

OPINION

by Prof. Nataliya Ivanova Vitanova, member of the scientific jury from "Episkop Konstantin Preslavski" University of Shumen, on a dissertation work for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Design of educational programs), developed by Ralitsa Atanasova Merdzhanova-Stefanova on the topic: "ADAPTATION OF A TEACHING DESIGN MODEL IN THE CONTEXT OF AN INFORMAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT", with supervisor Prof. Dr. Vasya Delibaltova

General characteristics of the dissertation. The dissertation presented for discussion has a volume of 228 pages, of which 155 main text, 6 pages of literature and 67 pages of appendix (7 appendices). It contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references, scientific contributions (the place of scientific contributions is in the abstract) and an appendix.

Structure and content. The introduction presents the author's reasons for choosing the dissertation topic and its relevance. It includes in a compressed form the main ideas related to the role of dance art and its specifics in an informal educational environment. An organic part of the introduction is the main hypothesis, research methodology and expected results. It presents the object, the subject and the main tasks. In general, the introduction introduces what is to come in the dissertation research.

The first chapter is devoted to the design of training. It presents the essence, features and models of learning design, as well as the advantages and limitations of the presented design models.

In the second chapter "Dance schools in the context of the modern non-formal educational environment" the dance art is presented in the context of the parameters and characteristics of the modern non-formal education. Dance training in non-formal educational environments is examined nationally and internationally, and the sector of dance training in non-formal education in Bulgaria is presented.

A third chapter is devoted to the research design and results. It includes the research program, the research procedure, the instrumentation, the sample size and the analysis of the results.

The fourth chapter "Research concept for the process of adaptation of a learning design model and author's development of resources" contains an author's matrix of a model of learning design Backward design model and resources in the process of adaptation.

Relevance of the topic. The topic is relevant, first of all because there are no similar developments in the field of pedagogical science. Second, if we follow Maslow's thesis of holistic human nature, then education (whether formal or informal) is designed to develop the complex personality, all its characteristics. The increased interest in dance art in recent years is a fact. In the context of the learning process, the art of dance has its specifics that must be studied in order to give direction to the development of the processes in it.

Conceptuality, evidence and practical significance of the development. The presented dissertation work is a completed author's concept, in which new possibilities related to the considered issue are sought and presented. As a positive, it can be pointed out that despite the small number of publications on the issue under consideration, the author of the dissertation was able to express and argue his position. For pedagogical science, the practical significance of dissertation research is also very great.

Scientific awareness of the author. The author knows the literature on the subject very well and substantiates his thesis with enough information. The bibliography contains 80 sources. Of these, 68 on paper and 12 web-based. Of all literary sources, 37 are in Latin, 31 in Cyrillic. Literary sources are used appropriately in the text and support the author's positions. This representative scientific argumentation of the text supports the conclusions of the dissertation.

Object, subject, goal, tasks, hypothesis and methods of the research.

The introduction contains all the details - object, subject, goal, tasks, research methods - all correctly justified and defined.

On page 9, systematization and summarization are defined as research methods. A generalization is a general conclusion made on the basis of individual observations or some facts. It is a logical process of passing from the singular to the general, from less general to general knowledge. Systematize is arrangement, order, classification, systematization, distribution; arrangement in a system. In this context, I believe that generalization and systematization cannot be defined as research methods.

Study design. An empirical study was conducted in which 295 subjects participated. A total of 15 people participated in the focus groups - 8 teachers from Dance Station dance school and 7 representatives of dance organizations from the country. The teachers are aged 25-37. 185 children of different age groups participated in the observation. 40 dance teachers from the 7 largest dance schools in the country and 53 dance students participated in the survey. The study included 166 hours of unstructured observations and 3.56 hours of focus groups.

An expedient choice of instrumentation was made. The data obtained from the empirical study are presented correctly. They are visualized tabularly and through diagrams. The conclusions make a very good impression - they derive from the research, they are not banal trivial.

Contributions to the dissertation. The contributions indicated by the author are correctly presented and are proof of the significance of the dissertation work.

Dissertation publications. The doctoral student's publications meet the requirements for number and representativeness - a total of 3 per issue (one publication is in print). All publications are in the context of the dissertation work. They have been published in collections.

Abstract. The abstract corresponds to the submitted dissertation text and presents the doctoral student's work in a comprehensive, sufficiently complete, correct and summarized way.

Dissertation Notes and Questions.

- There is a slight imbalance between the theoretical (67 pages) and the empirical part of the study (84 pages), in favor of the empirical. I take that as a positive.
- A well organized instructional design model (in dance) has been developed to work in informal settings. The model has been verified and is practically applicable.
- I appreciate the applications related to the dissertation research as very valuable and as a significant practical-applied contribution.
- From the graphical design model presented on p. 151, the correlations are not clearly delineated.
- There are quite a few theoretical propositions in empirical research.
- In the empirical study, the gender of some of the target groups was not specified (it was specified for the teachers - 58% women). The absence of this parameter limits the study in terms of correlations and analyses. It is very likely that there will be gender differences in the comparison.
- Research conceptual questions can be taken as recommendations.

- It is necessary to unify (standardize) the citation. Different citation standards are used in the text.

Questions: 1) Are "learning process" and "learning process" synonymous?

What are the arguments for using the term "learning process"?

Recommendations for dissemination of results

In connection with the popularization and dissemination of the results, it is recommended that they be published in the form of an independent monograph.

Conclusion

In its structure and content, in its conceptual design, the work of **Ralitsa Merdzhanova-Stefanova** is an independent and original scientific work.

The results achieved in the dissertation research can be considered scientific contributions of the doctoral student.

- The basis of the justified conclusions and conclusions are the results of the research, which are inherently reliable and relevant.
- The dissertation meets the technical standards for shaping this type of scientific work.
- The author can independently conduct scientific research, present and analyze the results correctly.
- I have no doubts about plagiarism.

In general, the dissertation meets the requirements for this kind of research. It protects the criteria of heuristic significance, of structuredness, of scope capacity, allows for the derivation of assertions, has internal coordination, and is balanced in sequences.

All the merits of the work, the scientific contributions, the legality of the procedure, prove the potential and perspective of the researcher as an author. He

demonstrates scientific competence, correctness, good faith - qualities necessary for the realization of the purpose of scientific research.

Based on the demonstrated qualities and skills for in-depth scientific research, proven scientific contributions and original achievements, I give my positive assessment of the conducted research presented in the dissertation work, and I propose to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to **Ralitsa Atanasova Merdjanova-Stefanova** in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, scientific specialty Theory of education and didactics - Design of educational programs.

Date: 22/04/2024

Shumen

Signature:

(Prof. Nataliya Vitanova, DSc)