

OPINION

**from Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences Lidiya Zdravkova Tsvetanova-Churukova –
Associate Professor at South-West University „Neofit Rilski“**

of materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position
„Associate Professor“ of University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“

in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences;
professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Innovations in the education)

In the competition for „Associate Professor“ announced at „State Gazette“, № 92 of 18 November 2022 and website of the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ for the needs of Department „Botany and biological education“ under the Biological Faculty as a candidate participates Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva from Plovdiv.

According to Order № RD-21-327 of 15 February 2023 of the Rector of University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition to hold the academic position „Associate Professor“.

Only the candidate Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva, holding her current academic position under a labour agreement with the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ from 2004, submitted documents for participation in the competition. Before that, from 1994, without interruption, until now, she also took academic positions under a labour agreement with the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ – firstly „assistant“ and after that „senior assistant“.

The submitted set of paper and electronic materials by Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Vakleva is in compliance with the Rules for the development of academic staff of the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“. The candidate applied considerable volume of scientific production for her participation in the competition: a total of 91 scientific works, from which 2 monographs and 69 published articles and reports concern the topic of the competition, 13 publications are outside the topic of the competition and 7 publications are connected with the preparation and defence of the dissertation for scientific educational degree „Doctor“. Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Vakleva transformed her innovative didactic methodical ideas practically in the training of students at national level as a co-author of a textbook on Biology and health education for Xth grade of Publishing House „Prosveta“ and four training aids used in the school network. She is also an author of 7 university training aids.

Seen by an official note with outgoing № NPD492/05 July 2019 issued by Unit „Scientific and project activity“ of the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ (UP), the candidate in the competition Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Vakleva managed 2 projects before receiving the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ and participated in the scientific team of 7 projects, after receiving the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“. Seen by a certificate of 15 September 2011 issued by Scientific research centre under the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Vakleva took participation in 2 projects after receiving educational and scientific degree „Doctor“. Seen by an Agreement of 18 August 2012 between the Ministry of education, youth and science as an Assignor on the one hand, and Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Vakleva as an Assignee on the other hand, Ch. Asst. Dr. Vakleva participated in 1 project after receiving the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“.

The training pedagogical activity and preparation of the candidate fully comply to a person, having academic rank. As I mentioned above, she has a number of published and used training aids in the educational process. She has developed new training courses on scholar disciplines, as follows: 3 for compulsory (Competence approach and innovations in the education, Health education and Ecological ethics); 9 for elective (Pedagogical ethics, Communicative skills, Ecological education, Education for sustainable development, Education for ecological ethics and sustainable lifestyle, Integrative education, Digital competence and digital creativity, Ecological aspects of the sustainable development and Medical business practices) and 2 facultative (Career development of the teacher and Drugs, health and society). From the academic 2010/2011 year until now, without interruption, she has been giving lectures to students of bachelor's degree and master's degree, in the system of postgraduate qualification and additional professional qualification of teachers, and **in fact has accumulated considerable associate professor's practice**. She is also a trainer of teachers to RAABE Bulgaria. She was a scientific manager of 12 successfully defended graduates. She has experience in scientific management of PhD students. She has a total of 50 participations with reports in national, international and university conferences, training seminars, forums and round tables.

The main personal contributions of the candidate are in her monograph „Innovations in the education“ issued by UP in 2022, which has the qualities of a habilitation work. As a result of the extensive research in training activities of students, in training activities of pupils and activities related to increase the qualification of pedagogical staff, a complex of theoretical experimental pedagogical models is built. The research was held in 10 thematic areas, most of which are extremely relevant. The monograph provides evidence of the effectiveness of pedagogical models. The subject

of the monographic study fully corresponds to the announced competition. The monographic study of Ch. Asst. Dr. Zl. Vakleva is original and summarizes the results of her multiannual experimental activity dedicated to innovations in the education, and it is in compliance with the European and national priorities in this field. It distinguishes with the variety of officially approved in the practice innovative models, with its highest scientific theoretical level. A big practical value has the experiment for development of critical thinking of students, as well as the ideas of competency-oriented education. It is about complex pedagogical innovations which the author realized in her proper practice as university teacher and in the training of students of the different educational levels. The effectiveness of the model she created *for formation and diagnostics of ecological competences* of university students biologists, and with a pedagogical profile, has been empirically confirmed, and it is a serious contribution in didactics of the higher education. Another extremely valuable model is related to *an experiment of the role of the integrative ecological education, interdisciplinary connections* in the training of chemistry and biology in order to build the relevant competences in students of IXth and Xth grade. *The importance of interactive didactic technologies for interdisciplinary ecological education* is revealed experimentally. The model „*education for sustainable development*“ is also supported experimentally in the practice of students in master's degree on the subject „Man and nature (VIth grade) and the subject „Biology and health education“ (Xth grade). A significant contribution to the theory and practice of the innovations in education is *the model for training in electronic environment and for the role of information technologies and web-based educational resources* in the training on Biology and health education. I cannot not to underline that in the monograph the problem about the innovations in Bulgarian school is interpreted in depth and conceptually. But at the same time I cannot not to point out that the competence approach is not accepted unconditionally, and even it is rejected by some authors of scientific works in the country and abroad, including also by representatives of the Bulgarian sociological thought (for example by Pepka Boyadzhieva). They think that this is one of „the Trojan horses“ in the education with expressed destructive effect.¹ This point of view, however, distinguishes from the position of Ch. Asst. Dr. Zl. Vakleva. It is undisputable that work should be done for development of functional culture of trainees and respective culture of the intellectual work, without opposing the procedural activity component of the scholar content of its

¹ (See. The collective monograph under the redaction of A.M.Osipov „The school in the paper abyss: the crisis of the information flows in the education“. – The great Novgorod: OOO „Tipographia „Vikont“, 2020. – p. 351; ISBN 978-5-6042052-1-1; p. 94 - 111).

theoretical component. Prof. M. Andreev, whose monograph „Integrative tendencies in the training“ is quoted by Ch. Asst. Dr. Zl. Vakleva, she thinks that the balance between the processes of differentiation and integration in the educational content is violated in the contemporaneity and that the integrative tendencies and holistic approach should be leading, but unfortunately this is not the case and they are difficult for implementation, because *there are not developed specific organizational forms to realize the interdisciplinarity*. This gap was filled in during the last decades in our didactic literature with new studies on the topic in the country and abroad. The technology of the contemporary training has been significantly enriched with the integration of information technologies in the educational process on all subject matters through the use of electronic manuals and wide range of educational resources of different platforms.

There are also scientific personal contributions in the monograph of the candidate „Ecological education – vision for the future“ issued by „Macros“ in 2011. As a result of a theoretical study with an international scope, for the first time the structure of a lesson is analyzed, using ecologically oriented interactive didactic techniques in the training. Models of pedagogical studies realized in the practice are systematized and illustrated with examples. All fields of ecological education are developed: history, theory and practice. The content of the main concepts is precisely defined and the interdisciplinary nature, and essence of the ecological education, and the role of value ethical aspects in the interpretation of this issue, as well as the innovations in this field are revealed.

The candidate has also other scientific contributions, containing in her publications, a part of which is in co-authorship. Her theoretical contributions are related as well with the civil education, with the optimization of the different types of lessons on biology, health education and ecology, as well as in the system of distance learning. Her studies are also productive in connection with the socialization of children deprived of parental care.

I fully also accept the self-assessment of Ch. Asst. Dr. Zl. Vakleva for her practical applied contributions. They are correctly and accurately formulated.

Seen by the list of established citations and references of scientific works applied to the documentation for the announced competition of Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva, the same was cited in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in world famous database with scientific information, she was cited in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review, as well as in non-refereed journals with scientific review.

I take the liberty of recommending to the candidate in her future scientific research work to differentiate more clearly the specifics of teaching of students and the

specifics of teaching in adults, having in mind the differences that exist between age groups.

The presented scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of the dissertation to acquire educational and scientific degree „doctor“, as a whole comply with the announced competition. The scientific applied and applied contributions are more than enough to take the academic position „Associate Professor“ at a prestigious high school. The candidate Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva meets all the requirements of the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Rules for its application and the respective Rules of the UP; she meets to the minimum national requirements (and exceeds them considerably); there is no proven plagiarism in scientific works; there is a classroom and other teaching workload provided for the announced competition.

Taking into consideration everything stated above, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend to the scientific jury to prepare and present a report-proposal to the respective faculty council for election of Ch. Asst. Dr. Zlatka Petkova Vakleva of the academic position „Associate Professor“ at the University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“ in: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences; professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Innovations in the education).

28 March 2023

OPINION PREPARED BY:

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