

STATEMENT

by Dr. Gergana Hristova Dyankova
Professor at SWU "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad

of a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences
professional field 1.2. Pedagogy
doctoral program Theory of Education and Didactics

Author: Zoya Nedelcheva Capon

Topic: Theatrical-educational strategies in specialized art schools

Scientific adviser: Prof. Dr. Nelly Boyadzhieva

1. General presentation of the procedure and the doctoral student

This statement was developed in pursuance of Order № P33-1306 / 19.04.2021 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski" (PU) in connection with the procedure for defense of a dissertation on "Theatrical and educational strategies in specialized schools in Arts" for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program Theory of Education and Didactics. Department of Pedagogy and Education Management with supervisor Prof. Dr. Nelly Boyadzhieva.

The set of paper materials presented by Zoya Nedelcheva Capon is in accordance with Art. 36 (1) of the Regulations for development of the academic staff of PU, includes the following documents: application to the Rector of PU for disclosure of the procedure for defense of dissertation; CV in European format; dissertation work; abstract; list of 5 scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation.

Zoya Capon graduated from NATFA "Kr. Sarafov", she was awarded a Master's degree in "Acting for Drama Theater". Her theatrical activity includes not only acting performances in professional theaters (1989-1995), but also many successful projects related to the promotion of theatrical art in education - as a teacher (2006-2016) Zoya Capon is the creator and organizer of the specialty Acting for Drama Theater. In 2007 she was hired as a part-time lecturer at the University of Plovdiv, and since 2016 she has been an assistant.

2. Relevance of the topic

The dissertation examines significant connections between educational and theatrical activities. The starting point for the search for such a relationship is expressed in the expectations to find out to what extent teaching and learning can be carried out with the help of theatrical-dramatic methods and means. The doctoral student presents the current grounds

for such dependence through a historical review of the history of theater as an art, as well as an analysis of classical schools and trends in the history of pedagogy with an emphasis on pedagogical reform. In this extensive review, Zoya Capon presents coherent arguments about the specifics of theatrical activity to be educational, and educational models to carry elements of theater. Based on these interpretations, the doctoral student introduces the relevance of the proposed dissertation research.

3. Knowledge of the problem

According to its content parameters, the dissertation research is dedicated to a sufficiently significant goal related to the search for innovative approaches for optimizing theatrical-educational strategies in secondary specialized art schools. The focus is on the complex potentiation of the influence of theater education on students in two educational perspectives: on the one hand - in their independent preparation for the theater profession, and on the other hand - in their preparation for successful social realization in life. In her logical substantiation of the differentiation of theatrical education as a comprehensive tool for professional realization and personal growth in terms of autonomous lifestyle after leaving the educational institution, the doctoral student reveals skills to know both the global goals of life education based on the competence approach and for the narrow-professional mechanisms of learning in the specialized schools of arts with a view to acquiring professional competencies for future realization in the field of theatrical art.

4. Research methodology

The methodological formulation of the dissertation is based on classical and modern discourses of theater theory, in whose interpretation the doctoral student finds educational potential for rethinking theatrical-educational strategies in view of their constitutive significance for the life self-affirmation of students. Zoya Capon connects the chosen main strategic perspective for achieving the research goals with the possibilities of empathy. In her productions, the doctoral student sets the specific charge of teaching theater activities as an art of experience and projects its effects through the prism of empathy with its value orientation for emotional and social competence in the context of future life perspective. The used research-methodical tools are based on wide-ranging methods, leading among which are the didactic natural experiment and the models of static analysis of the obtained data. I believe that the design of the research organized in this way is relevant to the hypothesis, the set goal and tasks.

5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions

In its compositional organization, the dissertation is distinguished by both proportionality and interconnectedness in the theoretical and empirical formulation. In the course of a theoretical presentation the doctoral student substantiates with the presentation of key categories the connections between learning as a learning activity and the characteristics of theatrical activity as a learning activity in view of the competence approach and strategies for building the necessary competency base. The performed interpretive analysis is distinguished by the good skills of the doctoral student to synthesize the meaning of the studied pedagogical and theatrical terms in finding intersections in their functionality. Zoya Capon convincingly outlines the peculiarities of theatrical education as an intra-psychological transformation of students, which results in the creation of positive attitudes to learning (such as goal setting and volitional activity) and the meaning of self-knowledge of general readiness for life. In this way, Zoya Capon argues the idea of transforming modern education in the direction of its function as a social institution, supporting self-awareness in the context of the personal perspective of autonomy and social empowerment in life. Zoya Capon emphasizes the potential of theatrical activity as a learning activity in its characteristics for developing the dispositional repertoire of the student's personality (moral code, virtues, skills for aesthetic experience) with artistic and creative reproduction while presenting the distinguishing indicators between theatrical activity and curriculum), directly related to the ability of teachers to define two-dimensional educational goals. I evaluate the empirical research in the Second Chapter of the dissertation as a component with a large contribution to the research methodology of theatrical-pedagogical theory and practice. It is planned and implemented with a realistically possible application for recognizing the complexity of the connections and dependencies between the teaching of theatrical art and educational activity as a foundation of individual-personal growth. The design of the natural experiment is described clearly, eruditely and in accordance with the requirements of modern scientific categories. The complex methodology is applied to two problematic circles: (1) creation of a program with a focus on creating a model for educational strategy for teaching and the whole process of theater learning (motivation for learning, self-assessment and self-regulation, cognitive abilities, social qualities and virtues, free time and social interaction for self-affirmation) and (2) development of criteria for assessing the dynamics of students' empathic abilities, according to the constructed model. The purpose, hypothesis, tasks, subject and object of research are precisely formulated. The methodological tools, constructed on the required dependencies and the applied methods for processing the collected data and adequately selected and sufficiently reliable. The analysis of the results in its aspects of quantitative, qualitative and statistical is in-

depth and professionally carried out. Visualization of data through tabular and graphical visualization supports perception and deepens understanding.

The contributions of Zoya Capon's dissertation can be summarized in two groups:

A. Scientific contributions:

1. A comprehensive theoretical analysis of leading theories and scientific constructs on the topics of the phenomenon of educational activity and theatrical activity as a learning activity and as a component of personal growth in the context of a broad life perspective.

2. The specific features of the theater as art and the main approaches to studying the theatrical training of future actors are introduced and substantiated, supplemented with new interpretations and connections in the direction of including the competencies for empathy as an innovative theatrical-educational strategy.

3. Models of dependencies are presented analytically, which present a two-way connection between the theory of pedagogy and theater pedagogy - the models provide an opportunity to conceptualize a new strategy for theater learning as a factor for individual personal progress of students in life.

B. Contributions:

1. A well-organized model for the development of empathic abilities is proposed, including their specific varieties (emotional and cognitive empathy).

2. The interpretation of the model allows for operationalization of educational approaches to adolescents with a focus on forming the quality of altruism, based on specific theatrical training, but also beyond its framework in view of altruistic activity off stage and problem-solving and decision-making skills.

3. The conducted experiment is beneficial for the practice of the secondary specialized schools, but also for the effectiveness of the innovatively developed educational strategy in view of the competence approach for a wider range of educational institutions.

6. Evaluation of the publications and personal contribution of the doctoral student

The doctoral student presents 5 publications on the topic of the dissertation research, realized in scientific forums and electronic editions. The publications are entirely author's and testify to the popularization of the achieved results among the scientific community while serving the current issues of theatrical and pedagogical practice.

7. Abstract

The abstract is written in accordance with the approved requirements and reflects in summary form the content of the dissertation research with an emphasis on empirical results and derived summaries.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation contains scientific and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for application of the Law and the respective Regulations of PU "P. Hilendarski". The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv for the application of the Law on Pedagogical Sciences.

The dissertation shows that the doctoral student has in-depth theoretical knowledge and demonstrates qualities and skills for independence and analytical skills, developed on a theoretical and empirical level in support of scientific theses in the studied scientific fields.

The volume of work performed, its scientific contributions and its applied prospects are the basis for my positive assessment of the study, which is why **I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Zoya Nedelcheva Capon in higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program Theory of education and didactics.**

11.05.2021.

Prepared an statement:

(Prof. Gergana Dyankova)