



REVIEW

on competition for the academic position "Associate Professor"

Field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences

Professional field: 1.2. Pedagogy (Art pedagogy – fine art and constructive-technological activities in kindergarten and primary school)

Candidate: Ch. Assistant Professor Gergana Angelova Avramova-Todorova, Ph.D

Author of the statement: Prof. DSc Plamen Anatoliev Legkostup - University of Veliko Turnovo

(Regulation No. RD - 238 of 15.07.2024 of the Rector of Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov University)

1. Description of the competition procedure

In the competition for the academic position "Docent" in professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Art pedagogy - fine art and constructive-technological activities in kindergarten and elementary school) for the needs of the department "Pedagogy and teaching methods", announced in the "State Gazette", no. 43 of May 17, 2024, one candidate participated: Ch. Assistant Professor Gergana Angelova Avramova-Todorova, Ph.D.

The documents of Dr. Avramova-Todorova, submitted for participation in the competition, show that the procedure for its disclosure and announcement has been followed and they are in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its Implementation, also with the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

2. Biographical data of the applicant

Ch. assistant professor Dr. Gergana Avramova-Todorova is the only candidate in the announced competition.

In 1994, she graduated the English language high school with a Certificate of Professional Qualification - English teacher in primary and secondary courses.

She has three diplomas for higher education: "Master" in Law (2001), "Master" in Social Counselling and Psychology (2018), from Burgas Free University and "Master" in Art Therapy (2020), acquired at the National Academy of Arts.

In 2022, the candidate successfully defended a dissertation on the topic: "Development of emotional intelligence in children in middle childhood through art-pedagogical means" and

received the scientific degree "Doctor" (1.2. Pedagogy, "Preschool and elementary school pedagogy") in Burgas Free University.

From the attached certificates of professional qualification and training, make an impression the specializations in art pedagogy (art-projective psychodiagnostics, crisis counselling for children, communication skills training, Techniques in therapy with stories and dolls for children, adolescents and adults, Art Therapy For Self-Exploration, Art Therapy For Self-Healing, How To Use Art Therapy with Other People) from Bulgarian and foreign training organizations that supplement and upgrade her professional competences and skills.

In 2006, after successfully passing the competition, she started working at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas as an assistant in law.

From 2023 until now, she is chief assistant in the Department of "PMO", University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov", where she conducts seminars and practical exercises, mainly in Art pedagogy, Methodology of construction and technology activities in kindergarten, Methodology of training in technology and entrepreneurship in elementary school, Art therapy.

3. Scientific indicators

According to the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas, the scientometric indicators of the candidate Dr. Gergana Avramova-Todorova for the academic position of "Associate Professor" are as follows:

The indicator from group "A" - 50 points (fulfilled)

The 'B' indicator is not required for this position.

The indicator from group C - monograph presented as a habilitation thesis - 100 points (completed)

Group "D" indicators:

- Published book based on a dissertation (for the award of the ONS "Doctor" or the National Academy of Sciences "Doctor of Sciences)" (75 points) - 75 points.
- Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in global databases with scientific information (30 items each) – 63 items.
- Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes (10 items each) - number of publications/issues. points: 280 points
- Published chapter of a collective monograph (20 items each) - number / issue points: 20 points

Total number of points under indicator "D": 438 points (completed), with a required minimum of 400 points.

Indicators from group "E":

- Citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in global databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes (15 items each) – 6x15/90 items.
- Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review (10 items each) – 6x10/60 items.
- Citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review (5 items each) – 12x5/60 items.

Based on the content of the "List of citations" presented in Appendix 11, I am pleased to note that Dr. Avramova is a recognizable author whose works are in monographs, refereed and indexed editions and peer-reviewed collective volumes. A total of 24 citations were noted.

Total number of points according to indicator "E": 210, with required 100 points.

Group "F" indicators:

- Participation in a national scientific or educational project (15 points each) - 2x15/30 points.
- Participation in an international scientific or educational project (x 20 points) – 2x20/40 points.
- Management of a national scientific or educational project (30 points each) - 30 points.

Total number of points under indicator "F": 100, with required 50 points.

The presented scientific production of Dr. Gergana Avramova-Todorova CORRESPONDS to the scientometrics laid down in the Regulations for the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas, exceeding the set minimum in quantitative terms.

In addition, from the reference for Educational and scientific activity, I will note the independent development of 4 ("Art therapeutic techniques in education", "Volunteering and causes in socio-pedagogical practice", "Constructive-applied activities for social groups", "Applied decorative activities in kindergarten") and co-authored 4 ("Methodology of construction and technology activities in kindergarten", "Technology and entrepreneurship education method in elementary school", "Development of mathematical, technological and entrepreneurial competences in kindergarten and elementary school " , "Social Rehabilitation and Practicum in Nature") curricula.

It can be seen from the same reference, chap. assistant professor Gergana Avramova-Todorova teaches (in lecture courses and exercises) the disciplines Applied decorative activities, Applied decorative actions in kindergarten, Activities with new visual techniques and natural materials, Art therapy, Art pedagogy, Methodology of construction activities and technologies in kindergarten, Methodology of Technology and Entrepreneurship Studies at elementary school, Therapy through stories. I have known Dr. Avramova for several years and I have very good impressions of her

work. I can justifiably claim that she is a charismatic and respected teacher, both by her students and her colleagues, enjoying their trust.

The candidate's participation in a number of national and international projects makes a positive impression, as the results obtained from them successfully complement her author's work. This shows that there is a deep scientific and theoretical-applied interest in the issues of the competition.

4. Directions in the candidate's research work and scientific contributions

The submitted publications logically overlap with the applicant's scientific interests and are in the thematic field of the competition. Those who are co-authors are correctly indicated. In accordance with the nature of the research and publication activity, the main scientific contributions of the research work of Ch. assistant Gergana Avramova-Todorova can be thematically summarized in the following directions:

- Formation of emotional intelligence in the education of fine art and constructive-technological activities through art pedagogical means;
- Art pedagogy in art education for preschool and primary school age;
- Art pedagogy in the training of constructive-technological activities for preschool and primary school age.

The candidate participated in the competition with a scientific output of a total of 39 scientific works (book based on a dissertation; monograph; chapter of a collective monograph; publications; participation in scientific forums) and 6 participations in research and educational projects, of which 2 international, 2 national and 2 – intra-university.

All publications included in the competition differ from those related to previous procedures.

I will highlight the contributing ideas mainly represented in the monographic work, the book based on the dissertation work and the collective monograph chapter, which complement and enrich the presented publications.

The monograph "Happiness for Children" explores visual and constructive-technological tools as innovative practical approaches in the education of art, technology and entrepreneurship for elementary school students. It explores how pedagogical methods can be used as a means of promoting feelings of happiness. An attempt was made (successful, in my opinion) to advocate the possibilities of impact through art in the process of forming the children's personality, considering the individual characteristics of the children. A model is presented for the formation of emotional intelligence by developing the skill of experiencing happiness. The experiment conducted in the course of the pedagogical interaction was carried out by means of creative means, which are part of the presented methodical approach. The approved model is aimed at a topical topic of our time, related to children's emotions and ways to achieve happiness. I believe that the monograph will be useful to all who work in this field.

The study of happiness in relation to the possibilities of its stimulation in the pedagogical process is complemented by **research in a number of publications**. The question of how to define happiness as an emotional state and whether it can be validly measured is presented conceptually.

An instrument for assessing the degree of happiness in primary school-age children was created and successfully tested, as well as an experimental model with creative techniques for influencing the feeling of happiness. (see Avramova-Todorova, G., Bureva, V. 2024. Measuring Happiness: Evaluation of Elementary School Students' perception of Happiness using InterCriteria Analysis, Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, Springer, ISSN 2367-3389; Avramova-Todorova, G., Bureva, V. 2023. Measuring Happiness: Evaluation of Elementary School Students' Perception of Happiness Assessed by Intuitionistic Fuzzy Logic, Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 758. Springer, ISSN 2367-3389; Todorova, G. 2023. Experimental model with creative techniques to promote happiness in children, Knowledge International Journal, vol. 57.2., p. 273-277, ISSN 1857-923X).

The section of the **collective monograph "The Visual Literary Work in Kindergarten and Primary School"**, entitled "Artistic Perception in the Wimelbuch Book", presents the possibilities of an integrative approach to the perception of literary works of the Wimelbuch type with the application of art and art pedagogical techniques and approaches. **An author's methodological algorithm is presented**, which is aimed at innovative approaches for the artistic perception of Wimmelbuch books.

The study of integration relationships in the aesthetic impact and the mechanism of children's artistic perception is complemented by the issues discussed in several publications that emphasize the peculiarities of artistic perception and the possibilities of influence of creative means in the pedagogical process (see Avramova-Todorova, G. 2023. The wimmelbook – artistic perception and opportunities for fine art activities in the pedagogical process, vol. 2(3), p. 137-141, Avramova-Todorova, G. 2024 for children: methodical approach for preschool age, Collection of articles and reports "Art, Creativity, Education. Between the brush and the pen", "Faber", V. Tarnovo, ISBN 978-619-00-1756-1, p. 222-227; Avramova-Todorova, G. 2023. Creative techniques for developing children's imagination, magazine Education and Technology, Volume 14, issue 1, pp. 147-149, ISSN 1314-1791).

"The World of My Emotions" is a book based on the candidate's dissertation, in which art pedagogical trainings aimed at forming skills for recognizing and regulating emotions in children are presented. The art pedagogical models included in the trainings use the possibilities of creative means for the formation of emotional intelligence in children of primary school age. Their successful testing in the pedagogical process confirms them as a suitable resource for supplementing the pedagogical toolkit with the approaches of art pedagogical techniques.

In addition to the possibilities of the creative process discussed in the book, the ways of forming emotional intelligence through creative means are presented in a series of publications (see Avramova-Todorova, G. 2023. Formation of multiple intelligences in technology, construction and entrepreneurship education, Management Magazine and education, volume 19 (3), pp. 67-72, ISSN 13126121; Avramova-Todorova, G. 2023. The emotionally intelligent teacher, issue 2, pp. 73-78, Avramova-Todorova, G. 2024. Ecological intelligence and competence approach in technology and entrepreneurship education, Journal of Management and Education, volume 20 (3), ISSN 13126121, p.154-158; Avramova-Todorova, G. 2024. Formation of ecological

intelligence through constructive-ecological learning in kindergarten, *Journal of Management and Education*, volume 20 (3), ISSN 13126121, p.150-154).

I feel obliged to state that in the presented by Ch. assistant Gergana Avramova-Todorova publications there is a deep professional interest in research and research of the conceptual ideas laid down in the articles and reports, which provide the basis for innovation, modernity and effectiveness in the realization of the cognitive, socializing, socio-emotional processes in the most important of the development of man periods - childhood. The supported opinions are reasoned and substantiated, expressing precisely and clearly the author's position.

The candidate's papers, written in clear and understandable language, show that great science can be done without terminological encumbrance. If we add that a significant part of her ideas is also original, then we can really speak of a unity between thinking and language in her research. Bibliographic sources are correctly cited.

A comprehensive summary of the applicant's achievements is reflected in the scientific contributions. I accept the main contributions of scientific production formulated by the author. They are characterized by credibility and correctness. In addition to an in-depth analysis of important theoretical-applied problems from the thematic areas of the publications submitted for the competition, they also contain approved models for optimizing activities. I rate them positively. I will highlight some of them that I consider the most significant, without understate the others. They are grouped into the following categories:

1. Contributions of a theoretical nature:

- Expand the available pedagogical knowledge related to the application of art pedagogy in the teaching of fine art and constructive-technological activities for children of preschool and primary school age;
- Enrich the available pedagogical knowledge about the development of emotional intelligence in children with art pedagogical tools;
- Establish opportunities for increasing emotional intelligence and the feeling of happiness in children of primary school age with art pedagogical means.

2. Scientific-applied and methodological contributions

Of the proposed research and development, the following stand out:

- The development, creation and implementation of "Training for developing emotional intelligence" (see Abstract) and models for developing emotional intelligence with art pedagogical means (see Book based on dissertation work "My Emotions");
- Empirically proving the effectiveness of the "Emotional Intelligence Development Training" application in a school setting. It can serve as a pedagogical resource for educators, social workers and other professionals in the helping professions when working with children in middle childhood in the direction of increasing their emotional intelligence;

- The development, creation and implementation of a "Creative model for developing the ability to be happy", in which art pedagogical tools are used, aimed at application in the process of teaching fine art and constructive-creative activity (see Monograph);
- Empirically proving the effectiveness of the "Creative Model for Developing the Ability to Be Happy" application.
- The developed and experimented models with art pedagogical means. In the creation of the models, the theoretical concepts of the pedagogical possibility to educate through fine art and constructive-creative activity were applied, through the application of concepts that use Wimmelbuch books, Karl Orff's methodology, etc. as a teaching tool. These models are aimed at the formation of emotional intelligence, ecological intelligence, tolerance and unconventionality in the education of fine arts and technology and entrepreneurship in preschool and primary school age.
- The development, creation and implementation of "Tools for measuring tolerance in a learning environment"; The proposed questionnaires help to be able to study the state of tolerance in students from the initial stage of education. The diagnostic toolkit contains three self-report questionnaires designed to measure general, contextual and behavioral tolerance;
- The developed and experimented models with art pedagogical tools for the formation of tolerance through projects for fine art and constructive-creative activity.

5. Critical notes, recommendations, questions

I have no significant criticisms of the candidate.

As I wrote above, I evaluate his scientific contributions positively and admire their delineation into two groups: contributions of a theoretical nature and contributions of a scientific-applied and methodological nature, but I think that the second group could have been divided into two parts - contributions of a scientific nature -applied nature and experimental-methodological contributions.

All materials for the competition are properly prepared and supported by evidence.

I have the following question for Dr. Gergana Angelova Avramova - Todorova:

Is it possible and to what extent, by using tools from art pedagogy, to integrate educational content between the education of technology and fine art, and this interaction, especially in the theoretical-applied field of artistic construction, will enrich or not the teaching methodology in primary stage?

I also have a recommendation for the candidate:

In her publications, she may examine more systematically the integral interactions between technology education and visual arts, especially through the lens of STEAM approaches in contemporary education. This expansion of science would be useful for preschool and primary education.

6. Conclusion

On the basis of the materials submitted for participation in the competition, I believe that the candidate, Dr. Gergana Angelova Avramova-Todorova, meets the criteria for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor", defined by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its Implementation , as well as from the Regulations for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas.

I propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to vote positively and to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" - Burgas, to elect Dr. Gergana Angelova Avramova-Todorova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Art pedagogy – fine art and constructive-technological activities in kindergarten and primary school).

Date: 28.08. 2024

Member of the Scientific Jury:

City of Veliko Turnovo

(Prof. DSc Plamen Anatoliev Legkostup)