

REVIEW

by Prof. Julieta Ivanova Savova, PhD

for a promotion to a “**full professor**” as a tenure track academic position
of the candidate: Associate Professor Radka Emilova Vassileva, PhD

Department of Didactics, the Faculty of Pedagogy,
University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Scientific field 1. Pedagogical sciences

Professional area 1.2. Pedagogy

Specialty: Theory of education and didactics (Pedagogy, and Animation and Education)

1. General information about the candidate

As the submitted dossier by the candidate Associate professor Radka Emilova Vassileva, PhD shows, she has an impressive professional career, teaching and social experience. If only her academic career is taken into account, she started in 1986 and has already 34 year professional service going to a promotion from the entry level of assistant professor to the chief assistant professor positions. Her academic promotion to a tenure track position of Associate professor took place in 2007.

During this period of time Radka Vassileva established herself not only as an academic representative in the pedagogical field, but also as a widely known agent of change in social and educational fields. In fact, the sustainable, consistent and vividly memorable professional development of Radka Vassileva is entirely logical: completion of secondary education as a

top student with a gold medal, continuing educational upgrading to a college (at that time a teacher's institute), successful completion of bachelors and master's degree levels, and later on a successful defense of doctoral thesis and awarding with doctoral degree (PhD) in 1998. Her well rounded and holistic development is not limited; neither is measured only by academic criteria.

Radka Vassileva has an impressive record of civic presence and activities which can be traced back to the early years after the 1989 political turnover and changes. She was elected a Member of Parliament (MP) in the National Assembly. Her experience as MP helped her to recognize the further importance of civic education. As a result, she developed in co-authorship a modern methodological guide for those teachers who teach civic education.

This high civic sensitivity and spirits continue to be rediscovered in all subsequent years of personal and professional affirmation of the candidate. Associate professor, Dr Radka Vassileva, has been the manager and creative director of the Educational Theater and the Fun Science Theater since the mid-1990s (1995). For the entire period of time so far, she works with an impressive gathering group of 200 teachers annually. From 1995 to 2020, there are over 100,000 spectators of theater performances. She is working systematically with about 25 schools offering innovate author's program with interactive performances for elementary school students.

Associate Professor Radka Vasileva is also a successful and memorable trainer in programs for teachers, principals, majors and other education-related actors.

She is also a participant in many educational projects (9 research and training projects under European programs). She herself is the leader of 2 projects. She is a member of the board of directors of "Academy for Children" at University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski "(2018). Her popularity and recognition are not only on a national but also on an international level. From 2018, she became a member of the Board of Education Journal Editors (USA).

Associate Professor Radka Vassileva has two successfully defended and already working in the academic field doctoral students, and as of the date of the competition (her promotion to the tenure track position of "full professor") she is supervising 3 more doctoral students.

2. General description and brief evaluation of the procedural details of tenure track position "full professor"

The submitted full dossier by the Associate professor Radka Emilova Vassileva corresponds with the legal requirements concerning academic positions promotions, incl. Regulations of the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski ". Her major publication - the monograph "Art animation in education. Teachers and Students in Dramatic Interaction "and the entire list of accompanying publications fully cover the required

quantitative and qualitative characteristics of documentation for the tenure track promotion at that level.

All the work and publications of Associate Professor. Dr. Radka Vassileva are her original accomplishments. The productive integration of philosophical-historical knowledge, socio-psychological and art-oriented approaches along with their pedagogical and educational dimensions nourishes author's inexhaustible creative and discovering orientation, and boosts her endless efforts of creating new attractive ideas and evergreen practices. In this way her academic work and wide practical applications are to be confirmed as unique and widely recognizable across the educational and art communities. The author herself is also considered as unique and highly creative.

My overall positive evaluation of the uniqueness and creativity of Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva, my high appreciation and acknowledgement of author's research, teaching and broad academic skills and accomplishments along with her social skills and competencies are additionally based on the demonstrated by her convincing scientific and creative reflections on other's ideas, approaches, models and practices where technological solutions discovered in the specialized scientific and interdisciplinary publications are modified and transformed by Radka Vassileva for the needs of the art animation.

If we assume that the model of art animation in education, which Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva creates, develops and practices in pedagogical and educational contexts, is a kind of empirical verification of

the value and meaning of the integrated conceptual constructions that she uses, then in the overall evaluation of the value of her publications, and especially the key publication - the monograph “Art animation in education. Teachers and Students in Dramatic Interaction” we should put again a strong emphasis on the author’s creativity.

In all author’s publications the language of writing is academically sustained. The style is scientifically sound; a precise conceptual meta-language is used.

The submitted dossier on which the tenure track position “full professor” is based also shows that the projected and planned academic teaching of the candidate is 360 hours. (5 academic courses, four of which are required and one is elective).

All formal procedures and steps related to the promotion to tenure track position “full professor” for Radka Vassileva are based on and completed accordingly the existing administrative and legal frames. No procedural deviations neither missing documentation are found.

3. Author’s publications

A list of 18 publications in both the Cyrillic and the Latin languages related to the promotion to a “full professor” position is presented. In the list there are two monographs:

- “Art animation in education. Teachers and students in dramatic interaction ”(2020). University of Sofia Publishing House. (key publication),”and

- “Model of educational drama in school.” (2014). University of Sofia Publishing House.

Some of the other publications included in the dossier are in referenced and indexed scientific sources, included in world-famous databases with scientific information (4 issues in the journal “Pedagogy”):

- Motivation of teachers to apply new ideas in education (2016) . In Journal “Pedagogy”, year LXXXVIII, #.2, 2016, pp.197-210.

- How to turn a classroom into a stage where children learn. Drama techniques. (2012). In: Journal “ Pedagogy”, # 7 / 2012, p. 1146-1166.

- Educational theater on the stage of non-formal education (2018). In: Journal “Pedagogy”, # 1, 2018.

- Strategies for organizing differentiated learning (2018) In Journal “Pedagogy”, # 5, 2018.

Other publications (12) are in the group of articles and reports, published in open-access (non-referenced) editions with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes and in textbooks, manuals and teacher’s books:

- Holidays and performances at school (2008) In: Collection of articles. "The holidays in the life of the young students (selected scenarios for conducting celebrations) ”S., 2008, pp. 9-19. ISBN 978-954-9493-5-3

- Theory and pedagogical practice (2009),In: Collection of articles "My pedagogical everyday life ”, S., 2009, pp. 9-15., ISBN 978-954- 9493-21-

- The moral upbringing of children in the social context action (2010), In: Collection of articles "Spiritual and moral development of students from the

initial stage of basic education" S., Publisher Stars, 2010, pp. 7-12., ISBN 978-954-07-3569-6

- Neue akzente im Bulgarischen bildungssystem (2010), In: : Collection of articles „Bildung und Religion im Wandel”, Bulgarien-Osterreich

(Hg.),Publisher. АБАГАР., 2010, pp 121-128, ISBN 978- 954-427-867-0

- Educational comics projects and research (2016), In: Collection of papers “Pedagogy and social work in the 21st century - challenges and perspectives”, Jubilee conference of FP, University of Sofia "St. Kl.

Ohridski ”, S., 2016, pp. 152-160, ISBN 978-954-07- 4149-9

- New ideas in education, born of Jose Ortega and Gasset.

Education, learning and faith in creativity. (2018). In: Journal: ”Management

and Education” No.3 / 2018 ISSN 13126121, Vol. 14, # 3, pp. 119-125.

- Basic rules for the design of educational animation. Project

“Fun Science” (2016). In: Collection of articles “A New Idea in Education, Bulgaria”, Burgas, BSU, 2016, pp 249- 257, ISBN 978-619-7126-28-0

- The animated images in the art animation designed for

educational goals (2018) In: Collection of articles “130 years of university pedagogy”, Publisher “Prosveta”, C. 2018. pp.131- 145, ISBN 978-954-01-3930-2

- Ideas for the cognitive potential of role-playing games (2018) In:

Collection of articles “The child and pedagogy, S. 2018, Publisher “Prosveta”, pp. 199-205, ISBN 978- 619-7126-28-0

- Educational Theater-History and Functioning within school Network in

Bulgaria (2019) SCRIP EA, Journal of Education, 2019, Vol. 4. № 3, pp. 146-167.

- Art practices in Bulgaria in the context of sustainable development (2020)
In: Journal "Management and Education" ISSN 13126121, 2020, under seal.

In the category Textbooks, teaching aids and teacher's books:

- Teacher's manual co-authored with Associate Professor, Dr. Silvia Tsvetanska) : "To Be a Citizen. Teacher's book/manual for civic education (2010) Publisher "Prosveta", ISBN 978-954-01-2472-8.

4. Academic portrait of the author and scientific contributions

Typical traits of Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vasileva as a researcher, academic author and lecturer are to:

- seek, discover, construct a "new reading" and / or discover entirely "new niches" in the scientific field. Undisputed evidence for such a quality, therefore, is her decades-long sustainable orientation and impressive consistency in the development of various aspects of educational theater and art animation as an interdisciplinary concept and practical approach;
- consider and seek answers to important questions identified in both the global theoretical and the practical dimensions;
- present captured aspects in all their possible dimensions and as parts of system levels;
- reveal their most sensitive manifestations, which binds as with students, as well as with teachers and education-related groups and communities.

Sometime we tend to hold stereotyped views thinking that when there is a single candidate in an open competition to any other eligible for a promotion, then the competition is somehow "dissolved". The specifics in

the overall academic image and evaluation of Assoc. Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva described in the previous sections of this review though are proof of the exact opposite. She is constantly competing not only with the “actors” on the big research and academic scale, but also with herself. If we look at her steps, activities and publications outside the announced promotion for a “full professor” in the specified academic area “**Theory of education and didactics (Pedagogy, and Animation and Education)**”, we will certainly find amazing consistency and strong self-determination and dedication along with firm desire for constant growth and achievement of new higher levels of mastering, and self- and professional development and perfection.

If we are accustomed to speaking and looking for master classes in the areas of standardized and stereotyped “reserved areas” of pure high creativity such as music, acting, etc., then the achievements of Assoc. Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva in the field of various formats of art animation and educational drama are a worthy example of how such classes can be organized beyond those in music or acting in order to master the "secret" of educational art animation.

The new type of partnership she advocates and works for attracting and motivating teachers, students and communities interested in a new quality of education shapes a unique creative triumvirate (researcher-teachers-students), which is characterized by sustainable transformation. And in the center of the creation and revival of all these opportunities is Assoc. Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva.

She develops and summarizes aspects related to dominant but also dynamically changing philosophies and interpretations of education; searches for their historical roots, but also identifies and comprehends their

new potentials; examines and compares educational paradigms and logically transforms her original model of educational theater in the mid-1990s into a constructivist-oriented model in the spirit of the new modern millennium.

Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva proposes new formats of art animation in education: stage role-behavioral reflective format; pictorial, visually-sensitive, multi-image format and event-entertaining format. She publishes and shares her own modifications and projects. In this way, without explicitly articulating it, she brings up the need for key changes in education, as well as in its basic institution - school, based on a new understanding of the creative partnership between formal and non-formal education.

The renewal of the pedagogical knowledge and the practices conceived by it is achievable goal, clearly shown and proved through the contributing character of the production of Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva. Her ability to make convincing statements in emotionally touching way, and to demonstrate and prove how important art animation is for not only education as a system, but also for the creative development, deep sensitivity and personal maturation of the young generations deserves understanding, indefinite support and high appreciation.

In her statements, Associate Professor, Dr. Radka Vassileva formulated four comprehensive scientific contributions, supported by evidence found in the key research and publication (“Art animation in education. Teachers and students in dramatic interaction”, 2020) in addition to the evidence containing the second reviewed monograph (“Model of educational drama in school”, 2014), which as a reviewer I fully support,

positively evaluate and reconfirm its value. At the same time, I would like to outline the broader format of author's contributions, which I found in the rest of submitted for a review publications. In my opinion, the statements bellow can be perceived as an added value to the entire scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof., Dr. Radka Vassileva:

1. Original art animation approach has been created on theoretically interdisciplinary grounds. It has been pedagogically designed, pragmatically oriented and successfully practically implemented, which impacts dynamically the relations between the key players in the school and influences interaction opportunities at the institutional level.

2. A variable art animation model for the needs of education has been built up, which manifests itself in different formats and leads to educational and personality-oriented multi-effects.

3. A high level of reflective analysis and numerous examples of creative thinking about "hidden" added opportunities of contemporary education to up bring, train and develop personal moral qualities with the assistance of various formats of art animation has been achieved.

4. Key rules for design of art animation in education are formulated and its transformative effects are recognized.

5. New approaches and innovative solutions based on specific strategies for differentiated teaching and learning have been demonstrated.

6. A new "bridge" between formal and non-formal education has been created and established through the art animation, and especially through its event-entertaining format.

7. New methodological ideas and modern practices of civic education are presented and shared. .

8. Strong advocacy for rethinking the teachers' initial training and in-service training has been made in the light of education of the 21st century based on a successful motivation of the teachers for accepting and transforming innovative ideas into educational practices leading to enrichment of their competence profile.

Questions and recommendations:

1. Is it possible to achieve a long lasting harmony between formal and non-formal education in the current Bulgarian contexts through establishment of various formats of art animation in education?

Rec.: To strengthen the cross-cultural social and pedagogical analysis of education in the light of globalization through inclusion of concrete international experience with regards to art animation in formal and non-formal education.

Conclusion

In my practice of assessing the academic value of scientific works and research, I have had the pleasure to get acquainted with various candidates. Having strong positive evaluation of the entire academic work and publications of Assoc. Prof., Dr. Radka Vassileva, accepting formally declared and additionally identified scientific contributions, which have a significant theoretical and practical value, and allow not only to think about the education of today, but also about its creative opportunities in the future, by declaring my deep respect for the presented and analyzed information by

the author, for the established models of art animation in education, for the demonstrated analytical skills and continuous involvement in the research practice, for the innovative solutions and strong abilities to successfully integrate theory and practice, I declare my absolute support for the candidate Assoc. Prof.. Dr Radka Vassileva.

In addition: Assoc. Prof., Dr. Radka Vassileva is among my most memorable colleagues and former students. I am really happy to be part of the jury team evaluating the contributions of the candidate Assoc. Prof., Dr. Radka Vassileva in order to be promoted for the tenure track academic position "full professor".

As a juror, I have the opportunity to touch again, to evaluate and recognize her sustainable academic development and growth , complete research skills, academic writings, strong professional and personal qualities and continuous achievements. I am proud of what she has achieved and I feel privileged to share with her and my other colleagues the pleasure of witnessing the next peak in her professional “rally”.

My positive review and evaluation of the content of the submitted dossier, and especially of the scientific production of the candidate, my full recognition of her professional, academic and personal traits and qualities as an academic lecturer, scientific researcher and professional trainer and colleague, give me a definite reason to fully support the candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Radka Vassileva for the promotion to the tenure track academic position of "full professor" in the

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Reviewer:

2.09.2020

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