

OPINION

on the dissertation entitled

Innovative Educational Technologies in Preparing Children for School

Doctoral candidate: Marinka Chaneva Ivanova

Form of study: full-time

for awarding the educational and scientific degree **Doctor**

Field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences

Professional direction: 1.2. Pedagogy

Doctoral program: Preschool Pedagogy

Author of the opinion: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Atanasova Dimitrova
Burgas State University “Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov”

1. Presentation of the procedure and the candidate

This opinion has been prepared on the basis of Order No. RD-16-270/17.12.2025 of the Rector of Shumen University “Episkop Konstantin Preslavski”, determining the composition of the scientific jury for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Marinka Chaneva Ivanova — doctoral student in the doctoral program Preschool Pedagogy, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences.

The dissertation was developed at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Shumen University “Episkop Konstantin Preslavski”, Department of Preschool and Primary Education. The doctoral candidate Marinka Chaneva Ivanova was enrolled in full-time doctoral studies on 01.02.2022 with a study period of three years. The scientific supervisor is Prof. Dr. Violeta Ivanova Kyurkchiyska.

By decision of the department council, the dissertation was discussed and directed for public defense. All required documents in accordance with the regulatory framework have been submitted. The doctoral candidate fulfills the national minimum requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. Scientific publications related to the dissertation topic are available.

Marinka Chaneva Ivanova has extensive practical pedagogical experience as a kindergarten teacher, which ensures a strong connection between theoretical foundations and pedagogical practice.

2. Relevance of the topic

The topic of the dissertation is highly relevant in the context of the digitalization of education and the need to modernize preschool pedagogy.

The problem of preparing children for school is among the leading topics in contemporary preschool pedagogy, as it is directly related to children’s successful adaptation to the school environment and their future educational development. In a dynamically developing society characterized by digitalization, rapid technological progress, and transformation of educational models, the need to renew pedagogical approaches in kindergarten becomes increasingly evident.

Modern children grow up in a technology-rich environment where digital tools are a natural part of everyday life. This changes the way they perceive information, learn, and interact with the

world. Preschool education faces the challenge of integrating innovative educational technologies in a way that corresponds to children's developmental characteristics while supporting the formation of key competencies related to school readiness.

Particularly important is the need to create a pedagogical environment that stimulates cognitive activity, critical thinking, communication skills, and social adaptation. In this context, innovative educational technologies are not merely technical tools but pedagogical instruments for building a new type of educational interaction based on activity, creativity, and experiential learning.

The relevance of the dissertation is also determined by the pursuit of ensuring a smooth transition between kindergarten and school. Preparation for school does not only involve acquiring knowledge but includes the formation of comprehensive readiness — cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral. Studying the possibilities of innovative technologies to support this process has both scientific and strong practical value.

The dissertation corresponds to current educational policies aimed at digital competence, STEM orientation, and modernization of preschool education. It proposes a pedagogical practice model that combines scientific principles with practical solutions, which defines its importance for the contemporary educational system.

3. Characteristics of the dissertation

The dissertation consists of 223 pages and is structured into an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, final summary, contributions, references, and appendices. It is illustrated with tables, figures, and diagrams. The literature includes Bulgarian and international sources.

The first chapter presents an in-depth theoretical analysis of the problem — school readiness, characteristics of preschool education, and the possibilities of innovative technologies.

The second chapter describes the research design, methodology, and experimental organization.

The third chapter contains an analysis of empirical results proving the effectiveness of the applied technologies.

The work is distinguished by clear logic, consistency, and solid methodological grounding.

The structure of the dissertation corresponds to the requirements for this type of scientific work. Of the total volume, 205 pages constitute the main text and 16 pages are appendices. The research is illustrated with 14 tables, 63 figures, and 18 diagrams.

The doctoral candidate conducted an in-depth analysis of key concepts related to school readiness and the implementation of innovative educational technologies. The theoretical review covers 84 scientific sources. The analysis is logically structured, based on a systematic approach, and supported by well-argued conclusions.

The theoretical analysis demonstrates thorough knowledge of preschool pedagogical foundations, the concept of school readiness, and contemporary educational technologies. Special attention is paid to the transition from kindergarten to school and the role of digital resources in forming sustainable knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The methodology is built on a pedagogical experiment conducted in three stages: diagnostic, formative, and final. An author-developed model for implementing innovative technologies is tested through empirical research supported by statistical analysis.

The experimental part is richly illustrated and supports the conclusions. The findings correctly reflect the state of the problem and lead logically to the scientific contributions.

4. Characteristics of the abstract

The abstract corresponds fully to the dissertation and includes all required elements.

It accurately reflects the structure, content, methodology, and results of the research. The theoretical foundations, experimental design, results, and contributions are synthesized clearly. The text is logically structured and written in scientific style, providing a complete representation of the dissertation.

The abstract fulfills its purpose of presenting the main ideas and achievements of the research.

5. Scientific contributions

The dissertation contains significant theoretical and applied contributions that expand knowledge and enrich preschool pedagogical practice.

At a theoretical level, the research systematizes and conceptualizes school readiness in the context of modern educational technologies. It integrates competency-based approaches with innovative pedagogical solutions.

A major applied contribution is the development and testing of an authorial model incorporating Envision multi-mouse technology, Bee-Bot robotics, and STE(A)M approaches. The model is experimentally validated.

The diagnostic toolkit developed represents an independent contribution with practical application potential.

Empirical results demonstrate the positive influence of innovative technologies on learning sustainability and competency formation. The dissertation provides a scientifically grounded basis for modernization of preschool education.

6. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The list of publications includes 3 authorial works published in peer-reviewed, non-indexed editions. They are thematically connected to the dissertation.

The doctoral candidate participates in scientific forums and pedagogical initiatives promoting innovative technologies in kindergarten education.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations

The dissertation may be expanded through future research in different educational contexts and age groups and through broader implementation of the developed methodologies.

8. Conclusion

The presented dissertation by Marinka Chaneva Ivanova meets the requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”. The topic is relevant, the methodology is sound, and the contributions are significant and applicable.

Based on the above, I propose that the scientific jury award Marinka Chaneva Ivanova the degree Doctor in Field 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy, doctoral program Preschool Pedagogy.



Date: 12.02.2026
Burgas

Member of the scientific jury:



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Dimitrova