

## **REVIEW**

by Prof. Dr. Peter D. Petrov

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position: "Professor" at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" - Smolyan Branch, by field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences; professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics)

In the competition for "Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 40 from 14.05.2021 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Philology and Pedagogical Sciences at the Branch - Smolyan, as a candidate participates Assoc. Prof. Sc.D. Nina Dimitrova Gerdzhikova from University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" - Smolyan Branch.

### **1. General presentation of the received materials**

The candidate submits all documents that are provided for the selection procedure for the academic position "Professor", provided in the BGLDAS and the regulations for its application. The minimum national requirements are significantly exceeded (Annex № 8).

#### **Subject:**

With order № P33-3120 from 12.07.2021. of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (UP) I am appointed a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of 'Professor' in UP in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics), announced for the needs of the Department of Philological and Pedagogical Sciences at the Branch in Smolyan.

Only a candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Assoc. Prof. Nina Dimitrova Gerdzhikova, working at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv - Smolyan Branch.

Presented by Assoc. Prof. Sc.D. N. Gerdzhikova set of materials on paper is in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of UP, and includes the following documents:

- the applications required by the regulations for development of the academic staff of University of Plovdiv, specified in the application to the Rector; scientific works and certificates for participation in national educational projects.

The candidate has attached 5 studies, 4 monographs, 1 textbook and 1 textbook and a list of 58 articles, of which 57 are accepted for review, as far as one of the articles published in the prestigious database of scientific data - Web of Science is the work of too large number of authors. All submitted materials are outside previous procedures for scientific degrees and titles. All publications are provided in full text.

### **2. Brief biographical data of the candidate**

The candidate is a long-term teacher of pedagogical disciplines at the Branch in Smolyan. Even as a doctoral student at the Faculty of Preschool and Primary Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" she impressed me as her supervisor and other colleagues in the department with her attitude to research and her desire to defend their own positions on discussion questions in pedagogy. Later, at the stage of acquiring the scientific title of "Associate Professor", she reaffirmed her high competence in the field of didactics. Her participation in numerous national scientific forums has always provoked lively discussions related to the ideas of competencies of students in pedagogical specialties, the nature of the category "competence" in a didactic context, the interpretation of didactic categories within the various didactic theories. The defense of her dissertation for "Doctor of Science" on "Organization and management of social communication in school pedagogy" caused satisfaction in all members of the scientific jury that in essence this work is a contribution to the modernization of pedagogy.

### **3. General characteristics of the applicant's activity:**

From the attached textbook, workbook and reference for the educational and pedagogical activity of Assoc. Prof. Gerdzhikova can be seen that she systematically made efforts to work with students. In the textbook submitted for review, the candidate successfully combines tradition with modern transformations in pedagogical knowledge. I would especially like to emphasize her contributions to the topic "Learning process", in which the author confirms the procedural interpretation of learning through the categories used: communication, subjective and cognitive perspective on learning objectives, analytical approach to the structure of learning content, procedural description of the social forms for organization of education, the styles of education and the classification of the academic achievements adopted by it.

The workbook, related to the extremely complex topic of multicultural education, is also a contribution to the development of aids for higher pedagogical education. The tasks proposed by the author have an original character and do not repeat already known similar publications.

#### ***Evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate***

The scientific production by quality and quantity of Assoc. Prof. Gerdzhikova corresponds to the highest standards in pedagogical science. It presents 4 monographs for evaluation. First of all, I will focus on the monograph "School as a pedagogical space of restlessness", which is noted in indicator item 3 (Annex № 7 of the documents). The habilitation work covers 309 pages, within which the author creates her original scientific construction of pedagogical knowledge. At the heart of the pedagogical process she puts the emotions related to a certain age stage. The main cognitive tasks in the exhibition are the description and explanation of the main pedagogical categories - education, training, upbringing and pedagogical counseling, which are directly related to the effectiveness of the school institution. In methodological terms, the influence of evolutionary epistemology is evident, which considers the cognitive process as a gradual accumulation of values, facts and patterns. At the end (pp. 290-295) a theoretical synthesis is made, which aims to derive an innovative model for rethinking the idea of the effectiveness of the school institution, beyond the statistical models.

In the third monograph - "Theory of Multicultural Education" - the contribution of Assoc. Prof. Gerdzhikova expresses herself in connecting the pedagogical with the culture. She manages to combine in one whole the extremely wide variety of policies, values and views on life in one comprehensive exposition, subordinated to the key pedagogical category "education". In the sixth chapter (pp. 149-168) the author's contributions on the topics discussed by her in the monograph stand out most clearly, namely:

- consideration of this issue in the transdisciplinary paradigm;
- the anthropological significance of multiculturalism for the application of the global approach to education;
- the need to form a culturally competent teacher.

In the fourth monograph - "The reform of the network of schools in modern society" - a total of four chapters Assoc. Prof. Gerdzhikova wrote three. From their titles can notice the delicately made difference regarding the development of the system of compulsory secondary education in our country and in developed democracies such as England and Germany. Here again the multifaceted awareness of the author and her ability to apply the pragmatic approach established in comparative pedagogy is evident. In the fourth chapter the author traces the changes in the normative base, regulating the profession of the teacher and his career development. The exhibition creates the impression of a certain dissatisfaction of the author with the analyzed normative documents. The constructive nature of her critique is proved by the model she presented for an internally differentiated general education school (pp. 132-138).

The collection of studies confirms the lasting interests of Assoc. prof. Gerdzhikova to the didactic issues and the topic of teacher training. Although each of the studies has its own contribution, I will pay special attention to two of them. One concerns the approaches to defining the learning task in learning theory. In it, the author adheres to the anthropologically oriented contingent theory of the learning task. This approach assumes the linking of the content of the task with the specific conditions of the ongoing training (pp. 60-61).

The second study I would like to highlight, is related to the multimodal analysis of the textbook. Its substantiation in itself is a contribution to the Bulgarian didactic literature. The author clarifies the differences between the functions of the traditional and modern textbook and explains the essence of the discourse approach to the structure of the lesson article.

From the presented 11 articles on indicator D, published in international databases (Web of Science), the scientific interests of the candidate are evident, which are reaffirmed by 47 articles under item 7. All 11 articles have been published in authoritative Bulgarian or European publications. In each of the articles the skills of the candidate to analyze in detail empirical or theoretical facts and to make substantiated proposals for reforms in the respective sector become visible.

The other publications are in well-known Bulgarian journals and cover the period 2001 - 2020, which proves sustainability in scientific research of the candidate. Of all the proposed articles (58), 23 reflect the author's empirical research, focusing mainly on students "emotions", on some health aspects of students' and young people's behavior, and on the problem of the

teacher's role in the multicultural classroom. Here I should note her competence related to the creation of two diagnostic tools for the emotionality of junior high school students, although the publications reflect only the initial stage of work on them. I hope that soon Assoc. prof. Gerzhikova will delight us with a new monograph in German, dedicated to this problem.

### ***Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations***

From the above it is clear that Assoc. Prof. Gerzhikova has significant scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions. They are expressed in the following:

- is able to integrate knowledge from different scientific fields by subordinating them to the traditions created in pedagogy; a clear example is her attempt in the habilitation work to construct the content of age pedagogies by looking for the procedural projections of the indicated emotions in the education, upbringing, pedagogical counseling, bringing education to the fore;
- shows creativity in synthesizing scientific knowledge related to multicultural education and manages to create a modern theory of cultural diversity in pedagogy, dictated by the globalization of economic development;
- contributes to the expansion of the socio-historical approach to pedagogical knowledge, which is applied in the development of topics in the textbook, notebook, in teaching studios, for the training of teachers with a multicultural profile; in this way it supports the acquisition of modern knowledge by students in pedagogical specialties; the exposition in them is dialogical, provoking the reader to think about the fundamental issues for pedagogy;
- proposes solutions for reforming the general compulsory education by comparing the experience in the developed democracies and Bulgaria.

The contributions I have noted I could summarize as follows: Assoc. Prof. Gerzhikova manages to prove with new means significant new aspects of the categories of education, teaching, upbringing, pedagogical consulting and efficiency of the school institution known in pedagogy, using arguments from the field of sociology, pedagogical anthropology and culturology.

The significance of her achievements is also proved by the citations presented in Annex № 7. They were made in the period 2008 - 2019, which convinces in the lasting interest in her publications. I, myself am the author of a positive review of one of her monographs, published in the leading pedagogical journal "Pedagogy". Among the names of the other authors who cited her works are well-recognized researchers in the country, who through their biographies have left lasting traces in the organization and management of higher education and in the formation of some strategies of educational policy. The number of citations satisfies the minimum national requirements for field 1. Pedagogical sciences.

### **4. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate**

All the scientific and applied contributions of the candidate mentioned by me are her personal work. They testify to her gradual growth as a scientist-researcher, which can be briefly expressed by the English word "up-grade".

## **5. Critical remarks and recommendations**

My recommendations to the candidate for the academic position "Professor" in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy are in the following directions:

- to promote more widely the results of its research activities through publications at home and abroad;
- to continue its intensive scientific activity through participation in national and international research;
- to apply her scientific knowledge and skills in the creation of new bachelor's programs, corresponding to the European tendencies in the pedagogical education.

## **6. Personal impressions**

Assoc. Prof. Nina Gerdzhikova is one of my first doctoral students. So far, I have supervised a total of 25 PhD students, what distinguishes Nina is her "restless spirit", her desire to always seek the "truth" and if she finds it, not to accept "in confidence" the opinion of even the greatest authority.

## **CONCLUSION**

The overall scientific and scientific-applied production of Assoc. Prof. Nina Dimitrova Gerdzhikova demonstrates her gradual growth as a very good scientist, researcher and artist, who practically realizes the modern concept of the new learning culture, combining competence and cognitive approaches. The materials submitted to me for review fully meet all the requirements of the law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application and the relevant Regulations of University of Plovdiv.

Based on the analysis of the overall scientific and scientific-applied production, her rich professional experience, her pronounced quality and innovation, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend the scientific jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty of Education for her election of the position "Professor" in field 1. Pedagogical sciences, 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics).

08.08.2021, Sofia

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