

OPINION

From Assoc. Prof. Stella Angova, UNWE, Media and Public Communication Department

For obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (PhD) in professional field
1.2 Pedagogy (Multimedia)

With a dissertation on the topic: MEDIA LITERACY AND CREATIVE APPROACHES
IN PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTIONS WITH 6-8-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

Presented by Dessislava Boshnakova

With supervisor Prof. Danail Danov, DSc

The dissertation has a total length of 275 pages in pdf format, of which 212 pages are the main text. A total of 152 sources in Bulgarian and other languages are used. Figures, diagrams, tables are included. The dissertation contains an introduction, 9 chapters, bibliography and 5 annexes.

The relevance of a dissertation on the topic "Media Literacy and Creative Approaches in Pedagogical Interaction with 6-8-Year-Old Children" is extremely high, especially given the growing influence of digital media in children's lives today. Children are exposed to media from an early age, and it often plays a significant role in shaping their worldview and social skills. In this context, fostering media literacy has become a fundamental part of the educational process, helping children navigate diverse forms of information and media content critically.

Children aged 6 to 8 are at a unique stage of cognitive and emotional development, beginning to form clearer social and cognitive skills as well as a broader interest in the world outside the family. The use of creative approaches in pedagogical work with this age group allows educators to integrate media literacy in an accessible and engaging way. Through games, interactive activities, and projects, children can not only understand basic media concepts but also learn how to use media safely and responsibly.

Research into media literacy among 6-8-year-olds and the development of creative approaches in pedagogy addresses modern needs for social-emotional learning and digital awareness. This makes the dissertation relevant and valuable for current educational practices and for creating long-term strategies that promote critical thinking and a sustainable approach to media from early childhood.

I agree with the author's assertion that the subject is currently under-researched. Initiatives and scientific publications on the topic of media literacy in Bulgaria started with the older population, reached the schoolchildren and quite reasonably it was the turn of the youngest. Against the backdrop of the increasing vulnerability of the population to misinformation, the lack of pluralism of opinions, the generally declining complex literacy,

it is good practice to work with the youngest and show them the path of knowledge and critical thinking.

The work is interdisciplinary and covers, besides communication and media sciences, pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, technology, neuroscience. One theoretical focus is on creative pedagogy. Reality requires the use of different pedagogical approaches so that the students' attention is "caught". Children in the age group studied learn best through play and hands-on activities that engage not only their minds but also their senses and emotions. Creative approaches to pedagogy allow for an environment in which children can express ideas, experiment with new concepts, and discover the world in ways that are natural and enjoyable to them. Through creative methods, children are encouraged to cooperate and communicate, develop their social skills - to work in teams, respect different points of view and find pleasure in communicating with others. The author makes a good suggestion: 'Educational approaches that combine digital technologies with healthy and purposeful principles can help revive Bulgarian education and create a balanced learning process' (p. 45). The topic of cognitive physiology as an important part of the learning process as well as neuropedagogy is also given a significant place.

The research approach is relevant to the aims of the thesis. Observation of children, interviews with teachers, questionnaires with educators and parents, and expert evaluations of academics were conducted. The research helps to indicate in concrete terms how the creative approach, in this case mental arithmetic and reading comprehension, affects learning. I agree with the conclusion that not only teachers are involved in education, but also the family. The work shows that there is a need for reorganization of education in Bulgaria, driven by a number of factors - technology, artificial intelligence, screen devices, visual content, students' interests, little book reading and many more. The results of the study are a good indication of the direction the education system should take.

My remarks are with regard to the structure of the thesis. In my opinion, the chapters are too fragmented and small in volume for this kind of scientific work. A second chapter stating the subject, object, methodology, etc. should be part of the introduction of the dissertation. Chapters seven and eight could be combined in the same way, and chapter nine could be entitled "Conclusion". Sixteen contributions are defined, which could be grouped more fundamentally.

Despite the notes, the work has its merits and its contribution to scholarship. First of all, an author's definition of the term "mental arithmetic" is proposed. Models are developed for effective development of reading comprehension skills, for developing cognitive skills: thinking, memory, concentration of attention from early childhood and for the personal characteristics, attitude and professional skills of the modern educational specialist.

Considering the importance of the topic, the serious theoretical basis, the correctly conducted and analyzed research with different groups of respondents, I will vote positively for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Desislava Boshnakova for her dissertation on *MEDIA LITERACY AND CREATIVE APPROACHES IN PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTIONS WITH 6-8-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN*.

10.11.24

Jury member: Assoc. Prof. Stella Angova