

## Opinion

From Prof. Dr Siyka Chavdarova – Kostova

member of scientific jury in a concurs for holding the academic position of „professor“ in a professional field 1.2. Pedagogy /Pedagogy, Animation and education/, announced by Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” in the State Gazette, No21/13.03.2019

The only one candidate in the competition is assoc. prof. Dr. Radka Vasileva, a lecturer in the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ". Her long-term teaching activity so far is entirely related to the profile of the competition, which is illustrated by disciplines such as: Pedagogy, Animation and education, Drama, theater and animation in education, Models for adult education, Conflict resolution, Design of training programs. The topic of the dissertations of her two successfully defended doctoral students and the three of whom she is currently a research supervisor is also in the field of the competition. The accumulated many years of experience in the field of non-formal education through the activities of the "Educational theater" and the "Fun science" are an evidence of the successful combination of pedagogical theory and practice. Her participation in project activities and teacher training is also directly related to the profile of the competition.

The main contributions in the research production of assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva are related to the development of drama issues in an educational context - both in school and out of school. Most of her publications are focused on the various manifestations of animation in education, with which she is associated by the Bulgarian pedagogical community. The two monographs presented for the purposes of the competition, as well as several of the articles, are directly aimed at revealing the wealth of opportunities to animate the educational process in the classroom and other social spaces.

Assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva thoroughly presents the essence and main characteristics of the concept of "educational animation". From pedagogical point of view, it is very important to reveal opportunities to increase children's interest to knowledge and their learning achievements through their active involvement in dramatization on topics related to educational content. The transformation of the stage into an educational space for both the participating children and the observers is convincingly argued. It can be said that assoc. prof. R. Vasileva "reanimates" the importance of the movement in the educational space in the form of activity of children and adults engaged in dramatized activities. Thus, pedagogical activity transforms its static to dynamism, to which students are especially sensitive.

The monograph "Model of educational drama" (2013) is a kind of guide for every teacher how to transform the space of the classroom by changing the traditional in the roles of teacher and students, argued through pedagogical goals with two main emphases - cognitive and affective. Both the goals related to the acquisition of knowledge and the focus on the development of communication and social skills, leading to the development of children's personality, are clearly identified.

Assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva applies a systematic approach in the development and application of the concept of educational theater, defining and systematically modeling basic components such as drama-methods, drama-techniques, drama-teacher and others. This allows the transformation of the practice into a scientific content structure, characterized by methodological orientation back to supporting the practice /article: How to turn the classroom into a stage where children learn. Drama Techniques (2012)/.

Undoubted contribution in the scientific production of Assoc. Prof. Dr. R. Vasileva is not only the theoretical justification, but also the practical empirical realization of the idea of applying theatrical art for educational purposes. This is not an experiment that has lasted a year, two or three, but a wealth of experience accumulated over the last 25 years - from the "Educational theater" to the "Fun sScience" theater, which is a permanent object of research, analysis and

improvement. Evidence of this is the movement in the conception - from the components "Watch", "Play" and "Write" to "Watch", "Get involved" and "Analyze", which presuppose increasing activity - physical, intellectual and reflexive, of students in the activities /article: "Educational theater" on the stage of non-formal education in Bulgaria (2018)/.

The value of the project "Fun science", implemented with children of primary school age, is in the integration of the activity of different pedagogical subjects - children, their teachers, students - teachers, actors, parents. I had the opportunity to visit with students performances of "Fun science", where I saw the real implementation of the basic ideas in it, i.e. the project is not only theoretically developed, but also successfully implemented in practice /article: "Basic rules for the design of educational animation. Fun science project "(2016)/. Particularly valuable is the emphasis on the place of the art animation in education, realized "through animated, i.e. moving, interacting and presented as multi-sensitive and sensory images of objects, subjects and phenomena that are specifically integrated into a scenario-designed educational process with planned cognitive, affective and social goals" /article: Animated images in art animation designed for educational goals (2018)/.

The monograph "Art animation in education. Teachers and students in dramatic interaction" (2020) impresses with both its information content and the woven emotionality that enhances the effectiveness of its impact. It not only introduces but also illustrates in depth and details the possibilities for applying the art animation in education. The meaning of its functioning in modern society is convincingly presented, with an emphasis on learning-seeking learning, saturated with emotionality, curiosity and activity as a leading focus in the learning process. Fascinating and at the same time systematically, the main determinants and characteristics of the educational drama are presented, presenting the student in a rational and emotional context, as a researcher and discoverer of knowledge, in effective interaction with the teacher.

The book fills a gap in the Bulgarian pedagogical literature as a systematic presentation of methodologies, theories, practical applications of the art animation in education. Its usefulness is for students who master this issue, as well as for a wide range of workers in the field of education - formal and informal, interested in applying artistic methods and techniques in the educational environment, incl. in the context of art therapy. It can be said without a doubt that this book not only reflects the long-term efforts of assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva to establish the place of theater and drama in education, but also confirms the importance of its research and practical activities for the development of the Bulgarian pedagogical theory and practice, that emphasizes the qualities of the monograph as a habilitation work for the academic position of "professor".

The other publications of assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva are related to various pedagogical aspects, that corresponds to the part "Pedagogy" in the brackets of the competition.

An original approach is applied to interpreting the relationship theory - pedagogical practice in the article "Theory and pedagogical practice" (2009) through the prism of the opportunities of the teachers to make appropriate choices within the pedagogical process. The question of the usefulness of the mastered theories for the specific pedagogical situations in which specific decisions have to be made is openly raised. The discrepancy of teachers' expectations for the direct application of theoretical knowledge in practice is commented, that in fact "requires additional efforts related to adaptation, partial change or formation of relevant but new realities". It is valuable to note that it should be the subject of special attention in the context of professional development of teachers: "Educators are gradually becoming more professional by selecting theories and research for the needs of their own practice of teachers, i.e. they become professionals who know what they need and are looking for it. "

Current problems in Bulgarian education are commented in the article "New accents in the Bulgarian educational system" (2010). They are seen as due to discrepancies between expectations of the family and the school as the main

educational institution, as well as the quality of education, especially in the natural sciences and the dropout from the education system.

The article "Motivation of teachers to apply new educational ideas" (2016) raises a significant question related to the professional development of teachers after their graduation – as far as the participation in various qualification courses leads to real application in the practice of new learning in their frames. Assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva puts as an object of research interest the finding that there is “an attitude among the majority of teachers to attend many qualification courses, but rather rare than often, real and long-term to apply what they have learned in their practice”. Through her practical work, she illustrates how it is possible what that is learned through “on-the-job training” can be solidify as a long-term innovation that teachers apply successfully. It is extremely valuable to bring out the main motives of teachers related to the application of newly acquired knowledge in their own practice: motive for theoretical awareness and motive for routine action, as well as: motive for refusal due to lack of reward, motive for leadership, motive for joint action and motive for workplace research.

One of the articles presents opportunities for moral education of 9-year-old children based on the theory of M. Hoffman, based on age characteristics related to empathy and willingness to empathize /article: "Moral education of children in the context of social action “(2010)/. The topics of civic education for primary school children in the book for the teacher “To be a citizen” developed by assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva have a clear moral orientation: My family, I communicate with others, I choose profession, I have an idea for the future, I am a citizen of my country, I take care of my health (2010).

The need for differentiated learning and opportunities for its implementation in the school environment are subject of a special comment in the article "Strategies for organizing differentiated learning" (2018). Practically oriented options are proposed that can be of benefit to teachers in order to differentiate their approach to students in the classroom.

The article "Art practices in Bulgaria in the context of sustainable development" (2020) can also be classified as publications with a general pedagogical focus, as the interpretation of art practices is made not only on the basis of educational theater, but through the prism of education through art in its current dimensions and social significance, especially in an educational context (eg. development of ecological culture). Assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva emphasizes the importance of the way contemporary art processes take place - "the event framework of problems that arise in society and need not only resources but also personal attitude and interpretation. Art practices always react to what is happening today, i.e. immediately; here and now i.e. in the current situation." Therefore, questions such as "why separate waste collection is important or why water should be purified, and how important it is to know the rules of road safety /.../ catalyze a change in behavior, culture and values".

Conclusion:

The documents submitted in connection with the competition show compliance with the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "professor".

The scientific production of assoc. prof. Dr. R. Vasileva presented for the purposes of the competition, her research activity, citation of publications, practical pedagogical activity for establishing the educational significance of art animation are convincing evidence in response to the requirements for holding the academic position "professor". Because of that I strongly support the award of the academic position of professor of PF 1.2. Pedagogy /Pedagogy, Animation and education /by assoc. prof. Dr. Radka Vasileva.

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Sofia

Signature:

/prof. Dr S.Chavdarova-Kostova/