

REVIEW

of a dissertation on the topic of “The ideas behind the progressive education movement and contemporary public education”

for acquiring the scientific degree of “Doctor of Science”

higher education area 1. Pedagogical science, professional direction

1.2. Pedagogy (The Theory of Education and Didactics – The Theory of Education)

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1. Structural parameters of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of 331 pages. It is structured with an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography and 4 annexes, one of which is being made public for the first time. The text includes 3 tables. The bibliography contains sources, 147 literary sources, of which 119 are in Cyrillic and 28 are international, it is supplemented by online resources – 45 in Cyrillic and 60 international and 37 internet websites. The used literature is of an impressive size, showing the objective study of the researched issue and the author’s in-depth knowledge.

The dissertation’s size is adequate and its structure consists of all the necessary components to be reviewed. A current problem, which has not been studied enough, has been researched, related to the connection between the progressive education movement and the contemporary public education, both internationally and at home. Its analytical interpretation has been carried out from the positions of chronological, systematic and civilizational-structural approach. The research is methodically well-founded with scientifically grounded purpose,

hypothesis, tasks, object, subject, methods. The chronological frames that are given offer the opportunity to present the entire progressive education movement in theory, practice, representatives, development tendencies, and influence on contemporary education. The stages of the dissertation research reveal the searches, interests and pathways that lead the author to the final result.

2. Abstract and publications information

The abstract follows the structure of the dissertation and reflects the research essence. Its contributions are correctly presented. The publications of the dissertation (one monography and nine articles and papers) are related to it and have scientific value.

3. Normative regulations

The dissertation meets the requirements of the normative regulations, stipulated in the Academic Faculty Development in Republic of Bulgaria Act, and the Regulations for applying it, as well as the Regulations on the conditions and procedures for acquiring scientific degrees and academic positions in Sofia University.

In terms of its subject and contents, the work does not repeat the dissertation presented for acquiring the educational and scientific degree “doctor”, there is no plagiarism, there is research originality, no copyrights or intellectual property rights have been infringed. The verification of the scientific-metric parameters, related to the scientific and publication activity of Assistant Professor Doctor Milka Terziyska-Stefanova shows that it meets the requirements for acquiring the scientific degree “Doctor of Science”.

4. Significant parameters of the dissertation

In the **introduction** the author justifies the actuality of the researched problem by presenting contemporary international initiatives on the history and comparative research of the new education. She poses the question regarding the lack of

terminological conformity and establishes the contents of the main concepts. The theoretical-methodological basis of the research is presented.

CHAPTER ONE, „The progressive education movement – origins, representatives and events” contains five paragraphs, which analyse the movement origins at the end of 19th century and first few decades of 20th century.

The first and second paragraph of this chapter follow the origins of the progressive education movement in international aspect, the first attempts for its institutionalisation and the characteristics of the new schools according to Adolphe Ferriere. A special spot is given to the establishment of the International League of the New Education.

The remaining paragraphs reveal the activity of Prof. Dimitar Katsarov in the International League of the New Education and chronologically present the Bulgarian participation in the congresses for the period between 1921 and 1936. The Bulgarian projects for the new education are presented in the “Free education” magazine, at the Bulgarian section and regional groups initiatives, as well as some attempts of schools and teachers to apply the new ideas in practice.

With reference to this, CHAPTER ONE includes the following positive accents:

The necessary terminological-conceptual clarifications are made in order to prove the acceptance of the concept of “new education” in international aspect and by its Bulgarian followers.

The progressive education movement is followed chronologically in time in terms of participants, activities, and periodicals.

The progressive education movement in Bulgaria is presented, the contributions of its representatives are presented, as well as the first attempts of applying the new methods in practice.

CHAPTER TWO. “Theoretical and practical achievements of the new education” consists of two paragraphs.

The first paragraph, “Scientific knowledge of the child and their upbringing and education”, follows the way the progressive movement education affects the pedagogical theory and practice by bringing attention to the educational mission of pedagogy, and by establishing the experiment in pedagogical research.

The second paragraph analyses the leading ideas of progressive education – the child’s value and their activity.

With reference to this, CHAPTER TWO includes the following positive accents:

The roles of the “Jean-Jacques Rousseau” Institute and the Geneva University are presented in regards to the development of the new pedagogy.

The arrival of the pedagogy and the attitude towards it in an international and home aspect are looked into as a result of the increased interest of reformers in the child.

The pedagogy development in Bulgaria is systematised.

The contributions of Prof. Dimitar Katsarov are proven with regards to the presentation of new education ideas in university lecture classes.

The characteristics of the traditional and the new education are systematised in a comparative aspect.

CHAPTER THREE, “The challenges education in the modern age faces” consists of two paragraphs.

The first paragraph “The role of UNESCO in the development of education” presents the policies, programmes, strategies of the world organisation, related to education. The education situation in the second half of the 20th century is analysed.

The second paragraph, “Education in the first decades of 21st century in the context of the digital era” reveals in a well-grounded way the new image of childhood and the challenges modern education faces.

With reference to this, CHAPTER THREE includes the following positive accents:

It shows the characteristics of contemporary childhood and education in the environment of a global information society.

It makes conclusions and evaluation regarding the online behaviour of children, their digital literacy and education in the conditions of cyber socialisation.

It researches the initiatives of UNESCO, the International Telecommunication Union, UNICEF for dealing with the COVID pandemic.

The **conclusion** contains the necessary summaries and inferences to confirm the hypothesis of the research. In the spirit of progressive education, it shows both the realised and the not yet realised ideas, which help preserve traditional cultural values.

Critical notes, questions, and recommendations

I have no critical notes or recommendations to the dissertation or its author.

Questions to the doctorate candidate:

Until when is the “new education” considered new to the actual pedagogic theory and practice?

Which progressive education movement ideas do you find in innovative contemporary Bulgarian schools?

5. Main contributions of the dissertation

I accept and agree with the main contributions of the dissertation, pointed out by Associate Professor Milka Terziyska-Stefanova.

With regards to the review, they are:

The progressive education movement is presented in terms of its history, theory, practice, representatives, periodicals, international initiatives.

The origination of the pedagogy is analysed as a result of the increased interest to the child and childhood, provoked by the new education.

It systemises the Bulgarian participation in the initiatives of the International League for the New Education, the Bulgarian section and its regional groups activity.

The role of Prof. Dimitar Katsarov is proven with regards to the dissemination of the new education ideas in Bulgaria in the first half of 20th century.

The characteristics of the child and childhood in the first decades of the 21st century are presented, together with the necessity for changes, which are at the base of the progressive education concept.

IN SUMMARY, the positive accents and contribution moments give me reason to give a **POSITIVE EVALUATION** of the dissertation and to strongly suggest to the scientific jury **TO AWARD THE SCIENTIFIC DEGREE OF “DOCTOR OF SCIENCES”** in the higher education area of 1. Pedagogical science, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (The Theory of Education and Didactics – The Theory of Education) to Associate Profession Dr Milka Nikolova Terziyska-Stefanova **BECAUSE THE DISSERTATION CONTAINS THEORETICAL SUMMARIES AND SOLUTIONS OF BASIC SCIENTIFIC AND SCIENTIFIC-APPLIED PROBLEMS.**

Date: 19.04.2023

Reviewer:

Associate Professor Dr Tinka Ivanova