

REVIEW

by Prof. DS. Venka Kuteva-Tsvetkova from VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", member of the scientific jury, on a dissertation topic:

"INNOVATIVE MODEL FOR DEVELOPING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE IN THE CLASSROOM"

for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the area of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics), developed by Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova, with supervisor Prof. DS. Siika Chavdarova-Kostova

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE Ph.D. CANDIDATE

The author of the Ph.D. thesis Ekaterina Zl. Tomova was born in 1990. For the time being she has developed remarkable CV. She has graduated with a BA degree in Pedagogy and Master's degree in Journalism, and at the present she is an Assistant Professor at the SU. Exceptional combination of experience in areas such as: media management – manager of social media; translation services for online store; authoring of articles and providing training as a surf instructor is far beyond her formal education. The valuable digital skills and competencies which Ekaterina Zlatkova has acquired have a positive impact on the successful integration of rich communication skills with both multifunctional management skills and differentiated professional skills. For me as a reviewer, both the pointed out areas of training and experience as well as the perfected valuable combination of skills are among the factors determined her choice on the dissertation topic, which is focused on the key competencies such as personal and social competence.

Information for the Ph.D. program

Ekaterina Tomova was enrolled in doctoral studies with order RD - 20 -940 of 07/09/2020. Her training in doctoral studies provides a good basis for developing the dissertation work.

RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISSERTATION

In the context of dynamic and globalized modern times, the importance of the competence approach far exceeds the scale of education. Social development, labor market, successful realization of young people are increasingly influenced by the qualities of their competence profiles. However, the purposeful institutional formation of the competence profile of the student has its beginning and roots precisely in education. In the introductory part the author of the dissertation very skillfully substantiates the relevance and significance of this approach with a specific focus on personal and social competence.

Why exactly personal and social competence? Because they are closely related.

The formation of the human personality is related to the formation and development of a wide competence complex, among which personal competence occupies a special place. The tendency for an increasingly pronounced personal/individually oriented approach to education is combined with another no less significant tendency for integrativeness. Since the qualities of the human personality have a valuable meaning and social significance, it is natural to pay attention and look for opportunities to develop and enrich the social competence within education. The beginning of a peculiar synthesis of personal and social competence can stand out particularly convincingly in and through education. Or as the author of the dissertation emphasizes: "Education has the unique opportunity and responsibility to achieve success in building a full-rounded person, capable of adapting to the social environment and realizing himself in the best possible way. This includes shifting the focus from the accumulation of knowledge to the formation and development of skills, attitudes and abilities to overcome emerging learning and life challenges, fostering proactivity in traditional or unexpected situations, also participating in activities that provoke self-awareness, resourcefulness and empathy, highlighting and realizing of creative impulses - formation and development of a set of competences."

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION

The total volume of the dissertation is 316 pages. The text is structured in an appropriate manner for this type of academic product in the chosen field: introduction, four chapters, conclusions, and bibliography. The

bibliography covers 162 sources – 135 in Cyrillic and 27 in Latin. The main text is visually enriched with 40 tables and 37 figures. 10 appendices are presented separately, with a volume of 101 pages, and here, too, the visualization is impressive - 43 tables and 1 figure. The entire work is designed according to the rules for preparing dissertation products.

BASIC DATA FOR THE DISSERTATION

The clearly formulated and logically justified starting positions and grounds for the selection and development of the dissertation topic show not only the skills of assistant professor Ekaterina Tomova to navigate and choose a prospective research problem, but also to convincingly link it to national priorities, as well as to the European competence framework . The author shows a very good knowledge not only of the national, but also of the European legal framework, the latest amendments, incl. the recommendation of the Council of the European Union dated May 22, 2018. to review and update key competences for lifelong learning.

Already in the introductory part, Assistant Professor Ekaterina Tomova very successfully formulates her theoretical, practical and personal motivational reasons for devoting herself to the chosen topic. She convincingly unfolds her research logic, in which the precisely formulated object and subject of the dissertation, main goal, tasks and hypothesis stand out. The author not only chooses a contemporary topic, she shows a very good knowledge of the existing modern Bulgarian legislation and European discourses. She articulates the conceptual framework convincingly, demonstrates a competent knowledge of existing publications and research in this markedly interdisciplinary field – pedagogical, psychological, managerial, etc., and her ability to see the research topic in a broad context is further evidence of her qualities as an explorer.

The research is carried out based on a rich combination of methods: surveys, pedagogical modeling; diagnostic procedures of a formative nature for students; projective methods; diagnostic procedures with students; content analysis; qualitative analysis and statistical processing of the results.

The studies are being implemented in 3 stages starting in 2020. Their total duration is two years. The target groups are elementary students (in 3rd and 4th grade), teachers and parents.

The specific research tasks for each stage are clearly formulated, showing consistent planning and linking of activities in each of them. The development of an innovative model for the formation and development of personal and social competence in the classroom for students of the third and

fourth grade was planned and laid down already in the first stage at the same time as carrying out part of the empirically based research. The validation of the model is set in the second stage, while the analyzes of the results of its implementation, giving grounds for important conclusions and recommendations, are key activities in the third stage.

The first chapter is focused on the theoretical analysis of personal and social competence. The chapter is structured in four main paragraphs and numerous sub-paragraphs, some of which have even more specific and fragmented sub-sub-paragraphs. The fourth paragraph is especially strongly, and in my opinion unnecessarily, fragmented.

In this chapter, both the theoretical framework, the conceptual base and the main concepts are examined and specified. In specific content terms, this chapter and its related paragraphs examine the competence approach, key competences and the updated European competence framework. Other key concepts are also clarified.

Personal and social competences are defined, their components are presented, important relations in the competence context are analyzed. Self-knowledge, self-control, self-evaluation and self-reflection are presented as main components of personal competence. Communicativeness, tolerance, empathy and cooperation are justified as main components of social competence. In this chapter, the author's effort to achieve the greatest possible conceptual clarity and precision should be noted as a positive point.

The second chapter is structured in seven paragraphs. It is dedicated to the description and specifics of the class hour, presented as an extracurricular form of education specifically in the elementary (primary school) stage. Basic functions of the class hour (information, orientation, practical-application, formation) are formulated. A very good knowledge of the thematic nature of the class hour, of its educationally oriented formative possibilities is shown. Its organizational and technological specifics are presented, author's criteria for effectiveness are formulated. Although brief, a useful added value is the descriptive presentation and comparative analysis of some non-curricular forms used in other countries (England, Finland, USA, South Korea, Japan, etc.).

And in this chapter, Assistant Professor E. Tomova shows not only good knowledge, but also analytical abilities, the ability to detect both weaknesses, shortcomings and errors associated with the use of this non-curricular form, as well as to discover its potentials for the implementation of educational goals in several basic dimensions. The author's initiative and dedication to this aspect of the integrative research field, her modern look at the possibilities of the class hour, tied to the active position of the students of

the 3rd and 4th grade from the elementary stage, deserves serious attention and a worthy evaluation.

In the third chapter, the innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in the classroom is presented. The chapter has a relatively small volume - 21 pages. It is structured in 3 main paragraphs, the last of which includes two more sub-paragraphs. It is dedicated both to humanistic theories and postulates for child development, and presents the grounds for developing the innovative model. The outline of methodological dimensions, incl. goal setting and consideration of educational interactions planned and constructed by the dissertation author in the context of Krathwohl's affective taxonomy are among the contributions of this chapter.

Despite the imbalance in terms of volume compared to the other chapters, as a reviewer I highly value the contributing nature of this chapter, because in my opinion, a particularly great achievement is the creation of the author's innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in students of the 3rd and 4th grades at the elementary stage, which relies on their active subjective participation in class time activities.

The fourth chapter is extremely rich and unreservedly confirms the unique authorial and research potential of Assistant Professor E. Tomova. It is devoted to the design of the empirical study and covers the analyzes of the obtained research results. The chapter runs to an impressive almost 200 pages.

As an overall summary assessment, it can be said that the research part of the dissertation is reliably constructed and methodologically sound. The combination of methods allows to implement the research tasks and to prove the effectiveness of the model.

In this chapter, the research stages, the methodological tools, the samples of the researched groups (students, teachers and parents) are presented. The analyzes of the results cover both the diagnostic, formative and control stages.

The diagnostic stage includes the analysis of the results of the surveys with parents and teachers, while the formative stage is represented by the analyzes of the opinions, evaluations, ideas, affective experiences and the demonstrated social orientation of the students. As many as 40 pages are devoted to the analysis of the projective methods used.

The control stage of the research is also presented in great detail through analyzes of the results of the control-diagnostic procedures and the survey among primary teachers who approved the model.

In summary, the research stages and levels of analysis based on the author's detailed model are competently presented. And in this part of his dissertation study, Assistant Professor E. Tomova shows a high level of

research culture and skills: conceptual-research, analytical-synthesis, explanatory, interpretative, evaluation abilities.

Mathematical-statistical methods for processing and proving sought cause-and-effect relationships and dependencies are also appropriately selected and competently used.

ASSESSMENT OF THEORETICAL AWARENESS, QUALITY OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ass. Professor E. Tomova shows extremely good awareness of the dissertation topic in several integratively related areas - pedagogical, educational, didactic, methodical, psychological, philosophical, managerial. She demonstrates a high level of research culture and transversal skills: conceptual-research, analytical-synthesis, explanatory, interpretive, evaluative abilities.

The conclusions and recommendations are based on the research and are precisely formulated. Some of them are specifically aimed at teachers and impress with their direct connection to the observed and proven deficits in their pre- and in-service training.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DISSERTATION

I fully accept the contributions from E. Tomova formulated in this way. The presented dissertation research has a contributing character.

- The integral theoretical platform, analyzes and summaries in its context are reliable and adequately reflect the significance of the dissertation topic.
- The conducted research is using a complex methodology, and the obtained results are a suitable empirically grounded basis for a new look at the possibilities of the class hour as an extracurricular form for the development of personal and social competence in elementary school students (3rd and 4th grade).
- The constructed and tested model for the formation and development of personal and social competence in 3rd and 4th grade students at the elementary (primary school) stage is research-proven working and applicable in school-organized educational practices during class time.

ASSESSMENT OF SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The scientific self-assessment of the contributions is an adequate reflection of the author's achievements.

ABSTRACT. DISSERTATION PUBLICATIONS

The abstract correctly reflects the structure and content of the dissertation work.

Ass. Prof. E. Tomova demonstrates an extremely high publication activity. The number of publications related to her dissertation topic far exceeds the minimum required. Only for the last two years, from 2020 to 2022, the author has 11 publications, of which one is a study and 10 scientific articles. All posts are self-contained. Out of a total of 11 publications, ten are in Cyrillic and one is in Latin.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING THE RESULTS

In connection with the popularization and distribution of the results, it is recommended that the dissertation work be published in the form of an independent monograph.

CONCLUSION

In terms of structure and content, the dissertation is an original author's research product. The constructed model and the results of its approbation reflect the scientific contributions of the doctoral student. Behind the reliability of the obtained results are highly developed author's abilities for research, analytical, interpretation, evaluation and theoretical-applied activity.

The dissertation is the author's own work. Meets existing standards for scientific papers. Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova meets the minimum national requirements for ONS "doctor". Based on the demonstrated qualities and skills, the scientific contributions and original achievements, as a reviewer I give my positive assessment of the conducted research, and I propose to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova in the area of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics).

6.02.2023 г.

Signature:
(Prof. DS Venka Kuteva-Tsvetkova)