

# OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Krasimira Teofilova Marulevska, PhD

**Regarding: dissertation on:**

**"An innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in the classroom".**

**For awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"**

**1. Pedagogical Sciences,**

**Professional field 1.2. Pedagogy,**

**Doctoral Programme in Theory of Education and Didactics“**

**Doctoral student: Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova**

**Scientific supervisor: Prof. D.p.s. Siyka Chavdarova – Kostova**

## ***I. Brief data about the doctoral student***

Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova is a doctoral student at the Department of Theory of Education at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Ekaterina Tomova's research activity was preceded by a wide range of activities in the social environment, which contributed to the development of competences, attitudes and values, which undoubtedly have a very great importance for the orientation of her research efforts to the problems of modern education in the real dimensions of education in Bulgarian schools. Ekaterina Tomova's teaching activity is an important moment in the doctoral student's professional development, which provides an opportunity to consider, raise and appraise ideas relevant to contemporary education among students preparing for realization in the field of education.

## ***II. Relevance of the dissertation work***

The topic of the dissertation submitted for defence is particularly relevant. The search for scientifically based answers to questions related to the development of personal and social competence are very prompt in the general context of educational activity in modern schools. The research interest in the peculiar in content and organizational terms pedagogical space of the class hour even more emphatically underlines the ability of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova to find significant problem fields in the general thematic framework of child education and development at primary school age.

## ***III. Methodology relevance***

The overall concept of the study, the methodological bases and the applied research methodology are scientifically justified, are relevant to the objective and contribute to the realization of the tasks set in the dissertation. The main parameters of the research are outlined with the necessary precision and clarity. The selection of methods and instruments for the

implementation of the research is in full accordance with the aim and objectives and guarantees objectivity and reliability in testing and proving the hypothesis. The stages of the research process reflect the coherent and reasoned actions of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova.

#### ***IV. Characteristics of the dissertation***

The dissertation is presented in a total volume of 316 pages, of which 305 pages are main text. It includes 40 tables and 37 figures. The number of references used is 162. Of these, 135 are in Cyrillic and 27 in Latin. In its substantive integrity and structural sequence, the work includes: an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and references. Separately, on 101 pages are presented 10 annexes, which contain 43 tables and 1 figure.

#### ***V. Scientific achievements in relation to the presentation, analysis and interpretation of ideas and concepts***

1. The theoretical presentation of the essence and meaning of personal and social competence, placed in the context of modern scientific searches related to competences and the competence approach in education, is distinguished by its comprehensiveness, completeness and consistency. In the aspect of historical dynamics, the positions of a number of researchers are very correctly presented and analysed. At the same time, the position of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova is clearly stated.
2. Relationships and dependencies between competence and a number of other personality characteristics are skillfully revealed. Conceptual and terminological clarifications important for the dissertation research are made. High precision is shown in differentiating concepts and in revealing their essence.
3. In relation to the aim and objectives of the study, the necessary attention is paid to the competency approach in education, the idea of lifelong learning, key competencies and other types of competencies for the full realization of the individual in modern society. The scientific analysis is supported by an excellent knowledge of important European and national normative documents .
4. The analysis of the psycho-social basis of the key competences by revealing the nature and significance of social knowledge, social influence and social behaviour, as well as their interrelation and interdependence is highly appreciated.
5. The essence of personal and social competence, their place and role for the full realization of the personality is fully revealed. The structural components of personal and social competence have been differentiated, taking into account the complexity of the process of their construction and development.
6. Research interest is also focused on the pedagogical space of the class hour. The specific features and functional possibilities of the class hour in the primary educational stage have been given much attention, and rightly so, given the identified tasks associated with conducting the experimental study. The content and organizational characteristics of the class hour as a non-routine form of education are revealed.

7. A significant achievement of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova is the innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in the classroom. The theoretical foundations of the model and its structural elements are clearly presented, as well as the pedagogical interactions at different levels. In the structure of the model, ideas related to the possibilities of forming personal and social competence in students at the primary stage of basic education are manifested.

## ***VI. Scientific achievements related to the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the results of the empirical study***

1. Empirical research is distinguished by organizational precision and reasoned sequence of actions. In each of the stages of the empirical study, the actions of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova are very well argued and precisely executed.
2. The research methods and the developed toolkit allow to successfully realize the tasks set in the dissertation. The research methods - questionnaire survey, pedagogical modeling, projective methods, as well as the methods of processing and analysis of the results of the empirical research have been applied in compliance with all the requirements for the planning, organization and implementation of research activities.
3. The prepared and implemented 6 lessons in the class within the formative stage of the pedagogical research are distinguished by original structure, clear objectives, content diversity, topicality of the topics and have a clear focus on the formation of personal and social competence.
4. The individual components in the proposed structure of the class hour - diagnostic, developmental, reflective and evaluative, are filled with diverse and very well selected methodological strategies, specific educational methods and means. The universality of the developed structure of the class hour is appreciated, which makes it widely applicable to achieve a variety of goals and objectives. In this sense, doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova very successfully enters the field of class management and presents workable ideas and original methodological and technological solutions for qualitative changes in the pedagogical space of such a specific form as the class hour.
5. The quantitative data analysis is distinguished by accuracy and correctness. It is accompanied by relevant tables and graphical representations that bring additional clarity to the analysis and conclusions. The qualitative analysis reveals the skills of PhD student Ekaterina Tomova in finding causal relationships, making assumptions, and formulating conclusions.
6. The analysis of the data obtained in the course of the formative stage through the application of projective methodologies on the individual topics of the class lessons allows the researcher to successfully trace the effectiveness of the developed model for the formation of personal and social competence, as well as the dynamics in the level of individual components in the two types of competence. Control diagnostic procedures are the final evaluation tool, very well thought out and implemented by the researcher. They

complement the overall evaluation-diagnostic activity to prove the effectiveness of the created model.

### ***VII. Scientific and applied contributions***

1. A comprehensive theoretical analysis of ideas and positions in the contemporary social, psychological and pedagogical scientific space in relation to the competency approach in education. **The content characteristics of personal and social competence are revealed.** An author's vision of the components constituting the two types of competence is proposed. The possibilities of the class hour as an unscheduled educational form are presented in a new light.

2. **An innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence** of students at the primary stage of primary education in the educational space of the class hour is created. The main structural elements of the model emphasize its universal character and the possibility to be applied in different educational stages and levels of the Bulgarian educational system, taking into account their specific pedagogical goals and objectives respectively.

3. The model for the formation of personal and social competence in the classroom has been tested in the course of a significant empirical study. Its effectiveness has been proven by tracking the dynamics of a number of qualitative characteristics, which is possible thanks to very well selected diagnostic methodologies and procedures. **The researcher's contribution to the definition of clear criteria and indicators for reporting the level of personal and social competence** in primary school students should be highlighted.

### ***VIII. Notes and recommendations***

1. As an opportunity to build on and expand the achievements of doctoral student Ekaterina Tomova in the study of the possibilities for the formation of personal and social competence in students, I would recommend a more detailed presentation, internal differentiation of the individual elements in the structure of the model. This would support the practical application of the model in the conditions of the modern school and the promotion of these innovative ideas among teachers - classroom teachers.

2. The developed criteria and indicators for tracking the level of development of personal and social competence can be presented in a comprehensive system for diagnosis and assessment of these competencies, which can be used in the practice of educational activities in school.

### ***IX. Authorship of the thesis and contributions, evaluation of publications***

The authorship of the thesis is undisputed. I accept the scientific contributions outlined by the author. I evaluate as excellent and productive the publication activity of PhD student Ekaterina Tomova. A total of 11 publications have been submitted, including 1 study in the

Yearbook of Sofia University "St. I have also published 1 book. One of the articles was published in 2020 in the journal Pedagogy, indexed in Web of Science. The publications have a focus on the issues studied in the dissertation.

**X. Abstract**

The abstract meets the requirements and correctly reflects the content of the thesis. The necessary structural components and technical parameters are available.

**XI. Conclusion**

The dissertation of Ekaterina Tomova is the result of a thorough scientific research. The research bears the characteristics of scientificity and originality, provides opportunities for the application of ideas and innovative practical solutions in the educational activity in the modern school for the development of personal and social competence in students at the primary stage of primary education. The distinguished merits of the dissertation work and the recommendations made give me grounds to confidently propose that Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2 Pedagogy, doctoral programme "Theory of Education and Didactics".

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