons be organized in double periods to allow sufficient time for critical thinking and more effective learning. The subject is taught across all eight grades of primary school. The experimental implementation of this subject began in the 2023/2024 school year as part of the experimental programme 'Primary School as a Whole Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable System of Education.' 'The World and I' is an elective subject, and students can currently choose between this subject and religious education.¹ The programme, entitled 'The World and I,' is currently part of a whole-day school initiative that has been implemented in just over 60 schools across the Republic of Croatia. Approximately 650 students are currently enrolled in this subject.

The subject 'The World and I' has been designed with the objective of fostering the development of critical thinking, personal responsibility and ethical behaviour in students. The subject is focused on the empowerment of students to engage in critical reflection on the world around them, the analysis of information, and the formulation of informed decisions. These objectives are achieved through teaching that develops the capacity to critically assess, solve problems, and engage in ethical action within the community. One of the principal aims is to encourage students to assume responsibility for their thoughts and actions, while simultaneously fostering social responsibility and an awareness of the importance of the common good. Students are trained to act with confidence and

¹ More information about 'Primary School as a Full-Day School: A Balanced, Fair, Efficient, and Sustainable System of Education' can be found at <https://mzom.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Obrazovanje/OsnovneSkole/Cjelodnevna-skola/Eksperimentalni-kurikulum-nastavnoga-predmeta-Svijet-i-ja-za-osnovne-skole.pdf>.

autonomy in various life situations, with respect for democratic values, solidarity, and empathy. As the curriculum states (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 2):

The primary educational goal of learning and teaching the subject The World and I is to guide the student towards critically thinking about the world around them by strengthening their critical thinking skills, which will enable them to act confidently, autonomously, and responsibly in various learning contexts and in everyday personal and professional life.

The main goal of this subject is to teach students how to think, rather than what to think, a principle that was first advocated by John Dewey.

Structure: Organizational Areas of the Curriculum ‘The World and I’

The curriculum for the subject ‘The World and I’ is meticulously structured into three principal areas, each designed to cultivate critical thinking, self-reflection, and ethical conduct. These areas are fundamental to enabling students to navigate the modern world, which is characterized by an abundance of information and a multitude of complex social challenges. The curriculum’s fundamental objective is to equip students with the requisite tools to engage with the world around them in a thoughtful and critical manner, to analyse information in a discerning and informed way, and to foster their development into responsible and reflective individuals.

The initial area of focus, ‘Information Management and Application of Critical Thinking Strategies,’ is designed to equip students with the capacity to efficiently process substantial quantities of information. In the contemporary era, where students are frequently confronted with an array of unverified data from disparate sources, the capacity to critically assess information is of paramount importance. Students are instructed in essential competencies, including the ability to discern reliable sources of information, assess the credibility of data, and make well-informed decisions based on their analysis. This area facilitates a progressive learning process, wherein students progress from an initial comprehension of fundamental facts to a more nuanced understanding of intricate concepts and, ultimately, the ability to apply their knowledge in creative problem-solving. As the curriculum states (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 3):

Students must know how to manage information and apply critical

thinking strategies to find, select, and evaluate various sources and information around them.

This foundation guarantees that students are not merely passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process, capable of making reasoned judgments.

The second area of focus, 'Personal and Social Responsibility, Ethical Action,' is dedicated to fostering the development of students' sense of responsibility, both at the personal and social levels. In this section, the curriculum shifts its focus to assisting students in comprehending their role within society and the consequences of their actions. Students are encouraged to engage in introspective reflection on their personal conduct, the values they espouse, and the extent to which these align with the broader democratic principles of fairness, equality, solidarity, and empathy. This area of the curriculum is of paramount importance for the inculcation of a robust moral compass in students, equipping them with the capacity to engage thoughtfully and ethically in their communities. As stated in the curriculum, 'The development of critical thinking enables students to enhance their personal and social responsibility, ethical conduct, and democratic values' (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 4). This learning area is aligned with the broader educational objectives of preparing students to become conscientious and active citizens who are aware of the importance of their contributions to the well-being of society.

The third area of focus, 'Managing One's Own Thinking,' is centred on metacognition, which entails instructing students on how to reflect on and regulate their own cognitive processes. This area is of great importance in enabling students to develop the skills required to regulate and enhance their cognitive functions. The utilization of metacognitive strategies enables students to monitor their thought processes, evaluate the efficacy of their problem-solving techniques and implement necessary modifications when required. As students become more aware of their cognitive processes, they gain the ability to manage their learning more effectively, which is essential for both academic success and personal growth. The curriculum makes this point explicitly, stating (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 5): 'Metacognition, or thinking about thinking, encompasses the management of one's own thinking processes, including monitoring, assessment, and improvement when necessary.'

The integration of these three domains constitutes a comprehensive framework for the cultivation of well-rounded, critically engaged students. The integration of critical thinking, ethical reflection, and metacognitive awareness provides students not only with academic knowledge but also the essential life skills required to navigate the complexities of contemporary society. The curriculum's concentration on these domains guarantees that students will be adequately prepared to confront the intellectual and moral challenges that lie ahead with assurance, integrity, and a profound sense of accountability.

Structured Learning Outcomes and Competency Development in 'The World and I'

The subject 'The World and I' is designed to be taught at all levels of primary education, with learning objectives that are aligned with the age and developmental stages of students. The learning outcomes are structured within three principal domains: the management of information and the application of critical thinking strategies; personal and social responsibility, with an emphasis on ethical behaviour; and self-management of one's thinking processes. In consideration of the developmental differences among students, the outcomes are designed to evolve and build upon each other in a manner that aligns with the progression through the grades. In the initial two-year period, students develop fundamental abilities for identifying and interpreting concepts from straightforward informational sources. With the guidance of the instructor, they extract new information and apply it in everyday contexts, thereby acquiring an initial capacity for critical thinking. In the domain of personal and social responsibility, students begin to comprehend the significance of community norms, learning about responsibility towards themselves and others. Concurrently, through self-management, students pose simple questions and monitor their progress, with consistent support from the teacher.

By the end of the third and fourth grades, students have developed the capacity to conduct independent research. They become more proficient at integrating new information with existing knowledge, thereby enhancing their comprehension of concepts. With regard to social and ethical conduct, students are able to differentiate between responsible and irresponsible actions and to practice empathy and collaboration within the classroom and in the wider community. With regard to self-management, students are beginning to set their own goals and reflect on their progress, although they still require occasional teacher support. In the fifth and

sixth grades, students develop the capacity to critically assess information and to conduct independent searches for answers. Their comprehension becomes more sophisticated, and the capacity for critical analysis of information is a pivotal element of their learning process. With regard to the domain of personal responsibility, students assume a more prominent role in comprehending the ramifications of their conduct for the community. Additionally, they engage actively in discourses pertaining to ethical matters. As students progress through the educational system, they gradually assume greater control over their own cognitive processes, formulating questions about their learning and directing their own learning trajectory. In the seventh and eighth grades, students demonstrate proficiency in independently analysing and evaluating complex information, applying it in a variety of contexts. At this stage, students demonstrate the greatest capacity for critical thinking as they integrate prior knowledge into new challenges. With regard to social and ethical conduct, students assume an active role within the community, contemplating a range of social concerns and formulating decisions that are grounded in ethical considerations. In the domain of self-management, students exhibit self-regulation, evaluate their own progress, and make decisions based on critical reflection on their learning processes and outcomes.

Teaching How to Think: The Role of Critical Thinking in the Curriculum ‘The World and I’

‘The World and I’ clearly demonstrates its focus on teaching children how to think, rather than what to think, through the development of critical thinking, metacognitive skills and the ability to self-regulate thought processes. At the heart of the subject is the ability to question information, analyse sources and draw independent conclusions. Rather than simply absorbing facts, students develop critical thinking skills, which are recognized as key skills for the twenty-first century and lifelong learning (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 2): ‘The subject The World and I is primarily aimed at developing students’ critical thinking competence – the competence of the future, the competence of the 21st century.’

Critical thinking enables students to become independent thinkers who are able to evaluate the credibility of information and make informed decisions. The key aspect of this process is not just recognizing information, but understanding the wider context in which information exists. In this sense, ‘The World and I’ does not focus on rote learning, but on developing students’ ability to think, analyse and connect facts in order to draw

conclusions. This empowers students to take an active role in their own education and lives, and prepares them for future challenges in a world full of information and complex social issues. The curriculum also promotes strategies for managing thinking by encouraging students not only to analyse information but also to monitor and adjust their thinking processes, making them autonomous thinkers. This process develops gradually, starting with simple monitoring and reflection on personal thoughts and progressing to more advanced monitoring and adjustment of thinking strategies. Students learn to recognize obstacles in their thinking, such as biases or emotional reactions, and how to overcome them in order to reach rational, objective conclusions. As the curriculum states: 'The student develops confidence in his critical thinking process and in the correctness of his conclusions, and is able to manage it: monitor the process, identify influencing factors, direct, regulate and correct it' (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 5). In addition, the metacognitive dimension of the curriculum plays a crucial role in teaching students how to think. Metacognition, which involves reflecting on one's own thinking processes, enables students to become aware of their thinking strategies and to adapt them according to the situation. Students become aware of how they learn, how they manage information and how they can improve their thinking processes. This promotes continuous progress in learning and decision-making, which is essential for the development of independence and responsibility. 'Metacognition includes knowledge and skills for managing one's own thinking: monitoring, controlling and evaluating effectiveness and changing strategies when necessary' (p. 4). In this way, students do not become passive recipients of knowledge, but active creators of their own thought processes, which better prepares them for future educational and life challenges. The curriculum also emphasizes the development of personal and social responsibility. Students not only learn how to think critically, but also how to apply these thinking skills in the context of ethical action. They are trained to take responsibility for their actions and to understand how their behaviour affects the broader community. Students develop awareness of the importance of ethics and empathy in everyday life and are encouraged to reflect on their own values and attitudes, becoming active and responsible members of society. As noted in the curriculum (p. 5): 'The student develops self-confidence, self-criticism, and personal integrity, recognizes and becomes aware of personal and social responsibility, and the ethical nature of actions for the benefit of the community and democracy.'

These elements of the curriculum clearly show that 'The World and I' does not just teach students facts or ready-made answers, but empowers them to think independently, make ethical decisions and act responsibly in the world. Pupils acquire tools for critical thinking, enabling them to become autonomous, responsible and ethically aware individuals who are prepared to face the challenges of contemporary society.

The methods used in 'The World and I' form the backbone of its pedagogical approach and are designed to promote active, experiential and collaborative learning. These methods are crucial to achieving the curriculum's primary objective: developing students' critical thinking skills and their ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations. Rather than focusing on passive learning that emphasizes memorization, the methods encourage students to take an active role in their learning process by exploring, questioning, analysing and reflecting on the content. This is essential for developing students' autonomy and responsibility, which are key outcomes of this curriculum. One of the core methods emphasized in the curriculum is problem solving and critical analysis. These methods guide students from the acquisition of basic knowledge to more advanced intellectual skills, such as researching and synthesizing concepts to solve complex problems. The curriculum explicitly states (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 3): 'Students are guided from basic knowledge and simple conclusions, through further research, concept integration and application, to innovative and creative problem solving.' This progression not only enhances students' understanding of the material, but also equips them with the tools to critically evaluate and manage information and draw well-informed and reasoned conclusions. Furthermore, the curriculum is predicated on the tenets of cooperative learning and discussion. Through group work and collaborative projects, students are afforded the opportunity to engage with a multiplicity of perspectives, thereby acquiring the capacity to communicate effectively while developing empathy and ethical reasoning. Such methods permit students to reflect on their own ideas and to consider the viewpoints of their peers, thereby facilitating the cultivation of social skills and a sense of shared responsibility. As the curriculum makes clear (p. 4): 'Collaborative activities facilitate the exchange of opinions, reflection on others' perspectives, and the development of critical thinking through dialogue.' Furthermore, the teaching methods employed in 'The World and I' incorporate experiential and project-based learning as integral components. By establishing a connection between the classroom and the real world, students are en-

couraged to apply their learning to their local community and everyday life. This approach facilitates the transition from theoretical knowledge to practical application. As the curriculum states (p. 5), ‘Learning through experience and project work encourages students to apply knowledge in practical contexts, reinforcing their understanding and fostering real-world problem-solving skills.’ These hands-on experiences not only reinforce learning but also instil a sense of responsibility and ethical action as students perceive the impact of their learning in a broader societal context. The combination of these methods is essential as they actively engage students, promote critical thinking and enable them to become independent, reflective thinkers. This is especially crucial in the contemporary era, where the capacity to evaluate information critically, engage in collaborative work, and apply knowledge ethically is paramount. The curriculum’s emphasis on active learning strategies ensures that students are not merely absorbing facts, but are learning to think critically, make informed decisions, and assume responsibility for their own learning and actions.

The teaching methods employed in ‘The World and I’ represent a pivotal aspect of the curriculum, as they epitomize its core objective: to instruct students in the art of critical thinking, rather than merely imparting knowledge. By providing students with the intellectual tools necessary to navigate complex information and contribute responsibly to society, these methods facilitate problem-solving, collaboration, experiential learning and critical reflection. By fostering active and engaged learning, these methods facilitate the development of the critical, ethical, and social competencies essential for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Two Engaging Approaches to Teaching

Story Rules: Learning Consequences Through Classic Tales

The objective of this activity is to analyse rules through the lens of well-known stories. This may be achieved by examining a story such as Little Red Riding Hood, or another story of a similar nature, in order to gain an understanding of the importance of following rules and the potential consequences of ignoring them. To illustrate, Little Red Riding Hood did not adhere to her mother’s counsel to remain on the path, which resulted in her encounter with the wolf and subsequent peril. The instructor guides students in a logical examination of her decision and contemplation of the ramifications of her actions. This approach enables students to discern emotions and instinctive responses while also recognizing the role

of rational thinking in making informed choices. The objective is to foster in students the capacity to evaluate circumstances and comprehend the necessity of rules for safety and well-being.

Logic Detective: Spotting Everyday Fallacies

In the pursuit of fostering critical thinking skills in young students, an activity focusing on identifying informal logical fallacies – such as *ad hominem*, false dilemma, and appeal to popularity – has been demonstrated to be an effective pedagogical tool. The Logic Detective exercise introduces students to the subtleties of flawed reasoning in a way that is both accessible and engaging, drawing on everyday scenarios that are relevant to their experiences. The structure of Logic Detective is straightforward yet efficacious. Prior to the activity, the instructor prepares a set of cards, each illustrating a different logical fallacy. To illustrate, an *ad hominem* attack is exemplified in a scenario where Tony's arguments are dismissed on the grounds that he habitually wears a hat indoors. A classic example of a false dilemma is illustrated in the statement, 'If you do not participate in this activity with me, then you are not a genuine friend.' Furthermore, an appeal to popularity is exemplified in a child's entreaty: 'Given that the majority of the class already possesses this item, it would be logical to conclude that I require it as well.' Such examples permit students to encounter, recognize and unpack common fallacies in a controlled and interactive setting. The instructor then divides the students into smaller groups and provides each group with a scenario card, requesting that they analyse the scenarios and identify any logical flaws within them. The exercise requires students to engage in discussion regarding the potential issues with such reasoning and to propose a more equitable and logical alternative. Subsequently, each group presents one scenario to the class, elucidating the fallacy and sharing their insights.

The overarching objective of this exercise is to enhance students' comprehension of logical integrity by enabling them to discern instances where an argument is compromised by personal attacks, the creation of false dichotomies, or social pressures. In learning to identify these fallacies, students are not only better equipped to process the arguments they encounter in their daily lives, but they also develop the confidence to question reasoning that may initially appear persuasive. By engaging in scenario-based activities, students develop the analytical tools necessary for independent critical thinking, a skillset that will benefit them in a multitude of contexts beyond the classroom.

Logic as a Core Tool for Critical Thinking in the Curriculum 'The World and I'

The subject 'The World and I' is predicated on the use of logic, which serves as an indispensable instrument for cultivating students' capacity to think lucidly, reason with coherence, and address problems in a methodical manner. Given that this curriculum is fundamentally oriented towards fostering critical thinking, logic becomes an indispensable tool for students in organizing their thoughts, analysing complex issues and drawing reasoned conclusions. The integration of formal and informal logic not only enhances students' intellectual abilities but also provides them with practical tools for navigating the challenges of everyday life. The teaching of formal logic provides students with an understanding of the fundamental principles of sound reasoning. This includes the ability to identify valid argument structures, avoid fallacies and construct coherent and well-supported conclusions. Students engage with deductive reasoning, syllogisms and the basic principles of valid argumentation, which enables them to analyse and evaluate arguments in a systematic manner. For example, children learn logical fallacies such as *ad hominem* attacks, where an argument is dismissed based on a personal trait rather than its merits – like saying, 'I won't listen to Lana because she wears glasses,' which ignores the actual point being made. They also explore false dilemmas, which present only two choices in complex situations, such as, 'Either you're my friend, or we'll never play together again,' overlooking other possible solutions. By analysing these examples, students sharpen their skills in spotting reasoning errors and constructing sound arguments.

As Lipman (2003, 185) notes: 'Formal logic requires the learning of rules for the standardization of everyday language so that the complexities of ordinary discourse can be reduced to the simplicities of logical language.' This formal structure assists students in comprehending the nuances of everyday communication, facilitating the translation of complex ideas into coherent and logical expressions. By practicing these logical rules students develop the capacity to deconstruct complex arguments, identify inconsistencies and arrive at conclusions that are both logical and well-supported. One of the principal advantages of teaching formal logic is its capacity to enhance the clarity of thought. Students are able to discern when an argument is logically sound and, equally importantly, they become adept at identifying flaws in reasoning. This is particularly ben-

eficial when students are exposed to a variety of arguments in subjects such as history, literature, and science, where the capacity to critically analyse sources and claims is essential. For example, in history, students might compare two different stories about a famous event to see how details can change depending on who is telling the story. In literature, they could discuss why a character might act in a certain way and if they can trust everything the character says. In science, they might look at different ideas about what causes weather changes and think about which explanations have more evidence. These activities help students start thinking critically and build their skills in understanding different viewpoints.

As is emphasized in the curriculum (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 4): 'The application of formal logic helps students not only in recognizing patterns of reasoning but in ensuring that their own reasoning is structured, clear, and free from fallacies.' In addition to formal logic, informal logic plays a significant role in the curriculum, enabling students to apply logical reasoning to real-world situations. The focus of informal logic is the construction of arguments in everyday language, with consideration given to contextual factors, the purpose of the argument and the intended audience. It is especially beneficial in fostering students' critical thinking abilities when they are confronted with practical problems or debates. The importance of context in shaping an argument is a key tenet of informal logic, equipping students with the ability to navigate discussions with greater nuance and adaptability. This is crucial for cultivating the capacity for reasoning that students will draw upon not only in academic contexts but also in their everyday interactions. As Lipman (2004, 40) elucidates, 'Informal logic focuses on natural language and the context of the argument, which is crucial for reasoning effectively in everyday situations.'

The study of informal logic provides students with an understanding of the various types of logical fallacies that frequently distort reasoning in everyday conversation. Such errors include ad hominem attacks, straw man arguments and false dilemmas, which collectively serve to undermine the quality of reasoning and are frequently observed in public discourse, the media and even social interactions. By learning to identify and avoid these fallacies, students are better equipped to engage in meaningful discussions and to defend their ideas with logical rigor. In the modern world, this skill set is of the utmost importance, as students are frequently confronted with misleading information and must learn to discern what is credible and what is not. Moreover, the curriculum incorporates logic

not only for the analysis of arguments presented by others, but also for self-reflection and metacognition. Students are encouraged to engage in critical reflection on their own reasoning processes, identify potential biases, and develop strategies for enhancing their thought patterns. This aspect of metacognition, or the consideration of one's own cognitive processes, is central to the broader objectives of 'The World and I'. Dewey himself (1959, 78) makes this point in his writings: 'Logic is both a science and an art; a science as it gives an organized account of how thought operates, and an art as it projects methods for future thinking.'

The curriculum is structured around the dual perspective of logic as both analytical and practical, with an emphasis on the importance of understanding and applying logical principles in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, logic acts as a conduit between the advancement of critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Students are instructed in the processes of critical thinking and ethical reasoning, with an emphasis on the application of logical principles in making responsible decisions. This convergence of logic and ethics is crucial for nurturing individuals who can reason effectively and act responsibly within their communities. The curriculum emphasizes this point by encouraging students to reflect on the ethical dimensions of their decisions, and to weigh their options logically and ethically before taking action (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 6):

By integrating logic into the learning process, students are better prepared to make decisions that are both rational and ethical, thereby ensuring that their actions contribute positively to society.

The incorporation of both formal and informal logic within the 'The World and I' curriculum is vital for achieving the subject's overarching objective: to educate students in critical thinking, rather than simply imparting information. The application of logic provides the cognitive framework necessary for critical inquiry, enabling students to approach complex issues with clarity, precision, and ethical awareness. The study of logic enables students to enhance their intellectual capacities and develop a deeper sense of responsibility in how they think, argue, and act in the world around them. Logic forms the bedrock of the 'The World and I' curriculum, underpinning both critical thinking and ethical reasoning. By equipping students with the skills to construct sound arguments, avoid logical fallacies, and reflect on their own reasoning processes, the curriculum ensures that logic is not only an academic subject but also a

practical tool for lifelong learning. The teaching of logic provides students with the tools necessary for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship. It enables them to construct sound arguments, avoid fallacies and reflect on their own reasoning processes.

A Philosophical Framework for Critical Thinking: Logic, Inquiry, and Reflection in ‘The World and I’

The curriculum for ‘The World and I’ is designed to integrate logic, philosophy, and critical thinking in a coherent framework that is intended to foster students’ capacity for independent thought, reasoning, and problem-solving. These elements are not merely academic concepts; rather, they are practical tools that equip students with the ability to analyse information critically, engage in ethical reflection, and respond thoughtfully to the challenges of the modern world. The curriculum places greater emphasis on the processes of thinking than on the content of thinking, thereby underscoring the significance of logical reasoning, philosophical inquiry, and reflective thinking as fundamental elements of an education. The curriculum’s approach to critical thinking is informed by the tenets of classical philosophical traditions. Also, the curriculum extensively employs the Socratic method, a classical approach to education that fosters deep inquiry through questioning and dialogue. This method teaches students not only to critically evaluate the claims of others but also to reflect on their own assumptions, encouraging a habit of continuous self-reflection. The Socratic method, which entails posing incisive questions to challenge preconceptions and prompt introspective reflection, prompts students to interrogate not only the assertions of others but also their own beliefs. ‘Socrates employed logic to challenge the opinions and views of his interlocutors, frequently utilizing irony to prompt reflection on their own positions’ (Ćurko 2017, 67). The curriculum employs this approach to encourage students to engage in more profound levels of inquiry and reflection, thereby instilling a lifelong disposition of critical questioning.

The influence of philosophy is further reflected in the curriculum’s emphasis on metacognition, defined as the ability to think about one’s own thinking processes. Metacognition is a key element of critical thinking, enabling students to actively reflect on their own thought processes. By becoming aware of how they process information, students can monitor, assess, and improve their cognitive strategies, ultimately leading to better decision-making and problem-solving. This reflective practice is closely aligned with Dewey’s theory of reflective thinking, which empha-

sizes the importance of active, continuous inquiry. According to Dewey, reflective thinking involves not just the absorption of information, but a deliberate process of questioning, evaluating, and revising one's understanding based on new insights. In the classroom, this means students are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, ask 'why' and 'how' questions, and apply their knowledge in new contexts. This approach fosters a mindset of ongoing learning and adaptability, key skills for navigating complex real-world situations. As the curriculum states (Ministarstvo znanja, obrazovanja i mladih 2023, 5): 'Metacognition, or thinking about thinking, encompasses the management of one's own cognitive processes, including monitoring, assessment, and improvement when necessary.'

The curriculum's integration of these philosophical principles ensures that students are not only able to critique external arguments, but also to refine their own thinking processes.

As defined in the curriculum, critical thinking entails the capacity to analyse information, question assumptions and apply logical reasoning in order to draw well-founded conclusions. This skill, which is applicable across academic disciplines, is essential for making informed decisions and navigating the complexities of daily life. As Ćurko (2017, 33) notes, 'Critical thinking is not about learning what to think but developing the ability to process, analyze, and critique information in a reasoned way.' This approach empowers students to become independent thinkers capable of handling the demands of a rapidly changing world with confidence and integrity.

The subject not only concentrates on the teaching of critical skills, but also ensures that students develop the ethical and philosophical foundation necessary for the responsible application of those skills in a variety of contexts. In conclusion, the curriculum of 'The World and I' represents a novel addition to the philosophical group of educational offerings, combining the strengths of logic, philosophy, and critical thinking to create a comprehensive framework for developing well-rounded, reflective thinkers. In the absence of these philosophical and logical components, the subject would lack the capacity to educate students in the skills of critical and responsible thinking, thereby undermining its overarching objective of fostering independent and ethical decision-makers.

At the End

The subject 'The World and I' offers a transformative approach to modern education, focusing on the development of key competencies that are essential for students to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing

world. By meticulously integrating logic, philosophy, and critical thinking, this curriculum equips students with the requisite tools to navigate the plethora of information and multifaceted perspectives they will inevitably encounter. This subject is not merely an avenue for the acquisition of knowledge; rather, it is a conduit for the cultivation of the capacity for independent thought, reflective reasoning, and ethical decision-making. One of the key achievements of this curriculum is its success in bridging the gap between abstract reasoning and practical application. The teaching of formal and informal logic provides students with the cognitive structure necessary to analyse arguments and approach problems systematically. Logic, as an intellectual tool, ensures that students develop clarity and rigor in their thought processes, enabling them to avoid fallacies and draw sound conclusions. By making logical reasoning an integral part of the curriculum, 'The World and I' enhances students' ability to engage with the world in a critical and informed manner.

Moreover, the incorporation of philosophical techniques, particularly the Socratic method, cultivates students' capacity to engage in lifelong learning, prompting them to challenge assumptions and pursue a more profound comprehension of the subject matter. This inquiry-based approach is crucial for cultivating an environment where students are not merely passive recipients of information, but active participants in their learning journey. The promotion of metacognition, or the ability to reflect on one's own cognitive processes, provides students with an additional dimension to their educational experience, thereby empowering them to enhance their cognitive abilities on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the subject's emphasis on ethical reflection and social responsibility ensures that students are not only prepared to engage in critical thinking but also to act in a conscientious manner. By engaging with democratic values and ethical principles, students learn the importance of making decisions that are not only logical but also compassionate and just. This dual emphasis on critical thinking and ethical responsibility equips students with the capacity to become engaged citizens, capable of making thoughtfully informed contributions to their communities.

In conclusion, it can be stated that 'The World and I' is more than just a subject; it is a foundational framework for preparing students to face the intellectual, social, and moral challenges of the future. The curriculum combines the strengths of logic, philosophy, and critical thinking to foster the development of independent, reflective, and ethical thinkers who are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world with

confidence and integrity. The subject represents a novel addition to the educational landscape, ensuring that students are prepared not only for academic success but also for meaningful and responsible participation in society.

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