



## STANDPOINT

by Prof. DSc. Yulia Georgieva Doncheva, "Angel Kanchev" University of Ruse

on a dissertation for awarding a **doctoral degree** in education and science

in: Field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences,

professional field 1.3. *Pedagogy of Teaching in ...*

doctoral program "Methods of *Teaching in Biology*"

**Author:** *Biser Sashkov Stanislavov*

**Subject:** *WEB-BASED LEARNING FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE IN BIOLOGY AND HEALTH EDUCATION IN 8TH GRADE*

**Doctoral supervisors:** *Assoc. Prof. Margarita Yordanova Panayotova, PhD, and Chief Assistant Zlatka Petkova Vakleva, PhD, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Biology.*

### 1. General presentation of the procedure and the PhD student:

By order No. RD-21-1038 dated 9th June 2022 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury to ensure a procedure for the defense of a dissertation on the subject of *WEB-based education for a healthy lifestyle in Biology and Health Education in 8th grade* for obtaining a doctoral degree in education and science in the Field of Higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching in..., doctoral program "Methods of Teaching in Biology" The author of the dissertation is Biser Sashkov Stanislavov – a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Botany and Biological Education with doctoral supervisors Assoc. Prof. Margarita Yordanova Panayotova, PhD and Chief Assistant Zlatka Petkova Vakleva, PhD, from the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Biology.

The set of paper and electronic materials submitted by doctoral student Biser Sashkov Stanislavov which is in accordance with Article 36 (1) of the Regulations for the Development of scientific staff of the University of Plovdiv, includes the following documents:

- an application to the Rector of the University of Plovdiv to initiate the procedure for the defense of a dissertation work;
- a curriculum vitae in European format;

- a protocol from The Department Council related to reporting the readiness to open the procedure and preliminary discussion of the dissertation work;
- dissertation work;
- abstract of the dissertation;
- a list of scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation;
- copies of scientific publications;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements.

The doctoral student has attached 6 (six) publications on the subject of the dissertation (independently and in co-authorship); Plagiarism Analysis Report and Reference by Andrey Raykov, PhD – Manager of the Educational Content Team at the “Уча.се” website.

I have no negative notes and comments on the documents regarding reduction of their relevant number; absence of document(s) certifying publication; lack of full-text content, etc. Everything is within the absolute limits required. All preliminary procedural and normative rules provided for in this procedure have been complied with.

## **2. Relevance of the subject matter**

The relevance of the issue developed in the dissertation in scientific and scientifically-applied terms can be summarized within the following aspect: Every single educator is looking for options, methods, approaches so that the information they teach can be sustainable for students. In this regard, I will take the liberty of quoting the author: “The proposed study is dictated by the need to optimize the integration of modern information and communication technologies in the field of health education in schools. The use of these technologies in the learning process is the basis for modernizing the education system.” Is there anything better than presenting an approved model?

The degree and levels of relevance of the issue, as well as the specific tasks developed in the dissertation, are summarized by the reasons for choosing this subject (on page 8) and the resulting methods, models and stages of pedagogical research with practical implementation, which clearly deserves admiration. Congratulations to our colleague and to his doctoral supervisors!



This is the place to congratulate Prof. Margarita Yordanova Panayotova, PhD, and Chief Assistant Zlatka Petkova Vakleva, PhD, for the extremely professional and competent guidance and finalization of the scientific work, the subject of which is particularly significant for education, in general, and specifically the health, awareness and competence of the young generation of Bulgarians.

### **3. Knowledge of the issue**

Getting acquainted with the development of the scientific work, one can easily conclude that the doctoral student's insight into the issues is quite evident. He has handled concepts easily, derives definitions, demonstrated prognostic ability. His experience as a long-term active teacher, a consultant in Biology and Chemistry, a participant in numerous projects, as well as the achievements of the students he has mentored demonstrates not only an excellent knowledge of the state of the issue, but also an assessment of gaps, shortages, needs for theoretical and practical, applied, creative, proven material.

### **4. Methodology of the research**

The methodology that has been chosen, with its associated research methods, of overall dissertation research, allows the achievement of the set goal, tasks and hypothesis. The answers to the tasks that have been reached are adequate, up-to-date and successful in the resolution of the issues planned to be dealt with in the dissertation work.

Specifying the characterization and evaluation of the methodology of the dissertation work, what impresses at prima vista is the author's study, with regards to the formulated essence, content and characterization of the competences for building web-based learning for a healthy lifestyle of the younger generation. These studies are followed by the doctoral student in the entire scientific development up to the inferences, the conclusion and the contributions.

### **5. Characterization and evaluation of the dissertation work and contributions**

The content of the work is in the following sequence: Introduction; 3 chapters; Conclusion and inferences; Scientific contributions of the dissertation work; Publications on the subject; A 10-page Bibliography covering a total of 133 sources, of which 80 titles are in Cyrillic, 53 in English and 6 textbooks (the sources used are contemporary and up-to-date in terms of the subject matter), as well as 7 Appendices (the circumstantial and correctly presented



applications, serve as evidentiary, original, material approved in the process of scientific research). The dissertation has a total volume of 201 pages, of which 165 are active text. The note includes 83 tables and 74 figures. The characterization, the analytical review of the content by chapters and the evaluation of the work can be systematized in the following: 1) A theoretical study of the researched issue has been made with derived definitions of the concepts related to the methodological aspects and to "Healthy lifestyle" and the related highlights. 2) Assessment of the nature of the inferences about the credibility of the material. The research work is based on the discovery, implementation and verification of a constructed model of *Web-based learning for the formation of competencies for a healthy lifestyle among students, experimentally tested for its effectiveness in the teaching process for Biology and Health Education in 8th grade*, which makes it not only dissertable, but also provides the possibility of development, looking ahead to the future.

The points of contribution, a total of 9 (nine) presented separately at the theoretical level (two) and at the practical-applied level (seven) are clear, correct and above all – and most importantly – with a focus on application in real practices They fully cover the whole process from its beginnings to its successful finalization. The accompanying arguments and the dissertation development create the impression that the researcher is responsible and committed to the current aspirations and development of the students. This has been proven by the overall development.

*Degree of participation of the doctoral student in the development of the dissertation and the inferences.* In no case can the authorship be doubted. An important fact in the research is that there is an extremely rich empirical provability, through which the presented thesis is approved. This is actually one of the most important highlights for real scientific activity reflecting in production, i.e. *quality* tested through practice.

#### **6. Assessment of the PhD student's publications and personal contributions**

The doctoral student participates with the following scientific production, related to the Scientometric criteria for the minimum national requirements in points by groups of indicators for the various scientific degrees and academic positions to the scientific and teaching activity of the candidates for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions, Field 1.



Pedagogical sciences, in the case for the purpose of obtaining a **doctoral** degree in education and science are as follows:

- *Dissertation work for awarding a doctoral degree in education and science, Group A, Indicator 1* → **50** points.
- *Abstract of the dissertation.*
- *Publications* – **6** in total, of which **4** are co-authored and **2** are independent. Published in the period from 2018 to 2022, with the following indicators:

- *Group D 7. Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes* → **2 independent issues x 10 points = 20 points;**  
**4 co-authored articles x 3.33 points = 14 points.**

Total = 34 points.

In the case of collective publications, the contribution of the doctoral student is clearly reflected. The sum of the indicators of the relevant groups in the content **fully meets** the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, paragraph 2 and 3 of ADASRB and article 1a, paragraph 1 of the Regulations for the Application of ADASRB for Field 1. Pedagogical sciences, Professional field 1.2. Pedagogy.

In the publications (articles and reports), the educational model which has been approved and exposed as scientific information, makes an excellent impression. Quantitative and qualitative data has been reflected and analyzed in an extremely precise manner and comprehensively according to all criteria, indicators and target groups, which take part in the assessment.

### **7. Abstract of the dissertation**

The content and quality of the abstract (with a total volume of 32 pages) follows the structure and reflects the main results achieved in the dissertation, as well as the inferences, recommendations, and scientific contributions of the scientific work. My conclusion is that it meets all the standard requirements for a synthesized and adequate, analytical-systematic development of the primary document, the scientific text, as well as the objective reflection of the content of the dissertation research. The scientific and technical requirements according to the relevant national and internal regulations for its design and presentation in the paper version and in the digital form as an on-line publication have been complied with.

## **8. Recommendations for future use of the dissertation contributions and results**

The scientific production (dissertation, abstract and publications) provided for participation in the competition does not contain any weaknesses that would detract from its merits.

As a recommendation, I can note the following: it would be good for the doctoral student to expand his participation in international educational projects. That is, to have an aspiration for/to popularize the results of the research activity in publications in English and other languages. Research like the one we present here needs to be "heard by" and made "visible to" the national and global scientific community. That is, for future use of the scientific and scientifically-applied contributions of the dissertation research in a theoretical and applied-in-practice aspect, be it in project activity, educational-applications, etc.

### **In this regard, let me ask the following questions:**

- Did you encounter any difficulties while developing the dissertation? What was the nature of these difficulties and why did they come about?
- How do you see the possible development of "*Web-based Learning for a Healthy Lifestyle in Biology and Health education*" for the other grades? In your future specific work (from here on), how will you develop it further because the amount of work you have done so far is quite substantial)?
- Specify, in your opinion, the difficulties or the factors that could hinder the mass, I would say national level implementation of your concept, that is, you have an opportunity, but...or is there no "but"?

## **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation **contains scientific, scientifically-applied and applied results, which represent an original contribution to science and meet all the** requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and the Regulations for the Application of ADASRB and the relevant Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.



The dissertation work shows that the doctoral student Biser Sashkov Stanislavov **possesses** in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty Teaching Methodology in Biology, **demonstrating** qualities and skills for independent conduct of scientific research.

Due to the above, I confidently give my *positive assessment* of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation work, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I *propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award the "doctoral degree" in education and science* to Biser Sashkov Stanislavov in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching in ..., doctoral program "Methods of Teaching in Biology".

11th July 2022

**Standpoint written by:**

Town of Ruse

(Prof. DSc Yulia Doncheva)