Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis

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The title of the thesis:

Competencies of future early childhood education teachers in the field of literary education

Key words phrases:

competences, literary education, children's literature, early school education, pedagogy student, early school education teacher

Abstract:

This doctoral dissertation examines the competencies of students – future teachers of early childhood education – in the field of literary education. The study is theoretical and empirical in nature. The work consists of four main chapters. The first two contain theoretical analyses related to the topics of teacher competencies and literary education in early childhood education. The third, methodological chapter, describes the process of planning and implementing the research. The fourth chapter analyzes the research results. The work concludes with a summary, including key postulates arising from the analysis, suggested directions for further research, and a reflection on the research process and results. The adopted research perspective is based on the belief that future teachers of early childhood education will play a key role in initiating and consolidating children's reading interests, as well as in shaping their attitudes towards literature. The review section presents two key areas of theoretical analysis: an analysis of early childhood teacher competencies and an analysis of issues related to literary education in grades 1-3. A key element of the study is a characteristic of the process of preparing students for tasks related to literary education, that is, the methods of acquiring and developing these competencies during the course of study. The role of literary education in developing children's reading and cultural competencies is also discussed. The methodological

section includes a definition of research strategies, research problems, methods, and characteristics of the study sample. A key element of the work is the presentation of research results. The study was conducted among 118 students of preschool and early childhood education at two Warsaw universities: the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw (APS) and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (UKSW). For the purposes of this study, the main research goal was formulated: to determine the level of competencies of future early childhood teachers in the field of literary education. Competencies are understood as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The research conducted is diagnostic in nature; therefore, no hypotheses are formulated. The research process availed of mixed methods, which allow for the combination of data obtained using different research methods and the verification, supplementation, and comparison of data, ultimately yielding credible results. Quantitative and qualitative strategies were employed, depending on the specific research problems. Quantitative analysis examined the results obtained using original questionnaires regarding knowledge of literary topics. Qualitative analysis was based on interview data regarding students' readiness for self-education, and document analysis-lesson plans-served as a supplement. The research results indicate that early childhood education students possess a basic knowledge of children's literature and understand the importance of literary education in their teaching careers. They are familiar with key works and are familiar with children's literature, although they may struggle with more advanced literary knowledge (e.g., recognizing quotes, authors, or critics). Analysis of lesson plans reveals the students' potential to design creative teaching activities using engaging methods, but their skills require further development. Despite the need to develop literary competences, students rarely engage in self-education, preferring practical forms of development. An analysis of the literature on the education of future teachers and the results of the conducted research lead to the formulation of postulates and conclusions. There is a need for further research on teaching competences and their impact on the quality of teaching. Teacher education in Poland is assessed in terms of both theoretical and practical preparation, and reports indicate directions for its development. Another important element is preparing pedagogy students to work with children's literature, which supports the development of empathy, critical thinking, and cultural competence in students.