

## OPINION

by **Nataliya Ivanova Vitanova** - Professor, Doctor of Sciences from Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" in: area of higher education 1 Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2 Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Innovative educational models)

In the competition for "associate professor", announced in the State Gazette, No. 39 of 09/04/2024 and on the internet page of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" for the needs of the "Pedagogy and Education Management" department at the Faculty of Education, Diana Minkova Dimitrova from the Paisiy Hilendarski University of Plovdiv participated as a candidate.

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate**

By order No. R21-1181 dated 07.06.2024 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski", I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Plovdiv in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Innovative educational models), announced for the needs of the department "Pedagogy and management of education" at the Faculty of Pedagogy at the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski".

To participate in the announced competition, the only candidate Diana Minkova Dimitrova from Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" submitted documents.

The set of paper materials presented by Diana Minkova Dimitrova is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Plovdiv University, and includes the following documents:

- a list of scientific works and the scientific works themselves;
- reference of compliance with the minimum national requirements;
- reference of compliance with the additional requirements for admission to participation in a competitive course for the academic position of "associate professor" at the Pedagogical Faculty of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski";
- annotations of scientific works in Bulgarian;
- annotations of scientific works in English;
- documents for the scientific research work;
- documents for the academic work;
- self-assessment of scientific contributions;
- list of citations;
- CV.

Candidate Diana Minkova Dimitrova submitted a total of 15 scientific works, of which 2 monographs; 4 articles in refereed and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (Web of Science and Scopus), 3 are in a foreign language (English) and 9 publications in non-refereed editions with scientific review or edited collective volumes. The mentioned publications meet the minimum national requirements and the national scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position "associate professor". They are an indicator of the candidate's activity and interests. With the exception of two publications (article № 7 and № 8 from the list), all others are concentrated in the field of pedagogical animation and interactive methods. This extremely large thematic concentration is both more positive and negative. It is positive because it protects the author from fragmentation and multidirectionality in his research searches and is a guarantee of completeness

and thoroughness when presenting the author's theses and arguments. For this reason, the author's insights are distinguished by considerable focus and depth. The following facts can also be highlighted as positive: 1. the articles submitted for review do not repeat the content of the monographs; 2. a reasonable balance between language accessibility and scholarly style has been found in all publications. It is negative because it significantly limits the research perimeter.

According to the presented Certificate of compliance with minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor", chief assistant doctor Diana Dimitrova collects 790 points. They also include the points from indicator E, which does not apply to occupying the academic position of "associate professor". In reality, the points are 680 (minus 110 points from indicator E), which are completely sufficient, since the required number of points for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" according to the minimum national requirements is 400.

## **2. Personal impressions**

I have known Diana Dimitrova since 2016. She is distinguished by a keen sense of novelty and an experimental spirit, with persistence and purposefulness in search of her research field, hard work and curiosity, collegiality and responsiveness.

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

Diana Minkova Dimitrova started working at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" in 2012, initially as a part-time assistant, from 2015 she worked as an assistant, and from 2018 to today as a main assistant. She has a completed musical education and has an excellent command of the English language. She participated in a total of 10 national and international projects. She gave lectures under the "Erasmus +" program at Charles University, Faculty of Education, Praha. Leads many disciplines from the pedagogical cycle in educational qualification degree "Bachelor" and educational qualification degree "Master". Under her guidance, 15

students successfully defended their theses. She has developed curricula for various disciplines in the educational qualification degree "Bachelor" and educational qualification degree "Master" and for qualification courses for specialists at the Department for Qualification and Professional Development of Pedagogical Specialists at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski". Participates in 2 commissions - Commission on occupational safety and health and Commission for checking speech and communication abilities.

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

The scientific production with which Principal Assistant Doctor Diana Dimitrova participated in the announced competition corresponds to the scientific specialty and its specifics.

The monograph "Pedagogical animation in education" (2023) is the main habilitation work. The presented monographic work is a complete author's concept, in which the concepts and views related to the issue under consideration are searched for and presented with arguments. In a theoretical-empirical study, generally known and not so well-known facts related to the animation approach in education are presented and evidence is sought for the effectiveness of pedagogical animation in the education of primary school-aged students. The presented and commented productions sharpen the view and perceptions of some modern failures in education, which can become a foundation when looking for opportunities to overcome them. The style and language are scientifically sound.

The literature reference lists 110 sources, including web based ones, 72 of them are in Cyrillic, 38 in a foreign language. The author is well acquainted with the literature on the issue under consideration. This is a prerequisite for him to justify, argue and defend his theses well enough.

The monograph "Interactivity in the teaching of English in primary school" is at a high professional level and shows a detailed knowledge of the various sides of

the issue under consideration. The intended ideas for interactive learning correspond to modern educational paradigms and the needs of digital-born students. The monograph presents the design and results of an experimental study that concerns the application of interactive methods for teaching English in primary school. The literary sources used are a total of 178, including electronic resources. Of these, 123 are in Cyrillic and 55 in Latin.

Both monographs are well structured. In them, current problems for pedagogical animation and interactive learning are presented, significant trends are analyzed. Here, points of intersection between them, their integrative nature and contribution value should be highlighted.

The rest of the presented publications are socially determined and up-to-date. They respond to specific socio-practical orders and solve certain general pedagogical problems.

In general, the scientific output of Diana Dimitrova is distinguished by a high degree of thematic concentration, topical relevance and professional thoroughness. They demonstrate scientific competence, precision, and good faith.

The scientific works with which Principal Assistant Doctor Diana Dimitrova participated in the competition are her personal research and achievements. The substantive analysis of theories and practices in the field of pedagogical animation and interactive methods, their characterization and comparison, reveals and proves the possibilities for positive change in this area. My assessment of the scientific works of chief assistant doctor Diana Dimitrova is **positive**.

The citations related to the publications of chief assistant doctor Diana Dimitrova are 16 (traditionally reported). They are from persons outside the authors' collectives in which Diana Dimitrova participates and are in the period 2018-2024.

Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the creative production submitted for participation in the competition - I accept the

scientific contributions made through the self-evaluation of the chief assistant doctor Diana Dimitrova. They are adequate and objective.

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

- Some of the conclusions made in the monograph "Pedagogical animation in education" (p.108) do not derive from empirical research.

- It would be better if the text after the analysis of the results, in the same monograph, is presented in the first chapter.

- Texts would significantly improve their quality if 1 person, plural were avoided. many h. and the parasitic words (in this line of thought, of course, after all, etc.).

**Questions:** 1.) How was the effectiveness of the learning activity measured (hypothesis, p. 7, monograph "Pedagogical animation in training")?

2.) Is comprehensive development of children possible (p. 20, monograph "Pedagogical animation in training")?

3.) How are pedagogical and didactic animation similar and different?

**Recommendation:** For greater visibility of scientific results to be published in Web of Science and Scopus editions.

### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by Principal Assistant Doctor Diana Minkova Dimitrova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the relevant Regulations of the University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and the competition for chief assistant.

The analysis made of the teaching, research and scientific activity, as well as the presented certificate of compliance with the scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position of "associate professor", present Diana Minkova Dimitrova as a good professional, purposeful and conscientious researcher, with sustainable scientific interests. The candidate in the competition fulfills the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor". I have no doubt about plagiarism in scientific work and publications. The ideas developed in the presented publications, the contributions of the author in the field of pedagogical animation and interactive learning, the academic and research activity of chief assistant doctor Diana Minkova Dimitrova give me the reason to give my **positive opinion** and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the election of chief assistant doctor Diana Minkova Dimitrova to the academic position of "associate professor" at the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" in professional direction 1.2 Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Innovative educational models).

13.08.2024

Shumen

Prepared the opinion: .....

(Prof. Nataliya Vitanova, DSc)