

REVIEW

by Prof. Laura Ivanova Dimitrova, DSc about the dissertation for the acquisition
of educational and scientific degree PhD,

Core professional field 1.3 “Pedagogy of ... Tuition”
(Methodology of teaching Fine Arts)

Thesis topic:

A Model for the Development of Visual Expression in
in the Fine Arts Teaching in grades 7 and 8
of Secondary School Education

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The dissertation has 247 pages and includes an introduction, three chapters, summaries and conclusion, and a list of the used literature from a total of 131 sources – Bulgarian and foreign. A separate booklet contains the materials attached to the dissertation.

The dissertation deals with current problems related to the search for “effective ways of developing the students’ visual and communicative abilities, concerning contemporary requirements” in the discipline of Fine Arts and the construction of an “active position” in mastering knowledge and skills, developing autonomy and creativity in solving problems in the field of “visual arts”. This also explains the doctoral student’s interest in pedagogical theory and practice and their application in teaching students the disciplines of Fine Arts and

Information Technology. The pedagogical model proposed in the dissertation is aiming the activating of creative activity of the students, and at the same time the mastering and the effective use of modern technical achievements.

The main research problem, the object and the field of the study are formulated precisely. The hypothesis of dissertation work has been developed. The main goals and objectives are outlined. The research methods used are in accordance with the nature of the dissertation and its specificity. A complex interdisciplinary approach is applied.

The first chapter of the dissertation entitled "Theoretical Framework" presents the cultural and philosophical nature of the visual image of the Tree of Life and provides a detailed analysis of its symbolism and the use of its image in traditional art.

In the second chapter, entitled "The learning process. Knowledge and Skills Required" reveals the place and role of fine arts and information technology training in accordance with the normative requirements in Bulgaria for this kind of training, with emphasis on the place and role of relevant disciplines in the seventh and eighth school grades. Some of the established methods of teaching fine arts and computer graphics are discussed.

In Chapter Three, entitled "Description of the proposed pedagogical model. Testing the Model. "The pedagogical model developed and tested by the doctoral student is presented, which includes 112 teaching hours, distributed as follows: 17 weeks x 2 academic hours of Fine Arts; 27 weeks x 2 hours Computer graphics and animation; 12 weeks x 2 hours Information Technology training. She outlines the main tasks and offers developed scenarios for lessons and appropriate methodical organization of the teaching process and offers a pedagogical model, which is based on a system-integrated approach and is designed for fine arts classes, computer graphics and animation and information technology, which the student considers as mutually "complementary objects according to the goals and tasks set in the program", which is designed to

encourage students to respect and appreciate traditional art and "draw on valuable ideas from it", to create in the contemporary environment, making up-to-date design solutions "with a competent application of the achievements of information technology". The following approaches have been used: a differentiated approach that allows students to make their own choices, taking into account the common theme and mandatory requirements, thus the students are encouraged to express their individual characteristics. As a result, students are more independent; their artistic activity is stimulated; they come to certain conclusions and ideas about their future work. Another approach is the individual one, it is applied in the cases of independent work with the students and gives the opportunity of understanding each of them, as an individual with his own qualities and capabilities. Applying the appropriate approaches leads to a positive change in students' attitudes towards the traditions in the field of the arts, increasing the quantity and quality of the acquired knowledge and skills related to the application of information technologies in the learning process. The integrated approach, which is also used, provokes and enables the expression of the diverse interests of the students and stimulates their creativity. The problem-situation research approach is also applied in order to activate the cognitive activity of students and to express their creative abilities. A system of criteria for assessing the knowledge and skills of the trainees has been developed, as well as tests for testing their knowledge in the field of vector graphics and raster computer graphics. The results of the ascertainment experiment and of the control experiment are presented. A comparative analysis of the input and output results is made. The experiment confirms the thesis of the dissertation, namely: the proposed pedagogical model improves the creative skills and enhances the students' knowledge by facilitating their visual expression.

The main contributions of this dissertation are:

1. Analysis of material related to cultural and historical heritage on the topic “Life in Development and Eternal Repetition”.
2. The Presentation of the work of Vladimir Dimitrov The Master in the context of the relevant topic.
3. Emphasizing the need of teaching the students in accordance with the principle of sustainable development in order to restore and preserve Earth's harmony.
4. Creating and testing a pedagogical model for the development of the visual expression of students in grades 7 and 8 in art and information technology classes, drawing students' attention to the philosophy of cultural and historical heritage.
5. Demonstration of the effectiveness of the selected pedagogical model, using statistical materials that taking into account the results of students.

The illustrations presented (in a separate booklet) fully and convincingly complement the thesis.

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation.

The PhD student has seven scientific publications on the topic of dissertation work in refereed scientific journals.

The dissertation reveals significant problems associated with the traditional art in the context of contemporary teaching where it is admired application of the latest technical developments.

The dissertation has major contributions with mostly practical application character.

Literature sources used are correctly cited.

The study could serve as a basis in the future theoretical and practical studies in the same field or in other related fields.

My assessment of the dissertation and abstract is positive.

Convinced, I suggest that Elena Veselinova Panayotova be awarded the educational and scientific degree PhD.

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Prof. Laura Dimitrova, DSc