

## **STANDPOINT**

**Of Doctor Elena Stoyanova Sabeva – Associate Professor at Plovdiv University**

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Regarding the materials submitted for a contest entry for taking the academic position **Associate Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”** in the area of higher education: 1. Pedagogy Sciences, Professional Field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics)

### **1. General Presentation of the Procedure and the Candidate**

In the contest for the academic position Associate Professor, announced in the State Newspaper, Issue 31 from 12.04.2019 and on the website of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” for the requirements of Department “Primary School Pedagogy” of Pedagogy Faculty, as a sole candidate participates Chief Assistant Doctor Nikolinka Aleksandrova Atanasova from Department “Primary School Pedagogy” of Pedagogy Faculty at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”. A complete set of materials was submitted within the required period of time in accordance with the requirements of the Law for developing the academic staff in Bulgaria, the Rules for implementation of the Law for developing the academic staff in Bulgaria, the Rules of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” for development of the academic staff, as well as the additional requirements of Pedagogy Faculty. All the procedure requirements are met – from announcing the contest in the State Newspaper to designating the scientific panel.

Chief Assistant Doctor Nikolinka Aleksandrova Atanasova graduated from Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, where she obtained Bachelor, Master and PhD degree, all of them in vocational direction “Pedagogy”, which was announced in the contest. She started work at the university as an Assistant in 2002. Following her career development it is noticeable that she has gradually taken the positions of: Assistant /2002/, Senior Assistant /2005/ and Chief Assistant /2010/ for the Department “Primary School Pedagogy”. A significant moment in her scientific development was her successful defense in 2011 of her thesis on topic: “Interactive Methods of Education at primary Stage of High Comprehensive School”, as a result of which she was awarded educational and scientific degree Doctor in vocational direction 1.2. Pedagogy, PhD “Theory of Education and Didactics”. Up to now Doctor Atanasova has already had 18 years of pedagogy experience and for this period she

has proved herself to be a successful lecturer, highly respected by her colleagues, always searching for innovations in the Pedagogy science, with an endless pursuit of professional self-improvement. These qualities are the reason for her being elected as a representative of the non-habilitated staff of the Faculty of Education at the last two general meetings of the University for elections of a Rector in 2015 and 2019.

## **2. General Characteristics of the Candidate's Activities**

In accordance with the specifics of the present contest, Doctor Atanasova participates with 2 monographs, 2 books, published on the basis of the defended thesis, 17 scientific articles and reports, 3 of which in co-authorship, and 1 electronic course “Interactive Education at School”, intended for university students. To this list can also be added her participation in the compilation of electronic textbooks in Bulgarian Language and Literature for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade of primary education. A list of 10 individual publications has also been submitted for acquiring the educational scientific degree Doctor, which are not subject of this analysis, but give the opportunity to follow the development of the candidate thematically. The scientific production, with which Doctor Atanasova participates in the contest, meets the minimum scientific-metric requirements for taking the academic position Associate Professor as the for indicator G and indicator D collected score points are twice more than the required.

The candidate shows active engagement in two directions: lecturing and scientific research, as there is a constant transfer between them.

The research interests of Doctor Atanasova to break the traditional frame, which has dominated for many years in education, her profound theoretical knowledge and teaching experience help her to focus on effective interactive education, which I consider as a key notion in her scientific research activity. I refer to the second monograph – **“Interactive Group and Project Education Face to Face. Theoretical and Applied Aspects”**, in the first chapter of which the effective interactive education is regarded, with its specific principles, methods and participants' roles as part of the contemporary educational environment. The author chooses to present two ways of interactive education – group based education face to face and project based, highlighting the peculiar characteristics of them.

There is technological specifics in the monograph **“Mind Maps as an Innovative Technique for Studying and Teaching”**, where the author profoundly and vastly reveals the relevance, significance and the opportunities for applying mind maps as a technique, which combines interactive teaching with studying and understanding. Considering the prospects of this method for implementing the aims of contemporary education, Doctor Atanasova derives the essential characteristics, stages of construction, types, to justify to the application of mind

maps in and out of the area of education. Driven by the interests of the new generation of university students, she focuses on computer mind maps, through which she does not only develop digital skills, but also stimulated the activity of the students affirming their subject position in the process of education. As a pedagogue, who is well aware of the problems of the modern didactics, Doctor Atanasova does not fail to highlight the advantages of this technique and also to show the pedagogic barriers for the effective use of mind maps. The monograph has a significant practical contribution, considering the suggested tasks for exercises with mind maps in the subject “Didactics”, intended for students in pedagogy specialties. Following thematically the other publications /articles and reports/ it is obvious that they correspond to the topic of effective interactive education, regardless whether it is implemented through alternative pedagogy means such as the e-platforms MozaBook and EdrawMax, or through mind maps. Pedagogically significant is the opportunity for applying the developed by Doctor Atanasova interactive technological arsenal in the different aspects of education: integrating, intercultural, civil, in order to optimize not only the process of education, but also in nurturing future independent personalities with civil stances. The width of her conclusions is impressive, as well as the research of the range of different age groups – from pre-school children to university students. It is appropriate to add the candidate’s participation in 3 projects, mainly to Fund “Scientific Researches” of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” as a member of research teams. Her participations in national and international scientific forums – 13 in total – are another opportunity for stimulating the scientific pursuits of the candidate and for popularizing new creative decisions in the area of education.

As for the teaching activity of Doctor Atanasova, she has had 700 hours auditory employment, consisting of lecture courses in Didactics, seminars in Pedagogy, lectures and practical lessons in the subject, in close relation with the subject of the contest: “Interactive Education at Primary School” and others. Here I do not comment on the more than ten lecture courses, in which Atanasova participates in Master programmes. The qualification activity of Doctor Atanasova, which she performs in pedagogy specialties and the feedback for her as a lecturer is excellent, is also important.

I agree with the mentioned contributions, proof of which is the number of her citations – 11 in total in Bulgarian and international scientific publications.

### **3. Critical Remarks and Recommendations**

As a colleague of Doctor Atanasova, I recommend her future publishing activity to be directed mainly towards specialized indexed journals in the country and abroad, as well as towards participations in joint projects with colleagues from prestigious European

universities. It will be beneficial for her pedagogy practice if she receives teachers' feedback about the efficiency of the mind maps method. I wish to express my admiration of the scrupulously presented and well organized materials so as to facilitate the preparation of this standpoint, for which I am really grateful!

### **CONCLUSION**

Considering the materials submitted for the contest, it can be inferred that the candidate possesses the required educational qualifications, PhD degree, work experience, teaching experience and meets the minimum national requirements for taking the academic position Associate Professor. I have no doubt about plagiarism and appreciate the undeniable contributions made. This is the reason why I consider the application of Dr. Atanasova for the occupation of the academic position of Associate Professor at the Plovdiv University „Paisii Hilendarski” in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Education and Didactics) is more than convincing, which is why I draw my positive conclusion.

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**The standpoint was compiled by: .....**

(Associate Professor Doctor Elena Sabeva)