

# REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. **Vladislav Gospodinov**, PhD  
(President of the Scientific Jury, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

A dissertation on the topic:

## "INNOVATIVE MODEL FOR THE FORMATION OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE IN THE CLASS TIME"

developed by

**Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova**

(PhD student of independent training  
in the Department of "Theory of Education",  
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Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

In the doctoral program **Theory of Education and Didactics (Theory of Education)**  
from the Field of Higher Education **1. Pedagogical Sciences**,  
Professional Direction **1.2. Pedagogy**

for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR"  
and

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Ph.D. **Siika Chavdarova-Kostova**

*Date, time and place of the public defense: 31.03.2023, 1:30 p.m., Meeting Room 1,  
Rectorate Building of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"*

### **I. Basic biographical information about the author relevant to the doctoral studies**

The candidate for the educational and scientific degree "doctor" Ekaterina Tomova was born in 1990 in Sofia. She graduated with a degree in "Pedagogy" in 2013, and then a master's degree in Journalism, Production and Creative Industry (2014-2016). Since the fall of 2019, after winning a competition, she has been appointed as a full-time assistant in the "Theory of Education" Department at the

Faculty of Pedagogy of Sofia University. On July 10, 2020, she was enrolled as an independent doctoral student at the same department with a deadline of July 10, 2023. After the early completion of the dissertation research, a discussion was held in the "Theory of Education" Department, positively sanctioned by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of pedagogy of the University and the work is aimed at public defense.

In the period 2020-2022, the doctoral student participated in 6 research projects, one of which was funded by European funding, and the others by national funding. He also takes part in a number of seminars and trainings. In total, there are 30 of her participations in scientific forums, in 17 of them with a report, and 11 of the texts are on topics in the context of the dissertation research, including one study.

## **II. Dissertation characteristics**

### **1. Relevance and significance of the topic of the dissertation research**

In the *Introduction*, the author reveals the significance and relevance of the problem field, which is the center of the dissertation work. Ekaterina Tomova directs her attention to our extremely dynamic modern times, to the problems and challenges that accompany it, but also to the existence of the few opportunities in the direction of educating and building the human personality. In this context, the issue of forming personal competence is undoubtedly extremely important, but also in close connection and dependence with social competence. The main documents for national and European creation are indicated, which also promote policies for the realization of these two types of competences. The author has been chosen as the main unique tool through which the study of this problem is realized and gives the opportunity to optimize the class time - a non-curricular form established during the decade, which is increasingly looking for its current projects and contains unused pedagogical and especially educational potential. Separately, but no less important, there is currently almost no larger up-to-date research on this significant issue, and the need for such is serious.

In the introductory part of the work, the main parameters of the theoretical-empirical research are also correctly formulated and indicated, which give a clear request for dissertationability of the research topic: object, subject, hypothesis, goal, tasks, methods and stages of implementation.

### **2. Structure and content of the dissertation work**

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters with corresponding subsections, conclusions, a conclusion and a bibliography, and the total volume of the main text is 316 standard printed pages, including part Bibliography (pp. 306–316). It includes 162 sources – 135 in Cyrillic and 27 in Latin. There are 40 tables and 37 figures in the main text. In a separate book/digital body, 10 appendices with a volume

of 101 pages and including 43 tables and 1 figure are presented. Having the body content where the apps are would make it easier to work with.

*The first chapter* is entitled "**Personal and social competence – theoretical analysis**" (pp. 13–68). It is the first of three theoretical chapters and contains 4 main focal thematic points.

First of all, the author has paid special attention to conceptual interpretations related to the word competence. A wide range of viewpoints is presented on this often hotly debated issue.

As a logical continuation, the relationship: intelligence – skill – competence is presented, through which the operationalization of competence and its extraversion are tracked.

As the main point of departure in the third focal point, the author uses the concept of lifelong learning (education). Key competences have been outlined through a thorough follow-up of the main regulatory documents of the European Union and Bulgaria.

In the fourth subsection of the first chapter, research attention is directed in two main directions. First of all, personal competence. It is presented and explained in terms of a rich set of theories. The determinants of this type of competence, its characteristics and also its components are outlined. The author applies the same logic of examining the issue in relation to social competence.

It's noteworthy that doctoral student Tomova logically and reasoned, including critically, presents here and in the other parts the various aspects of the problem.

*The second chapter* (pp. 69–84) is entitled "**The class hour – essence, specifics and opportunities for the formation of personal and social competence**". Ekaterina Tomova dedicates it to and presents in detail the nature of the class hour as an extracurricular form of education.

The functions of the class hour as a whole have been successfully outlined and the specificity of the form has been introduced at the initial stage of the basic education level. Also, the organization of work during class time, in particular methods, activities and techniques for its implementation, is considered. Special attention is paid to efficiency criteria when conducting a class lesson. A brief comparative analysis of extracurricular forms of work during class time in some countries (Great Britain, USA, Japan, South Korea, etc.) is also presented.

*The third chapter* (pp. 85–106) "**An innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in the class time**" to an even higher degree concretizes the author's research idea. This part of the dissertation is dedicated to substantiating and outlining the theoretical parameters of the model for working in the

classroom time in the direction of forming personal and social competence, which the author is about to approve (the approval is presented in the Fourth Chapter). As a starting point in the justification of the model, significant theoretical statements, part of humanistic pedagogy, are presented, which are focused on the development of the child in the initial stage of the basic educational degree. Doctoral student Tomova also makes terminological clarifications in the context of the development and testing of the model.

Specific methodical steps are also presented with an approach to the model for the formation of personal and social competence, with a special emphasis on goal setting. In the context of the latter, she projects educational interactions through the lens of Kratwall's Affective Taxonomy. This author's decision is relevant both from the point of view of the increasingly important place that the organized use of the affective sphere occupies in pedagogical interactions, and from the point of view of emotional intelligence. And not only.

***The fourth chapter*** (pp. 107–298) "**Empirical Research Design and Analysis of Empirical Results**" is devoted to the empirical research in its part related to fieldwork. The design and organization of the study are presented in detail. More specifically, its stages, the sample and characteristics of the researched persons, the methods and methodological tools used. Empirical research is classic - with ascertaining, transforming and control part. The appropriate selection, combination and application of the research complex of tools – survey method, mathematical-statistical processing of the obtained data, pedagogical modeling, content analysis, etc. - makes an excellent impression.

With a high degree of detail, the structure and content of the lessons within the model of the class hour, aimed at forming personal and social competence, are presented and are definitely intriguing. 4 components of the model are described, diagnostic, developmental, reflective and evaluative. The analysis of the results of the empirical study (120-298 pp.) is also impressively detailed.

The relatively larger volume of the empirical part makes a strong positive impression, which is relatively rarely achievable in this type of development. It can be said that this is definitely a very strong side of the work – the emphasis is on field work and the analysis of the results of this work. The research sample was appropriately selected and included 320 children, 137 teachers (from the cities of Sofia, Burgas, Pazardzhik, Lovech, Ruse, Stara Zagora) and 48 parents (from Sofia, Burgas, Blagoevgrad, Yambol and Kyustendil). The control study included 13 teachers who applied the author's model respectively in 13 classes in total (from Lovech, Teteven, Lukovit, Troyan, Apriltsi, Razgrad and Sofia). All 320 third and fourth grade students are from the same towns and schools. There is a proven model

that the author has arrived at on the basis of his research activity – theoretical and empirical. It is workable and could be used outside of the dissertation context. In addition to what has been stated so far, the readable and logical style of the author, the precise and correct use of the sources included in the work and the author's exceptional presence, especially when analyzing the results of the empirical research, definitely make an impression.

The dissertation ends with Conclusion and Conclusions, which adequately reflect the main points of the main text, which the author has reached through the research.

Also presented are the Reference of scientific contributions of the theoretical-empirical research, the List of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation research, the Bibliography and the Appendices.

### **III. Contributory moments of the dissertation work**

Through the prism of the Theory of Education, a multi-faceted presentation and analysis of scientific literature on the issues of the competence approach, theories of personality and socialization, personal and social competence, organization and conduct of the class was realized. Basic characteristics, specifics and components of personal (self-knowledge, self-control, self-evaluation, self-reflection) and social competence (communicativeness, tolerance, empathy, cooperation) and the functions and dimensions of a class lesson in the context of personal and social competence formation are outlined. In the direction of these two competencies, based on theoretical-empirical research, an author's interactive pedagogical model was created and successfully tested for their formation within the class hour. This supports "the promotion of children's expression and initiative, the development of the abilities for self-management, self-regulation, self-analysis, self-control, the skills of formulating and arguing, adequately expressing one's own position, for implementing and maintaining constructive interpersonal relationships" (p. 304).

### **IV. Evaluation of the Author's Abstract and Publications**

The text of the abstract structurally reflects the dissertation work, as well as the key content points of it.

The publication activity, the form and the content of the author's texts allow to draw the conclusion that to a sufficient extent, systematically and consistently, and in the end very successfully, the research idea in relation to the dissertation was developed, carried out and reflected in the relevant stages, finding the relevant necessary publicity.

## V. Conclusion

Bearing in mind what has been stated so far, it can be concluded that the dissertation work on the topic: "**Innovative model for the formation of personal and social competence in the class time**" meets the requirements for similar types of developments laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and related normative documents.

Based on this, as well as on the basis of what was noted above in the review, namely that as a result of the serious and continuous efforts made by the doctoral student, a scientific product of high theoretical and practical-applied value was created in a competent and thorough manner, it follows convinced to express a position with a **positive vote** regarding the dissertation work with a view to awarding **Ekaterina Zlateva Tomova** the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics).

Sofia,

27.02.2023

Author of the review: .....

*B. Господинов*

/Assoc. Prof. Vladislav Gospodinov, PhD/