

## **REVIEW**

from prof. Dora Levterova - Gadjalova, DsC, PU "Paisiy Hilendarski"  
of the materials submitted for participation in the competition  
to occupy the academic position of "associate professor"  
at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv  
by: field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences;  
professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy  
(Theory of education and didactics - Innovative educational models)

In the competition for "docent", announced in the State Gazette, no. 32 of 09 April 2024 and on the Internet page of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Pedagogy and Education Management at the Faculty of Education, Diana Minkova Dimitrova from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Faculty of Education participated as a candidate.

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

By order No. PD-11-1181 dated 07.06.2024 of the Rector of the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of 'associate professor' in the PU in the field of higher education Pedagogical Sciences 1.2 Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics), announced for the needs of the Department of Pedagogy and Education Management at the Faculty of Education

To participate in the announced competition, only one candidate, ch. PhD Diana Dimitrova from Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The presented by Ch. Associate Professor Diana Dimitrova, a set of paper materials is in accordance with the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of the PU, and includes the following documents:

- Application form to the rector for admission to participate in the competition;
- resume in European format;

- copies of two diplomas for higher education with the acquired educational and qualification degree "master";
- copy of diploma for educational and scientific degree "doctor";
- list of scientific works;
- scientific works (copies of publications);
- certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
- certificate of compliance with additional faculty requirements;
- annotations of the materials under Art. 65. from PRASPU in Bulgarian and English;
- self-assessment of contributions in Bulgarian and English;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
- certificate of work experience;
- documents for the academic work;
- documents for research work;
- certificates for teaching mobility and certificates for participation in international scientific conferences.

The candidate Ch. assistant PhD Diana Dimitrova. has applied a total of 15 scientific papers, 1 habilitation thesis, 1 monograph that is not presented as a habilitation thesis, 4 articles published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - of which only 3 are virtually visible in Web of science, 9 articles published in scientific publications, non-refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. The distribution of the scientific works by relevant headings, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 6 in Bulgarian and 9 in a foreign language - 5 in English, 2 in Russian and 2 in Ukrainian. All submitted scientific papers are accepted for review.

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

PhD Dimitrova graduated from the Faculty of Education of the University of Plovdiv with a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree. Since 2016, he holds a Doctorate in Pedagogy. He has been working at the "Paisiy Hilendarski" PU as an assistant in Pedagogy since 2015, and since 2018 as a chief assistant in Pedagogy at the "Pedagogy and Education Management" department. In the period from 2007 to 2015, she worked as an English language teacher at the

elementary level. She participated in 6 (six) national, educational and scientific research projects, mostly for the "Scientific Research" Fund at PU "Paisiy Hilendarski", one international project and one National Program. He took part in 6 (six) international scientific conferences with reports on the problems of pedagogical animation and interactive teaching methods and thus multiplied his scientific achievements in the field of innovative educational models.

She has lectured several times under the Erasmus+ program at Charles University, Faculty of Education, Prague.

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

#### ***Assessment of educational and pedagogical activity***

Assistant professor Diana Dimitrova teaches pedagogical disciplines (Theory of education and didactics, Paradigms of education, History of education, Pedagogical animation, etc.) with developed curricula in specialties for obtaining a bachelor's degree in OCS and OCS "Master". From the presented report it is clear that the necessary number of study hours are available to cover classroom employment under the announced competition for "docent". The teaching activity of the candidate is provided with over 1000 hours of classroom employment, from lecture courses on "Pedagogy", seminar exercises on "Pedagogy", current and internship practices.

Candidate PhD Dimitrova has additional developed study programs "Interactive learning methods", "Management of relationships in an educational environment", "Pedagogical animation", "Leadership, mentoring, coaching", on which he conducts training for qualification courses of specialists at the Department for the qualification and professional development of pedagogical specialists at "Paisiy Hilendarski" PU.

Under her guidance, 12 graduates of the OCS "Bachelor", "Master", one graduate of the DK ChilPhDen's Teacher and one teacher for the acquisition of the PCS have successfully defended their theses, upcoming defense of 3 students of which: 1 "Bachelor" and 2 "masters".

To the candidate's proactive activities can be added her participation in the Occupational Safety and Health Commission and in the Commission for checking the speech and communication abilities of candidate students.

The teaching activity of PhD Dimitrova is highly valued and she is a guest lecturer on the course "Pedagogy" at UHT - University of Food Technology, Plovdiv and at VUARR - Higher School of Agribusiness and Regional Development, Plovdiv.

***Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activity***

The habilitation thesis (NT 1) of PhD Dimitrova is dedicated to pedagogical animation for the purposes of training as an effective approach for forming an educational environment, tailored to the needs, opportunities and interests of students in primary school. The essence and main characteristics of pedagogical animation are discussed and presented. The concept of "animation" in scientific literature and its historical development, the essence of animation in the context of learning through entertainment are examined. The types of animation and animation activity are presented and discussed in detail. The issue related to the purposeful and constructive application of animation in education, placing students in the position of actively acting and thinking people, is discussed. In the monograph, the establishment of the effectiveness of the application of pedagogical animation in primary school education and the analysis of the results is presented as an idea and as an empirical study. The monograph presents the possibilities of learning to be an interesting experience for students, which gives them the opportunity to feel pleasant emotions and learn imperceptibly and fun.

The additionally presented monograph (HT 2) is dedicated to interactivity in the teaching of English in primary school. With scientific expertise, fascinatingly and in an easily understandable and readable language, PhD Dimitrova presents the problems of innovation and interactivity in education through characteristics of the conceptual thesaurus, historical development and with a direction for a positive change in education and increasing efficiency and improving its quality. It thoroughly presents the ideas of innovation, interactivity in learning as an innovation, given the need to innovate traditional forms, methods and means of learning. Presents the essence and characteristics of learning methods with an emphasis on interactive methods, as a modern form of active methods. Examines the specifics of the application of interactive methods in foreign language learning by presenting significant teaching technologies for language mastery.

PhD Dimitrova's articles are in two main spaces:

- Innovative models of education (HT3), (HT5), (HT7), (HT8), (HT10), (HT14);
- Interactive learning methods (HT4), (HT6), (HT9), (HT11), (HT12), (HT13), (HT15).

Both spaces feature pedagogical animation and its application to create more innovative models of education that meet the preferences of the modern generation of students.

In the articles, scientific and scientific-applied problems related to:

- the theoretical positioning of animation in many fields with emphasis in the educational space. The types of animations and their significance in relation to education are described. (HT1)

- the features of the innovative educational environment and its importance in relation to educational activities in primary school, with a view to increasing the quality of education, thereby increasing its developmental effect. (HT2) (HT3);

- the nature, content and main characteristics of interactive learning as an innovation. (HT2) (HT4) (HT5);

- in-depth theoretical analysis of interactive learning realized through the application of interactive methods aimed at achieving effective and full assimilation of knowledge, formation and development of skills that allow the learner (student) to become a full-fledged subject in the process of pedagogical interaction. (HT2)

- the essence, content and significance of interactive methods, intended mainly for educational purposes in school to renew the learning process, increase its attractiveness and form motivation in students for learning. (HT4) (HT5) (HT10) (HT15);

- a comprehensive review of the possibilities of applying interactive methods as an opportunity for effective learning through experience and learning at different levels. (HT4) (HT5) (HT10) (HT15);

- the possibilities of visualizing the educational content through the application of interactive methods in the teaching of English in primary school, with the aim of visualization which increases the degree of perception of the cognitive content. (HT7) (HT10) (HT15);

- research and presentation of the possibilities of pedagogical animation to enrich the pedagogical interaction with animation elements and stimulate learning motivation based on learning through fun and experience. (HT1) (HT6) (HT9) (HT11);

- research based on tracking and revealing the possibilities of educational animation in forming the aesthetic culture in the personality of children in kindergarten and primary school. (HT13);

- research based on tracking and revealing the possibilities of musical play as a means of laying the foundations of aesthetic culture in the formation of the personality of preschool chilPhDen. Emphasis is placed on aesthetic perception and aesthetic attitude to the world, as components of aesthetic culture, which are set through a cycle of musical and artistic-aesthetic activities. (HT8);

- a study tracking the possibilities of the innovative educational environment, used as a prevention factor when Roma chilPhDen PhDop out of school. Emphasis is placed on changing the position of students, supported and assisted by the teacher, as an alternative to traditional education and a good prerequisite for preventing PhDopping out of the educational institution. (HT3) (HT10);

- approved author's model for early foreign language learning through a combination of interactive methods to increase the effectiveness of the educational process, overcome difficulties in learning a foreign language and stimulate communication between participants in the process. (HT2) (HT14);

- author's system for measuring the achievements of students in learning a foreign language. (HT2);

- an author's model for the implementation of pedagogical animation in training through the application of animation elements. The model includes methods and means of applying animation in education, offers sample options and brief methodical guidelines. A wide range of games and digital resources for learning through animation are also offered. (HT1).

***Fulfillment of minimum national requirements***

The candidate Ch. assistant professor PhD Diana Dimitrova has attached a report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements, from which it is clear that she has a total of 790 points with a required minimum of 400 points. The distribution by groups of indicators is as follows:

<b>Group of indicators</b>	<b>Minimum number of points for associate professor</b>	<b>Actual number of points of the candidate</b>
A	50	<b>50</b>
B	–	–
B	100	<b>100</b>

Г	200	<b>310</b>
Д	50	220
Е	–	110
<b>Total points:</b>	400	<b>790</b>

It is evident from the Table that there is a full coverage of the minimum national requirements and even a significant excess of the points in indicators D and D. In addition, there are 110 items under indicator E.

#### **4. Contributions**

The contributions to the scientific production and research activity of candidate PhD Dimitrova can be structured in two areas:

- *Scientific:*

- An in-depth interpretation of innovations in education was made by tracking, improving and improving the content of education during their introduction and application.

- An in-depth analysis of the nature and effectiveness of interactive learning is presented, implying the application of interactive methods to create conditions for active interaction between participants in the educational process.

- The features of pedagogical animation and its application as an innovation in education to increase the effectiveness of the educational activity, the easier assimilation of the educational content and the enrichment of pedagogical interactions with chilPhDen of primary school age are presented.

- An interpretation of inclusive processes and monitoring of changes in attitudes towards the socialization and education of chilPhDen and students of Roma ethnicity has been introduced.

- *Applied:*

- Technologies have been developed for the application of interactive methods and pedagogical animation for innovative presentation of educational content. Indication of models of good practices and recommendations in the work and education of chilPhDen and students in primary school.

- The essence and specificity of the innovative educational environment adequate to the new modern reality and the needs of the students through the effective application of interactive methods has been clarified.

- The theoretical and organizational issues related to the optimization and offering of innovative models for the inclusion of pedagogical animation in the learning process as one of the modern ways to achieve a new type of pedagogical interaction, which is realized with the forms, means and methods of learning, have been clarified. enriched with animated elements for the formation and development of the student's overall personality.

- The essence and specifics of the influence of pedagogical animation on the formation and development of significant social skills among students of primary school age with the help of animation are described.

### **5. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution**

The formulated contributions and obtained results of theoretical and empirical studies conducted by PhD Dimitrova are her personal merit. With scientific initiative, creativity and conscientiousness, candidate PhD Dimitrova studies, researches and analyzes with originality the innovative models of education, their interactive application and their animating aspects.

### **6. Critical remarks and recommendations**

As a recommendation, I can point out - to publish her scientific results in journals with an impact factor, so that her scientific contributions are recognizable among wider scientific communities around the world.

### **7. Personal impressions**

I have known PhD Dimitrova since the period when he became an assistant in the "Pedagogy and Education Management" department as a searching, innovative, correct and well-intentioned person. These personal qualities of hers undoubtedly support her creative achievements in her scientific and teaching activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by PhD Diana Minkova Dimitrova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria



(ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv ".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the ONS "doctor". There are scientific and applied contributions in the candidate's works. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of PhD Diana Minkova Dimitrova are unquestionable.

The results achieved by PhD Diana Minkova Dimitrova in her educational and research activities fully correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Education, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the PU for the application of ZRASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the election of PhD Diana Minkova Dimitrova to the academic position of "associate professor" in the "Paisiy Hilendarski" PU in the professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Innovative educational models).

04 Septembert 2024

Reviewer

(Prof. Dora Levterova – Gadjalova, DsC)