

REVIEW

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Regarding: evaluation of the documentation and scientific production, presented in a competition for the academic position "associate professor" SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Pedagogy, area of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature in the initial stage of education).

This review was prepared on the basis of order No. RD-38-453/19.07.2023 of the Rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding a competition for "associate professor", announced in accordance with Art. 4 and Art. 25 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 57, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the RSARB, Art. 108, para. 1 and para. 3 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". In the announcement in SG, no. 56 of June 30, 2023, competition for a full-time associate professor in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature in the initial stage of education) only one candidate participated – Dr. Maya Sotirova Sotirova.

I. Professional biography of the candidate.

Maya Sotirova Sotirova was born on 17.11.1969. In 1992 she graduated from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", specialty "Elementary school pedagogy" with the qualification "master". From 1994 to 1997, he was a full-time doctoral student in "Theory of education and didactics" in the doctoral program of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". He obtained the scientific degree "doctor" in 2002 on the basis of a defended dissertation on the topic "Non-standardity in the child of primary school age as an educational phenomenon". Her professional career is closely related to the system of school and university education. Her teaching practice (during the period from 1993 to 2000) was followed by professional activity as an assistant (2000 - 2002) and as a chief assistant (2007 - 2009) at the Technical University - Sofia, Pedagogical College "St. Ivan Rilski" - Dupnitsa. In the period July 2007 - June 2011, he worked at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad as a chief assistant; developed her professional skills also from the position of deputy dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy and deputy director of the Center for Continuing Education at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Since 21.06.2011, she has been an associate professor at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" - Blagoevgrad. Maya Sotirova is a participant in eight national educational projects (two of which she is the head of) and seven international projects. The candidate in the competition is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria - Blagoevgrad branch; of the editorial board of the electronic magazine "Rhetoric and Communications"; she is a member of the editorial boards of four scientific collections.

II. Scientific output and activities of the candidate:

Maya Sotirova's scientific output is rich and varied; includes 1 book based on a defended dissertation; 2 monographs; 2 studies; 50 articles, a significant part of which were published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information; 34 textbooks and study aids in Bulgarian language and literature for grades 1-4, published in co-authorship. Specifically, the scientific production presented by Assoc. Dr. Maya Sotirova Sotirova for participation in the competition includes: 1 monograph - "Personalized training in the Bulgarian language at the initial stage of the basic educational degree"; 10 articles and reports in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information; 11 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes. For participation in the competition, 49 citations were submitted, of which 19 were in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information; 24 – in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and 6 – in non-refereed journals with scientific review. The presented publications are diverse in subject matter, corresponding to the field of the announced competition. The two co-authored articles highlight the applicant's teamwork skills. The five published articles in English contribute to the promotion of the candidate's research pursuits.

The scientific output of M. Sotirova is concentrated on current and significant thematic directions. The monographic work "Personalized training in the Bulgarian language at the initial stage of basic education" conceptualizes at a theoretical and practical-applied level the problem of personalized training in the Bulgarian language at the initial stage of primary education, examining it through the prism of the leading approaches in modern education - competence-based, person-oriented, value-oriented approach. The author substantiates the significance of the considered approach for developing the personal potential of the students; reveals socio-psychological grounds of the need to personalize educational services and actively involve the student in the design of his own educational trajectory. Dignity of work is the presented normative framework of personalization in primary school education through an analysis of institutional policies in Bulgaria to ensure general and additional support for the personal development of students; the proposed conceptual framework for the development of a didactic technology of personalized training in Bulgarian at the initial stage of primary education by outlining the parameters of personalization in each of the training components - goals, learning content, methods, means and forms of training; the disclosure of the challenges and prospects for personalized training in the Bulgarian language in 1st - 4th grade in Bulgarian schools.

The main highlights of M. Sotirova's research activity are multiculturalism and the importance of intercultural communication in the educational space - articles No. 3, 5, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16; technological aspects of the educational activity for the development of the communicative competence of students from the primary educational stage and the role of interactive educational models - articles No. 6, 7, 11, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23; personalization of training in Bulgarian language and literature for students in the initial stage of education and work with students with special educational needs - articles No. 9 and 12; socio-psychological portrait of the teacher and the role of his professional pedagogical qualification - articles No. 13 and 19; development of sociolinguistic competence in the professional-pedagogical training of students - article No. 4.

The provided scientific output is a testimony not only to the fulfillment of quantitative parameters, but also to the achievement of qualitative results in the candidate's research and scientific-applied activities.

A criterion for a positive evaluation of the candidate's scientific research activity is her participation with reports in round tables and scientific conferences (national, with international participation), as well as participation in 7 specializations and qualifications. The minimum national requirements under Art. are not only met, but also significantly exceeded. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB for "associate professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences according to the indicators as follows: A. Indicator - 50 points; C. Indicator - 100 points; D. Indicator - 375 points; E. Indicator - 555 points (with minimum requirements of 400 points).

III. Assessment of the contributions of the scientific production submitted for participation in the competition.

Not only the quantitative parameters of her publication activity, but also her specific theoretical and practical-applied contributions are a good testimonial for Maya Sotirova to hold the academic position of Associate Professor..

Significant theoretical contributions include:

- ✓ Exploring the parameters of intercultural communicative competence as one of the key objectives of modern education.
- ✓ Justifying the need to strengthen the communicative-practical orientation of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in the primary stage of education by justifying the prevention of the social alienation syndrome in pupils and outlining the opportunities that native language education contains for early support in communicative difficulties and the risk of social isolation..
- ✓ Revealing the ethnocultural aspects of reading instruction in primary grades.
- ✓ Outlining the parameters of intercultural pedagogical competence as a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable effective communication and interaction in the multicultural classroom and beyond..
- ✓ Arguing the need to develop the sociolinguistic competence of students of pedagogical specialties in the process of their professional training.
- ✓ Revealing the parameters of intercultural competence in the training of career guidance specialists for the school education system and in the training of mentors in a dual education system.
- ✓ Outline the challenges of multiculturalism in the context of socio-pedagogical work; arguing for the need to form intercultural communicative competence among social pedagogues for the implementation of effective educational, integrating, social-supportive, (re)socializing, research and organizational activities when working in a multicultural environment.

As practical-applied contributions can be highlighted her activities on:

- ✓ Linking the mastery of key competences with the achievement of a basic level of functional literacy of the student; offering specific methodological strategies for interrelated mastery of linguistic, literary, communicative language and sociocultural competences.
- ✓ A systematization of the types of learning tasks in the teaching of text production in primary grades; proposed methodological guidelines for the improvement of students' communicative-speaking skills in primary native language education..

- ✓ Revealing the place of dialogic oral communication skills in the set of competencies mastered by students; highlighting some features in their development and, on this basis, deriving specific methodological guidelines adequate to the goals of modern language learning and the communicative needs of modern students.
- ✓ Revealing the specific features of the application of information and communication technologies in learning in a multicultural environment; justifying their role in increasing students' linguistic, communicative and intercultural competence.
- ✓ Bringing out the specific difficulties encountered by students of minority ethnicity in the process of mastering reading in the literacy period and in the process of forming reading interests and reading culture in literature lessons (reading); offering methodological guidelines for optimizing reading instruction in culturally heterogeneous classes.

IV. Academic and teaching activity of the candidate.

Over the years, Maya Sotirova has led lecture courses and seminars on a variety of topics in bachelor's programs in the following disciplines: Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in elementary grades; Didactics of primary literacy; Communicative language skills of students; Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language to children with special educational needs; Speech development of children with mental retardation; Individual assistance in training (in the section "...on Bulgarian language and literature"); Pedagogical theories and technologies for teaching Bulgarian language and literature in secondary general education schools; Intercultural education; in master's programs in the disciplines: Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in primary grades; Methodology of electronic learning in Bulgarian language and literature in elementary grades; Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language to children with special educational needs; Language training of children with special educational needs; Language education of children with special educational needs (in English); Psychological-pedagogical problems of learning Bulgarian; Socio-pedagogical counseling in a multicultural environment; Socio-pedagogical work with ethnic groups; Intercultural communicative competence; Multicultural education, etc. Develops modules with electronic learning content in the disciplines: Applied research in multiethnic environment; Communication Skills and Teamwork; Didactics of primary literacy; Language training of children with special educational needs; Individual assistance in socio-pedagogical institutions; Integrated education of children from different ethnic groups; Intercultural education; Intercultural education and socialization in a multicultural environment; Communication skills and teamwork; Teaching methodology in Bulgarian language and literature; Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in primary grades; Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language to children with special educational needs; Methodology of speech development of children with mental retardation; Multicultural education; Pedagogical technologies for mastering the Bulgarian language by 3-11-year-old children; Pedagogical interaction in a multiethnic classroom; Pedagogical interaction in a multicultural environment; Psychological-pedagogical problems of learning Bulgarian; Development of communicative language skills; Socialization of children of different ethnic origins; Socio-pedagogical counseling in a multicultural environment, etc.

V. Critical Notes and Recommendations.

I don't have any critical notes.

VI. Conclusion.

Based on the review of scientific works and the scientific contributions found in them I categorically state my positive assessment of the opinion on the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" announced by the competition by Maya Sotirova Sotirova. The assessment is also substantiated by the adequacy of the documentation provided by the applicant to the requirements of the ZRASRB, the Regulations for the implementation of the ZRASRB and the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The achieved scientific-theoretical and scientific-applied results give me reason to confidently recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to give a positive assessment of the candidacy and to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" to elect Maya Sotirova Sotirova as an "associate professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Methodology of training in Bulgarian language and literature in the initial stage of education).

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City of Shumen

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