

## **OPINION**

for dissertation work on the theme: "Individualization and differentiation of pedagogical interaction in kindergarten"

for the degree of Doctor of Science

in professional direction 1.2 Pedagogy (Pre-school pedagogy), Sofia

University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Author of the opinion: Prof., D. Sc., Klavdia Sapundjieva, Sofia University

By order of the Rector of Sofia University, I was selected as a member of the scientific jury under the procedure for the thesis defense: "Individualization and differentiation of pedagogical interaction in kindergarten", with the author Assoc. Prof. Rosalina Plamenova Engels-Critidis. There are no violations of the procedure and the submitted documents and materials are in accordance with the Rules for the development of the academic staff of the Sofia University. The applicant meets the national eligibility requirements.

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant**

Rosalina Engels-Critides was born in 1976. She has completed bachelor's degrees in pre-school pedagogy and Bulgarian philology, as well as a master's degree in pre-school pedagogy with a specialization in Pedagogy of

Mass and Art Communication. She has been a PhD in Pedagogy since 2005. Rosalina Engels has been a lecturer at the Sofia University since 2000 as a part-time teaching assistant. Since 2006 he has been a full-time teacher, and since 2014 he is an associate professor in pre-school pedagogy. She is an active and authoritative participant in the academic life of the faculty, head of graduates, member of various committees, member of the Faculty Council, Erasmus + Coordinator, participant in a number of projects, conferences and international scientific forums. He has numerous specializations in various programs in Bulgaria and abroad. In summary, it can be said that Rosalina Engels is a lecturer with a broad background and culture, a researcher who monitors and adheres to the scientific news and dynamics of contemporary requirements for the social sciences and pre-school pedagogy.

## **2. Presentation and analysis of the dissertation**

The work is dedicated to a topic that has always been relevant to pedagogy and pedagogical practice. From a contemporary perspective, research is particularly relevant in the context of the characteristics and specificity of child and childhood in the 21st century. Structurally, the work consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, conclusions, recommendations, a bibliography, annexes - a total of 311 pages. The research concept is very well formed and well founded. The methods are appropriate and allow for a comprehensive theoretical and empirical scope and analysis of the problem. The studied and used literature is on the topic of work and covers sources of Cyrillic, Latin and online

publications.

The theoretical part in chapters one and two presents the aspects of individualization and differentiation in education, as well as the educational perspectives of learning through experiencing and personally meaningful childhood experiences. The basic concepts of the study are clarified, the nature and role of individualization and differentiation in the educational process are revealed. A little-researched and especially important psychological-pedagogical discourse of pedagogical interaction related to the activity and emotional well-being of children is revealed. This is a *real contribution* that shows not only knowledge of new theoretical trends in the problem, but also a research sense of the really important research focuses of modern childhood and pre-school pedagogy. The third and fourth chapters are devoted to the empirical study and the analysis of its results. Criteria and indicators oriented towards the child and the teacher / directors are identified and justified, which allow to determine the emotional well-being and progress in the interaction of the child with the others and their individual involvement in various activities, as well as the attitudes and opportunities for applying individualization and differentiation in regulated and unregulated pedagogical situations. The stages and methods and participants in the study are described and the conceptualized tasks are experimentally deciphered in the respective activities, methodological steps and results sought. In general, the results prove that the active and appropriate implementation of individualized and differentiated children's learning based on learning by experiencing and personally meaningful children's experiences leads to higher educational progress and mastering the educational content of the child. The specific dimensions and statistical evidence for this summary enrich the field of pre-school pedagogical

science, the psychology of individual differences, and the management of pre-school practice. It is *a contribution* based on statistically sound relationships that demonstrate the impact of individualization and differentiation on the well-being and activity of children, as well as the positive attitudes of teachers/directors to this process. Chapter five introduces and conceptualizes the educational model for the individualization and differentiation of interaction in kindergarten. This is *a real contribution* as it gives specific instructions, steps and methods for working with children and is in practice a variant-dynamic and system-structured toolkit for the individualization and differentiation of group interaction. The model reveals opportunities for stimulating child activity, for appropriate selection of educational content (integrative-spiral approach), for individual and differentiated learning while taking into account the uniqueness of the child personality and at the same time stimulating teamwork. Author's educational technologies have been developed and tested for individualization and differentiation of group pedagogical interaction in kindergarten, which enriches the arsenal of methods for the work of the kindergarten teacher. The importance of the individual motivation of the children's practical experience, including the use of electronic technologies, is included and designed in the real pedagogical practice.

The conclusions, conclusions and recommendations summarize what has been achieved and outline a possible perspective for pedagogical work in kindergarten towards the effective implementation of individualization and differentiation. It is also *a real contribution* as it brings out the necessary steps and substantive features for regulatory work, the development of innovative kindergarten programming systems and the preparation of pre-

school teachers, as well as training and promotion and qualification practices in this regard.

### **3. Abstract, publications and contributions**

The abstract is a fair and complete presentation of the work. 12 publications have been made on the work, 6 of which are independent. They are published in representative and official editions and are diverse in genre - studios, articles, reports. The contributions are correctly deduced and consistent with the achievement.

### **3. Critical notes, questions and recommendations**

It would be good if after each chapter and some paragraphs there are richer summaries of the relevant text.

#### **Question:**

1. How will you explain in more detail the fact that the results of the test for the readiness of children for school and their progress in the level of well-being are not statistically significant, in particular the contradiction that there is no correlation between the test results and the progress in the degree of inclusion of children in organized group activities. The interpretation of p. 152 regarding the possible "greater need ... to initiate different activities themselves" is true, but not sufficient, and even contradicts the basic idea.
2. Although I take into account the limited and restrictive dominant use of the terms education and training and the appropriate setting of pedagogical goals in the prescriptive documentation of pedagogy, I am tempted to ask: "Are there educational/pedagogical results and is the Model applicable in

this respect"?

### **CONCLUSION:**

Considering the very good knowledge of pre-school theory and pre-school practice in Bulgaria, as well as the huge amount of work done on theoretical conceptualization and conducting empirical research, as well as the real contributions made, I think that the work has the necessary characteristics and qualities of a dissertation research for the acquisition of the Doctor of Science degree.

On the basis of the mentioned merits and scientific contributions, I give my positive assessment and propose to the scientific jury to give a scientific degree "Doctor of Science" to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosalina Plamenova Engels-Critides in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Pre-school pedagogy).

03. 01. 2020

Prof. D.Sc. Klavdia Sapundjieva