



REVIEW

by

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Yordanova Karaivanova, VTU „St. St. Cyril and Methodius“

member of a scientific jury, appointed by order No. RD 38-556 / 26.09.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

REGARDING: defense of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor PhD"

in the field of higher education: **1. Pedagogical sciences**

professional field: **1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy)**

Faculty of Education Sciences and the Arts

Department of Preschool and Media Pedagogy

Author: Blaga Georgieva Dimova

Topic: Competence-oriented model of pedagogical interaction in the field of education "Environmental World" for 6-7-year-old children in preschool education

Doctoral program: Preschool pedagogy

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Dr. Lyuboslava Dimitrova Peneva

1. DATA ON THE DOCTORAL STUDIES, DISSERTATION, AUTHOR REFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS

DISSERTATION DATA.

Blaga Dimova is a graduate of Goethe High School, Burgas, where she completed her secondary education in 2003. In the period 2003-2004, she studied macroeconomics in Germany. Received a Bachelor's degree in "Economic Management" at the University of Economics, Varna in 2008 and continues his studies in the master's program "Financial Management" of the "Dimitar A. Tsenov" Academy of Economics, Svishtov. In 2019, he acquired a

Master's degree in department "Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy" at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

Her professional realization until 2017 is outside the sphere of education. From 08.09.17 until now he works as a teacher in the Kindergarden "Morska Zvezda", Burgas. He has the fifth qualification degree. Permanently supplements her qualification by participating in various trainings. In 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years, she is a part-time assistant at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

Reflecting on what has been achieved and purposeful research searches logically provoke Blaga Dimova's interest in acquiring the educational and scientific degree "Doctor PhD". As a doctoral student of an unsupervised form of education in Department "Preschool and Media pedagogy" of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", she convincingly proves her professional expertise for the realization of scientific research. The acquired knowledge and skills allow her to make her choice for a multi-faceted study of an extremely important and significant topic for preschool education - the topic of applying the competence approach in pedagogical interaction on "Environmental World". On the basis of the conducted in-depth and multi-directional research, it offers scientifically based possibilities for the application of a model for the formation of a system of competences in the preparatory age group (6-7-year-old children), which was developed and substantiated in the current private didactic context of the "child" interaction methodology – environment'.

The data from the doctoral student's autobiography testify to the purposefulness of her interests in the field of preschool education and convincingly prove the possibilities of protecting them from the position of a responsible young researcher.

DOCTORAL, DISSERTATION, ABSTRACT AND PUBLICATION DATA.

Blaga Dimova is a doctoral student in unsupervised form of study in the Department "Preschool and Media Pedagogy", registered with Rector's Order No. RD-20-1 dated 04.01.2021. The term of her studies is three years, starting from 05.01.2021 to 05.01.2024. Before the expiration of this term, she has promptly and qualitatively fulfilled all the requirements, including the educational requirements provided for in the individual plan and all others arising from the doctoral program. A positive decision of the primary unit for

readiness for the defense of the dissertation work has been approved - RD 20-1576 of 21.09.2022.

The doctoral student has successfully implemented herself in the field of preschool and higher pedagogical education. Her professional expertise as a teacher and the competences acquired in the process of training in the doctoral program allow her to successfully fulfill her commitments as a teacher and honorary assistant. In the intersection of preschool theory and practice, she skillfully chose the topic of her dissertation, directing her research ambitions to developing and justifying a competency model for pedagogical interaction in the environmental world in the fourth generation of the age group. In addition, it includes pedagogical theory and practice with an author's option for innovating the educational interactivity "child - environment" by applying a competence-oriented approach.

During the entire period of her training, Blaga Dimova promptly and precisely reports the fulfillment of her obligations arising from the IEP. It is clear from the provided documentation that no procedural violations were committed and the formal requirements of the laws and regulations in force in the RB and the SU were correctly fulfilled.

Actuality of the topic

The doctoral student has chosen to develop an interesting, current and dissertable topic. It corresponds to society's expectations and requirements for pre-school education, related to the realization of competence-oriented pedagogical interaction in kindergarten, by means of which to guarantee the formation of a system of competencies significant for the prosperity of the growing individuality. Inclusion in the values of ecological, social and civic culture implies the inclusion of the child in various forms of educational interaction, which presuppose the mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for successful integration into the surrounding world and provoke manifestations of emotional empathy and sustainable readiness for creative functioning in him. The process is complex, determined by the action of various factors. Therefore, it should be purposefully managed through the development and application of modern educational technologies, which guarantee in an educational and applied plan the prospective development of social and civic competences, the skills to support sustainable development and for a healthy lifestyle and sports, and digital competence. It is important that through them the emphasis is placed on the successful functioning of individuality by optimizing

and promoting subject activity in the conditions of meaningful and subjectively meaningful activities. In this context, those forms of educational interaction that bring the child into the position of the subject of his own activity, behavior and communication and guarantee the mastery of a personally significant and valued experience are of prior importance. They should be implemented by trained teachers who have the necessary security and confidence to implement the educational interaction in the kindergarten in the context of the competence-oriented approach. It is in this wide-ranging research field that Blaga Dimova concretizes her research topic, directing her attention to the development and testing of a complex, by its nature, competence-oriented model of pedagogical interaction in the field of education "Environmental World" for 6-7-year-old children in preschool education (p. 6). Through it, the doctoral student offers an option for optimizing the quality of preschool education, structured according to the specifics of the educational field she has chosen. It is based on the idea of guaranteeing opportunities to master a system of competencies in a technological complex that provides mobile options for realizing the thematic content through combinations of a basic and variable component. Its didactic importance in the context of preschool education is associated with the implementation of competence-oriented interaction in the preschool. Its applied assurance through the proposed technological elements categorically defends Blaga Dimova's ambition to create methodical security for the teacher who has accepted the challenge of implementing competence-oriented education in kindergarten.

Knowing the problem

Blaga Dimova demonstrates in-depth knowledge in the investigated problem area. This is evidenced by the volume of researched scientific literary sources and documents. Based on the excellent knowledge of their content, the doctoral student analyzes and summarizes various opinions and positions regarding the selected problem research field, subordinating them creatively to the topic of her dissertation work.

Research methodology

The selected research methodology enables the achievement of the set goals, oriented to the development and testing of competence-oriented model of pedagogical interaction in the field of education "Environmental World", based on a thorough study of the problems of competence-oriented education and their

projections in the private didactic field of the effective formation of system of competences in the fourth preparatory age group. Through it, it is ensured that an adequate answer to the tasks solved in the dissertation work is obtained, since the obtaining of valid, relevant and representative information is guaranteed through the various research methods.

The research methodology is described in detail and correctly. It was implemented precisely, professionally and competently. It is consistent with the nature of theoretical-applied research and is carried out through a complex of expediently selected methods: theoretical analysis, pedagogical experiment, pedagogical observation, content analysis, survey, mathematical and statistical methods for processing and analyzing the results of the research. The skillful selection of various methods for collecting empirical data is impressive. They help the doctoral student to achieve an objective analysis of the initial theoretical and empirical information and guarantee the reliability of the results.

The criteria and indicators for determining the changes in the dynamics of social and civic competences, the skills to support sustainable development and for a healthy lifestyle and sports and the digital competence are measurable and observable. Indicators related to qualitative and quantitative assessment are correctly specified.

The design and organizational parameters of the study are detailed. Diagnostic procedures are described precisely and in detail.

Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions

The dissertation was developed in a volume of 327 pages, of which 221 pages are text, and the remaining pages systematize the used literature (a total of 139 titles in Cyrillic and Latin, including internet resources) and the included appendices.

The paper is structured in INTRODUCTION, FOUR CHAPTERS, CONCLUSIONS, TERMINAL CONCLUSION, REFERENCES AND APPENDICES. Its contents include a total of 48 tables, 4 figures, 2 schemes and 61 diagrams. 7 appendices with various evidentiary materials are presented to it: tables with systematized results of a study of the thematic content and its relationship with the educational cores of the "Environmental World" direction in the pedagogical systems selected for the purposes of the study, individual and generalized protocols for reflecting children's achievements in incoming and outgoing diagnostics, survey card for researching the relationship between key

competences and competences in the educational field "Environmental World" and the approaches, methods and means of pedagogical interaction applied in practice for their formation, picture tests and instructions for the implementation of diagnostic procedures, content of the formative program, photographic evidence, etc. In their unity, they unequivocally prove the precise implementation of the research program and its effectiveness.

In the *introduction*, the doctoral student provides arguments in support of the chosen topic of her dissertation. They testify to the meaningfulness of the problematics chosen for research, to which the author approaches with respect and the necessary professional and personal commitment. Proof of them are the specifically formulated motives that provoke her research interest and set the direction of her research searches in the context of the current normative documents defining the vector for innovation of preschool education.

In *the first chapter*, Blaga Dimova presents the theoretical formulation of the problem, focusing her attention on specifying the theoretical-conceptual formulations that are the basis for competence-oriented education. Correctly clarifies basic concepts and brings systematicity, which is especially useful in the next steps of carrying out the empirical part of the research. The PhD student shows a good knowledge of significant publications and documents and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the essence, dimensions and effects of the competence approach in education and its projections in the current pedagogical reality. Able to successfully integrate cognitive and research resources for the needs of his own research and bring out the advantages of competence-oriented over traditional education. The methods and procedures used allow one to thoroughly understand the multifacetedness and interdependence of the problems identified at the theoretical level. In this part of the development, the author convincingly defends her ambitions for precisely setting the general theoretical conceptual framework of her research.

In *the second chapter*, the doctoral student logically directs her research efforts to specify the specifics of competence-oriented education in preschool age, examining it precisely in the private didactic field of the pedagogical interaction "child - environment". The in-depth analysis of well-chosen scientific literary sources allows her to systematize the parameters of the relationship "competency-oriented education - pedagogical interaction in the educational field "Environment World" and to specify its significant theoretical and technological aspects. Convincingly argues the mutual relationship between the child's readiness for school and competence-oriented education, interpreting

it in the context of the characteristics and specifics of the educational field "Environmental World". Demonstrates excellent skills in implementing a content analysis, consistent with the research criteria, of eight program systems for preschool education, in order to outline the possibilities of the thematic cognitive content of the educational field "Environmental World" in the direction of the formation of competences in children in the fourth age group the kindergarten. The findings allow the doctoral student to theoretically justify the need to develop a scientifically based model for competence-oriented education through the pedagogical interaction "child - environment" in a preparatory age group (6-7-year-old children), focused on the triad: social and civic competences, skills for sustainable development and for a healthy lifestyle and sports and digital competence.

In *the third chapter*, Blaga Dimova presents the design for the implementation of a pedagogical study, aimed at developing and testing a competence-oriented model for pedagogical interaction in the educational field "Environmental World", based on the example of the fourth preparatory age group. Correctly specifies its framework through its purpose, object, subject, hypothesis and tasks. Purposefully systematizes criteria and indicators for tracking children's progress. It describes in detail the research tools used at each stage of its implementation. Admirations deserve the logical connection of the phased implementation of the research in its pilot and main version. She convincingly defends her ambitions for a precise professional composition of her author's model through the punctual presentation of her goals, tasks, fundamental principles and approaches. With the necessary attention and care for its effectiveness, it systematizes requirements to guarantee its effectiveness in the context of the selected competencies. She legitimately points out as his advantage the two-component nature of the formative program, which presupposes overcoming routine and formalism in pedagogical everyday life. It presents in detail its technological parameters through the algorithm for their implementation and its substantive thematic concretization. It systematizes original technological elements, appropriate in terms of achieving a complex developing effect in a subjective-personal plan through the early development of competencies important for individual prosperity. Their educational and applied potential meets the requirements for good pedagogical practice and convincingly proves the skills of the doctoral student to develop and defend effective in the modern educational context innovative technological solutions that have their results in relation to the chosen research challenge.

In *the fourth chapter*, Blaga Dimova presents an analysis of the research results. The obtained data are expressed visually by appropriate graphical methods. The interpretation of the statistical dependencies is correct and allows deriving trends to prove the research thesis. The general analysis made convincingly defends the ambition of the doctoral student to promote the final educational product of her work, which has a marked applied significance and the advantage of scientifically based conceptuality and statistically protected performance regarding the formation of a system of competences in 6-7-year-old children.

The dissertation is the original work of the author. The content of the dissertation does not violate copyright and intellectual property rights. This has been proven by testing with a software product to detect plagiarism and the use of improper practices. The results of the performed inspection are reflected in a protocol attached to the documentation, accompanied by an opinion of the scientific supervisor.

The language of the dissertation is academic, the style is appropriate for this type of work, and the structure of the text is well organized with the necessary logical completion of each component.

The abstract is structured according to the requirements, in a volume of 54 pages and clearly presents the content characteristics and structural parameters for the dissertation work.

Assessment of the PhD student's publications and personal contributions

Blaga Dimova presents a total of 3 scientific publications. They were realized during her studies in the doctoral program and were applied in defense of the necessary scientometric indicators. The developments testify to her skills in popularizing the results of her scientific research. All publications are on the topic of the dissertation work. They meet the requirements for scientific articles and reflect the staged results of the conducted research within the framework of the work on the dissertation project. They are dedicated to current problems related to the improvement of competences in additional forms of pedagogical interaction, with practical parameters of digital competence in preschool childhood and with presenting options for the formation of skills for sustainable development. They reflect the author's personal contribution to the issues she researches, related to the topic of the dissertation work.

The above proves that Blaga Dimova complied with the quantitative requirements of the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the number of publications and participation in scientific forums. The attached materials confirm that the minimum national requirements listed in relation to the educational and scientific degree "doctor" have been met. The duly certified scientometric report counts for G "A" - 50 points, for G "G" - 70 points.

2. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS.

The main achievements in the dissertation work and the contributing moments in it can be systematized in the following way:

A. Scientific-theoretical aspect:

1. I positively accept the realized scientific and analytical-comparative analysis of the conceptual essence of competence-oriented education in current theoretical studies, based on which its modern dimensions are derived with a focus on the pedagogical conditions and requirements for its implementation.

2. I positively evaluate the presented modern ideas and definitions of the main concepts in the dissertation work and their systematization in a comprehensive conceptual system, related to the conceptual-thematic framework of the research benchmarks, situated in the contextual field of competence-oriented education in preschool childhood and in the conditions of pedagogical interaction on environment in kindergarten.

3. I confirm the contribution in the analytical disclosure of the relationship between competence-oriented education and pedagogical interaction in the educational field "Environmental World" and admire the addition of the pedagogical theory through the derived principles and requirements for the selection of the educational content, presupposing complex results, both in terms of privately didactic plan and regarding the overall educational process in the kindergarten.

4. I admire the derivation of trends regarding the content parameters of current program systems, reflecting the causality between the thematic content of the surrounding world and the results of its implementation in the context of the formation of the competences fixed in the author's research program.

B. Experimental-research aspect:

1. I positively evaluate the experimentally tested competency-oriented model of pedagogical interaction in the "Environmental World" educational field and find its advantage statistically proven importance for the development of social and civic competences, skills to support sustainable development and for a healthy lifestyle and sport and the digital competence of 6-7-year-old children.

2. I positively accept the systematized toolkit for researching the effectiveness of the application of the author's formative system. It is easy to apply and with sufficient reliability provides an opportunity to track the progress of each child.

3. I confirm the contributing points regarding the author's options for optimizing the pedagogical action in the surrounding world in the context of competence-oriented education, which presuppose possibilities for their variable applicability in pedagogical everyday life.

4. I consider the organizational, methodological and qualification recommendations presented in the research plan to be a contribution to ensuring the effectiveness of competence-oriented education and I accept them as grounds for proven sharing in the community of the attitudes and attitudes of preschool teachers regarding the approaches, methods and means of implementing competence-oriented oriented interaction in the private didactic discourse of pedagogical interaction in the surrounding world.

C. Practical-applied aspect:

1. I positively admire the protected in an applied plan and statistically proven example of good practice by testing the competence model in a real educational environment. I find that it can be successfully applied and upgraded in the professional daily life of the innovative teacher who has the ambition to guarantee competence-oriented education through the pedagogical interaction in the surrounding world.

2. I positively accept the applied enrichment of the teacher's methodological arsenal with technological elements for the development of a system of competences, the effects of which are statistically protected. I appreciate the opportunity to achieve mobility and variability in the competence-oriented education of preschool children through them.

The contributions correspond to the content of the development of the topic and objectively reflect the achievements of Blaga Dimova

Questions

When presenting the basic components of the author's model, what are your reasons for specifying the type of pedagogical situation using the wording "for the consolidation of knowledge" and to what extent it corresponds to the nature of the specified tasks and the focus on the formation of competences?

Recommendations for future use of dissertation contributions and results

The professional reflection of what has been achieved through the realized research program probably provokes research intentions related to future scientific projects. I recommend focusing the research interest in this direction and wish the doctoral student to publish a monograph in which she can present the results of the conducted research to a wider audience.

3. CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains *scientific, scientific-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science* and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student *Blaga Georgieva Dimova* possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the field of preschool pedagogy, **demonstrating** competences for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research, the achieved results and contributions, and offer to the respected members of the Scientific Jury my positive vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor PhD" to *Blaga Georgieva Dimova*, in the field of higher education *1. Pedagogical sciences*, professional field *1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool pedagogy)*.

Date: 29.09.2022

Veliko Tarnovo

Prepared the review:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petya Karaivanova: