

OPINION

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On the thesis for the award of a doctoral degree in higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Education in (Methods of Education in Fine Arts)

Author: Elena Veselinova Panayotova

Title: **A Model for the Development of Visual Expression in Fine Arts Education in 7th and 8th Grades of Secondary Education in Secondary Schools**

Scientific adviser: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya Dimcheva - Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

The reviewed work consists of 242 pages of body text, 5 pages of reference (from 123 sources in Cyrillic and 8 sources in Latin alphabet), and also an appendix of 133 pages of visual materials (presented separately). The main text is structurally divided into an introduction, three chapters, summaries and a conclusion, including critical analysis and contributions.

The title corresponds to the content of the dissertation, and the choice of the topic is original and appropriate for scientific research because it examines specific features regarding art, cultural heritage studies and ecology. The thesis investigates the forms to stimulate students' creative pursuits by increasing their interest in the graphic capabilities of digital images.

The introduction raises significant problems related to the teaching of fine arts by incorporating information technology and the formation of knowledge and skills for visual expression, which in turn helps to build individuals with philosophical and literacy skills.

This section presents the pedagogical aspects of the dissertation work. The object of the study is the process of teaching fine arts and information technology with elements of computer graphics in the 7th and 8th grades, and the focus of the study is the way of visual expression of 7th and 8th graders. The main objective of the research is to create a pedagogical model for the development of visual expression by tracing the connection between traditional works and contemporary interpretations of visual images. The tasks of the dissertation are sustainable. The hypothesis

is sound, the assumptions and methods of inquiry are formulated logically and though sophisticated, they are free from unnecessary complexity.

Chapter One, "The Cultural and Philosophical Essence of the Visual Image of 'The Tree of Life'", is a theoretical framework that provides an overview of the cultural aspects and contemporary interpretations of the visual image of the Tree of Life. Similarly, and in a similar context, the topics "The Wheel of Life," "Eternal Life," and "Harmony in Nature," are discussed in their cyclicity, repetition, conservation, and their relation to national holidays and customs.

Chapter Two, "The Learning Process. Required Knowledge and Skills", focuses on the place and role of visual arts and information technology training, relative to SER in 7th and 8th grades. In the content of Chapter Two, the author draws a link between art and virtual reality by expanding the concept of visual culture through digital means. It provides knowledge of computer graphics and the use of specialized software. The specific methods of teaching fine arts in digital environment are analyzed.

In Chapter Three, "Description of the Proposed Pedagogical Model. Model Approval", the pedagogical model used and the lesson scenarios are presented. The methods and approaches applied in the educational process of Fine Arts and Information Technologies with elements of computer graphics in 7th and 8th grades are also considered. Following the successful implementation of the proposed pedagogical model, a quantitative analysis of the results was made, from tasks of ascertaining and control experiment, as well as from diagnostic tests. The end of the chapter includes summaries and conclusions that are a consequence and result of the approbation of the proposed pedagogical model.

A positive quality of the dissertation is the conclusion after each chapter, which gives additional insight and clarity about the merits of the dissertation.

I would like to give the following recommendation: Some parts of the dissertation contain texts related to the theory of art / types of compositions, harmonies, etc. /, which in a sense a rather weighty and are characteristic for textbooks and teaching aids, so that they could be omitted.

The dissertation includes an application, with visual material related to cultural presentation, as well as students' results from the tasks performed in the pedagogical model.

Final remarks and conclusions have been made, convincingly proving the achieved positive results. Through interactive training in fine arts and the application of information technology in the implementation of artistic projects, students were given the opportunity to develop their individual qualities as artists.

Scientific contributions are presented, which are convincing and objectively follow the results of the work done.

The listed 8 publications are directly related to the dissertation research.

My opinion is that Elena Panayotova's dissertation has high scientific qualities. The results and conclusions drawn therein are very useful and necessary for improving the educational process of Fine Arts in grades 7 and 8.

In view of the above, I find it justifiable to give my positive assessment of the proposed dissertation work and an abstract to it and propose to the Scientific Committee that Elena Veselinova Panayotova be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty 05.07.03 Methods of Education in Fine Arts.

19 February 2020

Prof. Dr. Emil Kukov