

REVIEW

by **Prof. D. of p.s. Galya Hristozova** – BFU

member of the scientific jury appointed by Order No. UMO-137/3.07.2023 of the Rector
of the Burgas Free University

for a dissertation on the topic:

"MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATION OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR INTO ASSERTIVE
BEHAVIOR BY CREATING STORIES FOR STUDENTS IN THE INITIAL STAGE
OF EDUCATION (3 RD-4 TH GRADES)"

PhD student: Vesela Pancheva Stoyanova

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty
"Preschool and primary school pedagogy" Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Pepa Miteva Field of higher
education: 1. Pedagogical sciences; Professional direction: 1. 2. Pedagogy; Doctoral
program: Pre-school and primary school pedagogy, CHN, BFU

Data for the PhD student

Vesela Pancheva Stoyanova's entire educational and work activity is related to her pedagogical orientation and her motives for working with students. She successively graduated from the Institute for Kindergarten and Primary Teachers in Dobrich and holds a professional bachelor's degree in primary school pedagogy; Shumen University "K. Preslavski" and has a bachelor's degree in elementary school pedagogy since (1989). In 2004, he completed a master's program in psychology at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and Methodius". Already in 2007, it acquired the first PKS. She has several specializations in project development and management.

From 1992 until now, Vesela Stoyanova has been the director of "Dimitar Talev" Secondary School in Dobrich. No other professional activity is specified. Her educational status, her professional interests and her many years of work and activity logically led her to the decision and desire to continue in a doctoral program in Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy at the Center for Humanities of the Burgas Free University.

Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation has a traditional structure: introduction, four chapters, conclusion, references, appendix. The total volume is 234 pages, of which the main text is 220 pages; and the appendices are in a separate body - 89 pages. The used literature contains 179 sources, of which 160 are in Bulgarian, 12 in Russian and 7 in English, as well as 14 sources from the Internet. The structure is consistent with a similar kind of scientific development. An abstract, a list of scientific publications and final products, scientific contributions, creative autobiography are attached to the dissertation work.

Analysis of the dissertation

The draft of the dissertation proposed for discussion has a current topic and concerns an extremely important problem for pedagogical practice. In the introduction, the doctoral student very seriously and responsibly stated her reasons for choosing the topic. The purpose, objectives, object and subject matter are well stated. Two logical hypotheses are formulated and the idea of developing a model is briefly described.

The **first** chapter is theoretical - it clarifies concepts such as aggression, aggressiveness and aggressive personality behavior. The most famous theories about aggression, which are known worldwide, are analyzed - aggression as an instinct, aggression as a drive and aggression as social learning. In detail, the doctoral student dwells on the essence of aggression, the reasons for its manifestations. Special emphasis is placed on children's aggression. Skillfully interprets various theories and opinions, expressing his personal position on them. Her long-term work as a school director and her "encounters" with various types of aggression among students help to clarify theoretical concepts with observations from practice.

Clarifying the relationship between assertiveness and personal self-esteem is particularly useful. In places in this chapter, activities of the school where the doctoral student works are shared, on the occasion of some commented author's opinions from the theoretical review. They "mirror" the theory, but it is better to separate them into separate parts. In the first chapter, the age characteristics as well as the behavior of students from the initial stage of education

are clarified. And here I ask the question: What information do the age characteristics give us about the behavior of students?

The specific features of children's creativity and the ways of forming skills for creating fairy tales are considered. Characterization of the fairy tale genre is made with an emphasis on the magical tale. There is too much emotional information and reasoning here about how useful a fairy tale is, what its functions and possibilities are, what the creative process is. However, it is useful to distinguish 3 stages of creative work in the creation of the model - preparatory, actual - in which the fairy tale is created, and analysis of children's creativity. The first chapter ends with conclusions and summaries, some of which are from the theoretical overview.

The **second** chapter is related to the research design and includes aim, objectives, hypothesis, object and subject, methods. They are already mentioned in the introduction, but they are detailed here. A self-report questionnaire for measuring aggression in children is presented. The main version of the test for children has 29 items in 4 scales - physical aggression, verbal aggression (verbal), anger and hostility. All factors are described in detail. The sample of students included in the study is representative. They are 520 - 255 boys and 265 girls from third and fourth grade from 4 schools in Dobrich, divided into 260 students in control and experimental groups. The organization, stages and course of the empirical research are described in detail. The separate stages enable a lean organization with precisely fixed activities. The tests used are professional, reliable enough to measure aggressiveness and the presence of assertiveness.

The most significant is the **third** chapter, in which an exemplary model for composing magical tales is presented, which is the contributing point in the dissertation work. The main parameters of the example model are described - goal, tasks, object and subject. The model is continuous - it consists of three stages, carried out in eight topics, which can be carried out in eight lessons of two teaching hours each. The tasks in the model are well structured and outline the sequence of actions. The first stage is relatively well developed in the methodology of literary education, but it is supplemented with many creative ideas. The most different and useful is to analyze the characters with assertive and aggressive behavior. Ideas related to creative activities, such as making costumes, are interesting, and especially useful - storytelling with creative tasks -

on behalf of different characters, with their own ending, according to children's drawings, etc. During this stage, the creative tools necessary for the next stage are also created: dodecahedron, cognitive maps and joker cards. The second stage is the writing of the fairy tales itself, with a graphic distinction between group work and individual work (p. 146). Initially, group stories are created, then individual ones. Group work is differentiated, groups are heterogeneous. During the third stage, the students' creativity and the behavior of their characters are analyzed. The entire developed, described and tested model is presented graphically (p. 157) and here the connections and dependencies between the stages, their sequence as actions, i.e. the entire logic of the model is visible. A continuation of the model is the electronic interactive game with text and audio file. Unfortunately, the conclusions are not based on the wonderfully done work in the third chapter, but general reflections of the doctoral student related to education. Administrative and organizational skills dominate over scientific ones.

The **fourth** chapter analyzes the results of the conducted research. A psychometric test of the instrument used was performed. Frequency, variation, dispersion and multivariate analysis were applied with Excell and SPSS software products. The data from the aggression test and from the assertiveness test are presented. Appropriate diagrams were used to illustrate student responses. The results before and after applying the model are presented and compared. In the control group, in which the model was not applied, no differences were observed. They are present in the experimental group. Conclusions from/after chapter four are actually conclusions from the entire dissertation.

The **conclusion** is acceptable, the recommendations are useful and applicable.

Applications are in a separate body. It contains the two questionnaires used for aggressive and assertive behavior, the observation protocols, a lot of photo material of the students' work, the joker cards, the cognitive cards, a lesson outline plan for the perception of a magical fairy tale, for extracurricular reading, for making up fairy tales. Some of the compiled fairy tales are also presented.

Three final products are also presented: 1. Box - "My magic" with dodecahedron figures, cognitive cards and joker cards; 2. Methodical manual "Handbook for writing magical tales";

in which creative tools and various resources are offered in helping children's workers to create magic tales 3. Interactive electronic game to create magic tales through text and audio file.

The main positive features of the dissertation work are in the following directions:

- There is a balance between the theoretical and the experimental part; The theoretical part is analytical, detailed and overview;
- A wide range of authors related to the principles and characteristics of assertive behavior, different types of assertive and aggressive behavior are included and interpreted; to magical tales and their study at an elementary stage. Authors are correctly cited;
- The created example model is orderly, clear, with well-structured stages, it can be easily repeated by those who want to test the idea of using the story to reconstruct aggressive behavior;
- Quantitative data is reinforced with detailed qualitative analysis;
- The conclusions at the end of each chapter reflect the most significant and characteristic of it;
- Hypotheses are defended;
- The author of the dissertation is sympathetic to the topic, the problems, the students. It shows a professional and responsible desire and intention to help in a working way to transform aggressive behavior into assertive behavior;
- Through the model used, the skills for perceiving an artistic work of a certain genre and type are improved, and as a result, competences for in-depth literary analysis for the age are formed;
- Interest in the book is formed, developed and retained in a logical and consistent way, which is a big problem in modern literature education in primary grades;
- In general, the presentation style is scientific, the language competence is at a decent level;
- And most importantly – the developed and tested model helps transform aggressive behavior into assertive behavior, which is the main goal of the doctoral student;
- Outside of the dissertation work itself, the doctoral student, as the acting director, will have the opportunity to share her experience with colleagues from the school in which she works, as well as in the other three schools where the experimental activity is carried out, and will

thus promote the application of a working model for the solution of an extremely serious and difficult problem such as student aggression.

Questions:

1. Why exactly did you choose fairy tales for this transformation? In the title, you don't specify the type of tales you'll be using. Can fairy tales bring about this transformation?
2. Do the students identify with the characters in the fairy tales they create?
3. Is it possible to apply the model to the next level?

Notes:

- In places, the author of the dissertation works as a reviewer - "The dissertation distinguishes between the concepts of aggression and aggressive behavior" - p.16. "...mainly in the present dissertation it is accepted..." - p.35. and others;
- In many places, the name of the author being cited is not mentioned, but only the number of the source being cited is noted in parentheses. So, it is from pp. 81 to 85 and in many other places;
- Citing authors and explaining theoretical positions in the third and fourth chapters are not recommended. Only the author's work and interpretation of the research results should be here;
- Higher punctuation competence could have been demonstrated.

The **abstract** meets the requirements for this type of text and reflects the most significant components of the dissertation work. I accept the contributions made by the doctoral student in the abstract and in the dissertation. They are of a theoretical and a practical-applied nature. Dissertation topic research **publications** such as titles are related to the topic of the dissertation. I take it to be 4, which means 40 points out of the required 30. There is also a non-scientific parent's guide.\

In conclusion:

The presented dissertation of doctoral student Vesela Pancheva Stoyanova on the topic "Model for transformation of aggressive behavior into assertive behavior by creating fairy tales among students in the initial stage of education (3rd-4th grade)" was developed according to all the rules for this scientific genre. The doctoral student fulfills the minimum national requirements for the ONS "doctor". I have no doubt about plagiarism in scientific work and publications. Based on the demonstrated qualities and skills for independent scientific research, proven scientific contributions and original achievements, I **give my positive assessment of the conducted research presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and propose to the respected scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor"**.

Prof. d.p.sc. Galya Hristozova

26.08.2023