CONSTANTINE PRESLAVSKY UNIVERSITY
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OPINION

regarding a doctoral dissertation on the topic:

INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES IN PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL

Candidate: MARINKA CHANEVA IVANOVA

Scientific supervisor: Prof. Violeta Ivanova Kyurkchiyska, PhD

prepared by: **Prof. Chavdar Georgiev Sotirov,** PhD
Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen

1. Grounds for the Opinion

This opinion is prepared in accordance with Order No. RD-16-270 /17.12.2025 issued by the Rector of Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen. The order appoints an Academic Jury for the public defense of the dissertation titled Innovative Educational Technologies in Preparing Children for School. The candidate, Marinka Chaneva Ivanova, completed her doctoral studies with the right to defense as per Order No. RD 10-141/25.02.25, effective from 01.02.2025). The procedure is for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) in the doctoral program: *PreschoolPedagogy*, Professional Field: 1.2. *Pedagogy*.

The procedure was officially opened following the candidate's application and a preliminary departmental discussion held on 05.12.2025 (Protocol No. KD-01-04 / 05.12.2025). The Department of Preschool and Primary School Education issued a positive assessment of the dissertation's quality and the candidate's readiness for public defense.

All legally required documents have been submitted.

2. Brief Academic Profile of the Candidate

Marinka Ivanova holds a Bachelor's degree in Preschool Pedagogy (1996) and a Master's degree in Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy (2011) from Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

She was enrolled as a doctoral student on 01.02.2022. Her professional career began as a kindergarten teacher in 1996 and she currently serves as a "Senior Teacher" at the "Konche Vihrogonche" Kindergarten in Shumen. Her career demonstrates consistent professional growth, including various postgraduate specializations in primary pedagogy and information technology. This background reflects strong motivation and commitment to the field of preschool education.

3. Relevance and Significance of the Topic

The relevance of the scientific work submitted for review on the topic: *Innovative educational technologies in preparing children for school* reflects the current trends in the development of preschool pedagogy, which is increasingly being established as a key stage in the overall educational system. Preschool age is a sensitive period for the formation of basic cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral prerequisites for school readiness, which requires targeted application of pedagogical approaches tailored to the age characteristics and individual needs of the child.

Due to intensive digitalization and the growing role of technology in children's lives, preschool education must integrate innovative technologies to optimize and enrich the learning process. The application of interactive, gaming, digital and multisensory technologies in preparation for school, as are the subject of attention in the dissertation, create opportunities to stimulate active learning, development of cognitive interests, speech skills, fine motor skills, social competencies and self-regulation, which are key components of school readiness.

In this sense, I think the topic is relevant both theoretically and practically, contributing to the development of pedagogical practices for a successful transition to school.

4. Analytical Characteristics of the Dissertation

The work is organized into three chapters and consists of 223 standard pages long – 205 main text and 16 pages of appendix. It includes 14 tables, 63 figures, and 18 diagrams. The numbering of the figures and tables in the abstract follows the dissertation.

The research utilizes 84 sources in Bulgarian and foreign languages. Regarding **the introduction** – it examines the preparation of children for school, with the emphasis on the formation of knowledge, skills and social competencies through preschool education. The author emphasizes the role of innovative educational technologies for the effective acquisition of educational content and the development of competencies that are a predictor of school readiness. The normative requirements and the modern context in which children grow up with information technologies are indicated, and the teacher has a key role in directing them towards educational goals.

The text argues for the relevance of the topic and the effectiveness of innovative methods for stimulating active and creative participation of children.

The object, subject, and purpose of the study are presented and defined correctly. The research hypothesis is also derived.

The **Chapter One** (containing 3 paragraphs) provides a theoretical overview of school readiness and innovative technologies such as the Envision multi-mouse system, Bee-bot, and STE(A)M.

Chapter Two outlines the research design, including criteria for linguistic, mathematical, social, and digital skills. It is the methodological basis of the dissertation work - the organization, contingent, criteria and indicators of the dissertation research are presented. The criteria and indicators for the different types of skills that are the subject of the empirical research are described in detail - *language, mathematical, social, coarse and fine, and digital skills* (pp. 82 - 84).

The author applies a modern, reliable research methodology and a way of organizing the conducted research. The criteria and indicators are derived (p. 106).
In paragraph **2.2. Experimental work** , the author has exhibited a developed author's diagnostic toolkit (e-book), presented in *Appendix No. 2.*

I believe that the doctoral student's pedagogical experience and research flair are the basis for the well-presented architecture of the research in this chapter.

Chapter Three presents the empirical analysis, utilizing statistical processing to validate the results. Based on the established: methodology of the experiment, tools and criteria, the data from the mathematical and statistical processing of the empirical study are presented. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results has been carried out. The data are visualized in tabular form and diagrams. This data processing and analysis prove the skills and competencies of Marinka Chaneva to analytically present her results from the conducted experiment in a scientific and academic style.

Regarding the abstract – it meets the generally accepted requirements. It presents the author's formulation of the contributions of the dissertation work, of which I consider the following to be more significant:

- *In the context of competency-based learning, innovative methods of pedagogical communication have been explored. Educational software resources have been adapted for the purposes of kindergarten learning, as well as the possibilities of STEM learning.*
- *A system of criteria and indicators has been developed to assess children's readiness for school in the context of competency-based learning.*
- *A system of exercises has been developed for the purposes of the teaching experiment, which are in an educational environment different from the traditional one.*
- *The author's system of exercises supports the work of preschool teachers in the process of forming competencies. Having proven its effectiveness, the didactic technology is presented to preschool educators, both through internal and external qualification.*

5. Recommendations

I recommend publishing the results in the form of a monograph to further disseminate the findings.

6. Conclusion

The dissertation meets all academic and scientometric requirements for the awarding of a PhD. The text is logically consistent and academically sound.

Anti-plagiarism software has confirmed the originality of the work.

Based on the significant results achieved, I give a positive assessment and recommend that the Academic Jury award **Marinka Chaneva Ivanova** - doctoral student at the Department of Preschool and Primary Education of the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Shumen, the degree of Doctor (PhD) in the Field of Higher Education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field 1.2. Pedagogy, Preschool Pedagogy.

04.02.2026
Shumen

Prepared by:.....
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