

TENURE REVIEW

For the academic position of “Full Professor” in the field of higher education 1. Educational sciences, professional orientation 1.2. Education /Pedagogy, Animation and Education/, announced in SG Issue 21 of 13.03.2020, for the purposes of the Faculty of Education at Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”

Reviewer: Prof. Yana Merdjanova, Dr., Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”, Faculty of Education

Habilitation procedure: the habilitation procedure was open by the Faculty of Education at Sofia University and the required number of hours ensured /360 equated to seminars/ 4 compulsory and 2 optional disciplines at three university faculties /Faculty of Education, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Faculty of Slavic Studies/ - Pedagogy in three university specialties; Models for Adult Education; Animation and Education; Drama Theatre and Animation in Education. It is obvious that in this specific area extensive work has been done for years, persistently, diligently so that the latter two academic disciplines are innovated, introduced and established. Even at this reading of the candidate’s application, a conclusion can be drawn about a thoughtful, prepared and responsible choice and proposal of the Academic Screening Committee, the Faculty and the university teacher as this is a procedure for growth at the place. **The procedure is legally compliant /Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria - ADASRB/** - all required documents and transcripts have been submitted and the potential candidate’s main habilitation work has been considered and approved by the Screening Committee.

Candidates: There is a single candidacy in the procedure, that of Assoc.Prof. Radka Emilova Vasileva, PhD. The major moments of her professional, academic and research path are bright, memorable and unique with dedication to one area – pioneering challenge, at the fluid border between theatre, art and education. Assoc.Prof. Vasileva has taught at the Faculty of Education since 1986 and has consistently been promoted, from Assistant Professor to Senior Assistant Professor in 1990, to Chief Assistant Professor in 1993, and to Associate Professor - since 2007 till the present. In 1998 she defends her doctoral dissertation. Assoc. Prof. Vasileva is an author of the programmes and holder of the courses related with Art Animation in education: *Animation and Education* and *Drama, Theatre and Animation in Education*. For years she develops these issues and is a holder of the courses on *Conflict Resolution, Management Training* and *Training Programmes Design*. In addition, she is a lecturer of a core course in Education at two faculties, three specialties providing teaching qualifications at Sofia University. Special mention is worth making of Radka Vasileva’s leadership activity as a manager and creative director at Educational Theatre “Fun Science” which since 1995 has been

working all year round with more than 200 teachers from the all over the country and whose student audience comes round to the impressive 100 000 children. At the same time Assoc. Prof. Vasileva authors educational plays, directs teams of professional actors, organizes large-scale events – festivals, performances and trainings.

Scientific production: 13 texts: 2 monographs, 10 scientific papers and 1 school textbook were submitted for the procedure to be reviewed. Meaningful, original, varied and high-value scientific output. The author's ideas evolution is distinctly traceable – firstly, from Educational Theatre to Animation and Art Animation in Education; secondly, from the practically applicable to theoretical rationalization and notional conceptualization; thirdly, the interaction and the gradual synergization of general educational issues with the world of art. Sources: 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13 are predominantly related to educational issues, whereas 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12 are oriented towards the second area of the procedural topic: Animation and Education. But even interpreting such issues as the relation between educational theory and practice in our everyday life /7/, children's moral education /8/, new highlights in Bulgarian educational system /9/, design of educational space /10/, Assoc. Prof. Vasileva has left her mark in her creative search for innovation through the connection between personal creations and established classical norms of pedagogical thinking and reality. The textbook *Civic Education* (2010) /13/ to the aid of the elementary school teacher in the scheduled class-time hours offers a dynamic creative collaboration between teacher, pupils and society for forming of positions and worldviews. It is also impressive how the author develops and seeks solutions for implementing art techniques and drama theatre at school, but also in the field of non-formal education /5/; she acts carefully, studying teachers' motivation for using such techniques /3/; what she seeks to achieve is the educational effect of implementing art strategies as strategies for differential education /6/. The author's pedagogical thinking steps upon fundamental educational knowledge and thus, develops it in a responsible and careful manner, builds upon it both inspirationally and at the same time, with precision by means of ideas, concepts and experience from an entirely different social sphere – that of art. **This approach and actual results from the yearlong and original, practical experience of the candidate suggest professional trust, collegial respect and high expertise.**

Assoc. Prof. Radka Vasileva's **two monographs** also mark the development of her ideas. The first monograph *An Educational Drama Model at School* /1/ defines the model of educational drama and offers 3 projects to demonstrate it: one, teacher-focused; another, engaging the whole class in project work and a third, focused on improvised role plays. Decades of practical and creative work after that lead the author to the systematization and elaboration of her fundamental treatise on Animation in Education.

The monograph *Art Animation in Education. Dramatic Interaction between Teacher and Students (2020)*. /2/ is a cast of the author's entire life and professional credo. It is the candidate's fundamental habilitation work in the current procedure. Voluminous in pages and large in content – text with bibliography plus rich appendices of illustrational, demonstrational, diagnostic, experimental material, the very title and contents of the monograph make several claims which engage the reader with certain expectations – maturity, responsibility and innovation:

1. The book appoints a *meeting between Art Animation and the Pedagogical* on a Systemic, Institutional and Subjectively personal levels.

2. It triggers and provokes by its metaphorical subheading “dramatic interaction” the synthesis between the single-meaning scientific reading and the case-based polysemic understanding and interpretation of the offered experience.

3. It represents a systematization as well as a new reading in the new context of Art Animation of established pedagogical and educational approaches and paradigms dating back to Antiquity, moving through the Classicism, the New Age, the Modernism and Post-Modernism of the global ages. The search for a link between them and Animation is both indicative of the author's correctness and the author's attempt to exert pressure upon tradition.

4. Thus, Radka Vasileva's book makes an attempt and eloquently demonstrates and embodies the reflexivity and the spirit of the object and the subject of her own research. This is *a sign of authenticity and actually lived-through, manifold, multi-level and multi-variational authorship*.

Compositionally, linguistically, informationally, stylistically the treatise exhibits all *the characteristics of monographic scientific research with the qualities of a habilitation work – and of a serious scientific postdoctoral research as well as of a monograph on it*.

On this basis, scientific theoretical and practically applicable contributions are noticed, which differ from the already existing ones in the field of research and in the past scientific works authored by Radka Vasileva.

1. Theoretical systematization and analysis are carried out of various leading and established pedagogical approaches and educational *paradigms in their corresponding historical time, on the one hand, with a manifest relation to the new context of Art Animation in Education*. In this way, new characteristics for the well-known approaches are highlighted while methodological grounds are *being sought after* together with a *transformation of Art Animation from a set of educational techniques and means to the status of a methodological determinant for a type of education*.

2. *A four dimensional presentation/ formatting of Art Animation* is unfolded /second part/ – role-based traditional /drama and theatre/, subject-based /teacher/, visual and image-based /picture formats/ and as a medium /entertainment event formats/.

3. On the level of *application*, the concept of the link between Animation and Education is protected in a diagnostic, tracking-experimental, experience-implementation and illustration-demonstrational aspect.

4. The second, third and fourth paragraph of the second part of the book build significantly upon *educational theatre and educational drama* explored so far predominantly in the science of pedagogy and in earlier works of the author.

With these key levels of contribution the monographic treatise sets a synthetic strategic living space-time of *Art Animation in perspective – as a methodological platform for educational models, for school models of an institutional organization, of learning and teaching models and of culture-forming models*. The monographic treatise can be described as **historic** in the development of pedagogic thinking and in educational practice. I think that Assoc. Prof. Radka Vasileva has managed to express herself completely and to pass on to future generations her pedagogical and creative and fictional credo in a brilliant way. The characteristics of the treatise are a manifestation of the richness, the variety, the depth, the patience, the dedication, the superiority of the professional, the scientific, the creative, the artistic, the human, the spiritual of its author. The treatise is a work of authentic and deep creative love.

These are the beliefs underpinning the recommendation related to the potential of the author and that of the treatise – a wish for Assoc. Prof. Vasileva for a future development of her thesis about Art Animation **IN** Education as a thesis about Art Animation **FOR** Education – as its philosophical and methodological foundation, justifying not only its integration in specific and any educational models, but defining and shaping a special art-educational model stemming from all of its characteristics /**an Art-animating philosophy of education**/.

The contributions in the main monographic treatise complement the scientific contributions presented by the candidate in all her scientific works. I accept them all and highlight their **authentic authorship**: a developed, original, author-made, art-animation approach in education; created original, author-made, applied formats for school and non-formal education; a created and established in Bulgaria 25 years ago, functional, author-made model of “Fun Science” Educational Theatre; as well as a created and approbated theoretical and applied model of School Educational Drama.

Evidence of all contributive moments in Assoc. Prof. Vasileva’s work exists and is presented on an ideational, theoretical, academic teaching, project, experimental, consultative, expert, applied and

implementation level. Nevertheless, I would highlight once again **two brilliant contributions in the field of general pedagogical issues:**

1. Theoretical systematization and analysis is carried out of various leading and established pedagogical approaches and educational *paradigms in their corresponding historical time, on the one hand, and with a distinct manifest connection with the new context of Art Animation in education. An ideational and theoretical thinking synergy* is realized in a historical and spiritual perspective between **pedagogical classics – pedagogical modernity – pedagogical perspective.** /sources 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13/

2. Analysis and identification is made of the possibilities and the specific methods of interaction and transfer of ideas and forming practices from the sphere of Art Animation and Art in general within the pedagogic reality. An ideational, theoretical, practical and applied **synergy** is realized **between two different spheres: Education/Pedagogy – Culture/Art.** /sources 2, 3, 5, 10, 11/

Teaching and research project activity: As a university teacher Assoc. Prof. Radka Vasileva is an embodiment of originality, academicism, the human charge, which turn her auditoria into an ebullience and a workshop for young people creating and experimenting with themselves, with the professional terrain and with the future. Her project work attracts doctoral students, assistants and undergraduate students. Participations in 11 scientific projects are presented /1 international/, in 2 - as an organizer and in 9 - as a member.

Doctoral student supervision: Assoc. Prof. Vasileva's PhD students' theses defences are memorable in the faculty. Successful supervision of two PhD students was carried out followed by academic realization – one of them, as a young colleague at the Faculty of Education and the other, as an assistant at New Bulgarian University. Presently, Assoc. Prof. Vasileva supervises 3 PhD students.

Expert consultancy and trainings: As a founder and leader, manager of *Fun Science Educational Theatre*, Assoc. Prof. Vasileva is an expert in the field and a consultant for all related to education and interested in this area – school principals, teachers, government officials, actors, parents, school and university students, colleagues – university teachers. Since 2018 the candidate has been a member on the Editorial Board of a USA educational journal. The trainings carried out by Assoc. Prof. Vasileva and her team are many. All of them are longstanding, repeatedly performed with the relevant audiences /indisputable evidence for their quality and the authority of the candidate as a specialist and expert in the field/: 2006-2010 - school principals; 2012-2016 – mayors and municipal staff development and qualifications; 2010-2012 – teachers, school principals, civic education experts; 2011-2013 – adapting educational programmes at the *Together in Class* Foundation; 2013-2014, 2019-2020 – consultant and instructor in art and drama methods and techniques for teachers; since

2018 – member of the Administrative Council of *Kids Academy* at Sofia University, a modern initiative by academic university innovators.

Citations: 82 citations are presented – 18 in referenced and internationally indexed editions; 14 in monographs and peer-reviewed volumes; 50 in non-referenced, reviewed scientific journals and editions.

Conclusion: Assoc. Prof. Vasileva’s creative work is genuine and unique with the author’s own mark and style. It is my conviction that it will serve for generations on end to specialists and people of a wide humanitarian and social profile dedicated to the humanitarian cause of uplifting, supporting and letting the Human reach new heights. **Happy is the fate of a specialist who in their own lifetime has managed to create and establish a School of followers, like-minded associates and partners. Assoc. Prof. Vasileva is indeed chosen for such a fate. Undoubtedly, because she dedicated herself to it.**

The procedure and application as a whole comply with the requirements of the ADASRB.

Not only with complete conviction and satisfaction, **but with collegial pride**, I propose to the members of the honourable Jury to support the promotion of Assoc. Prof. Radka Vasileva to the academic rank of “Full Professor” in the professional orientation of 1.2. Education /Pedagogy, Animation and Education/ for the purposes of the Faculty of Education at Sofia University “St Kliment Ohridski”. With her overall professional and scientific research work, with her creativity, Assoc. Prof. Radka Vasileva will remain in the history of pedagogy and the sciences of education as a pioneer and theoretical founder in Bulgaria of Art Animation in Education as a serious and autonomous pedagogical orientation on a theoretical and applied level. And these are the meaningful, beautiful, exciting phenomena in the life of the science of Pedagogy continuing its true biography.

10th September 2020

Sofia

Reviewer:

Prof. Yana Merdjanova, Dr.