

REVIEW

by Prof. Maria Stoyanova Aleksieva, PhD,
Burgas Free University, Center for Humanities,
Pedagogy Program Council
member of the scientific jury, order No. LS/53 of 02.12.2022

Competition for the academic position "Associate Professor"

Field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences

Professional direction: 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool and primary school pedagogy,
Media pedagogy)

Center for Humanities, Program Council for Pedagogy

The competition is announced in the State Gazette, no. 82/14.10.2022

1. Procedure

The procedure for conducting the competition has been followed and is in accordance with the regulatory documents.

The materials submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" and scientometric tables have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 58, para. 3 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the Burgas Free University, namely:

- ✓ the candidate has an acquired educational and scientific degree "PhD";
- ✓ a published monographic work that does not repeat the publications and research presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "PhD";
- ✓ original scientific works and publications and scientific and applied developments are presented;
- ✓ meets the minimum national requirements defined under the ZRASRB in the relevant scientific field and professional direction.

Based on this, the applicant's admissibility committee - Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD - decides to be admitted to the competition for the academic position

"Associate Professor", higher education area 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool and primary school pedagogy, Media literacy),

Pursuant to Art. 29 of ZRASRB, she has the right to participate in the competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" (*in 2021 she defended her doctoral dissertation and was awarded the educational and scientific degree "PhD"*).

2. Applicant data

Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, is a graduate of VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the city of Veliko Tarnovo in Theology, Master's degree (1993-1998).

In the period 2013-2015, he acquired the Master's degree, majoring in "Preschool and primary school pedagogy" at the same university.

Since 2018, she has been a part-time teacher of teaching Methodology in Bulgarian language and literature grades 1. - 4. at VTU.

In 2021, she defends the "PhD" degree in the DP "Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature (I-IV class)" (Diploma No BT-21 40026/ May 25, 2021) with a dissertation on the topic "Formation of media literacy of 4th grade students through extracurricular forms of work".

She also worked at "P. R. Slaveikov" Primary School, V. Tarnovo. Her position used to be primary school teacher.

From February 2022, after a successful competition for the academic position "assistant professor" in Professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool and primary school pedagogy), she is on a basic employment contract at the Burgas Free University, at the Center for Humanities.

As soon as she started working at BFU, Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, develops educational activities, participates in project activities, in national and international performances, which is presented in her creative autobiography.

3. Compliance of the scientific production with the requirements of ZRAS

Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, participated in the competition with scientific production presented in accordance with the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB:

In **indicator group A**, she has a defended dissertation for the acquisition of the "PhD" degree – **50 points**.

In **indicator group C**, Dimitrova, PhD, has a published habilitation thesis, which does not repeat the publications and research presented for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" – **100 points**.

In **indicator group D**, the total number of points is **230** and is based on the presented scientific publications of Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, in various sources, including in publications indexed in global databases.

In **indicator group E**, the total score is **70**.

The minimum requirements for the number of points for the individual groups of indicators for occupying the academic position "associate professor" is a total of **общо 450 points**.

From the presented reference of Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, it is clear that she fulfills the minimum requirements (*for the academic position "docent" - 400 points*) in some of the indicator groups she exceeds them.

The classification of the evidentiary material by indicators was carried out correctly. The calculation of points by indicators, as well as as a final score, is accurate and does not diverge from the evidence presented.

4. Description of the scientific papers

For participation in the competition, Assistant Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, presents a total of 13 (thirteen) publications. All publications are independent and are on the topic of the announced competition.

Quantitatively, the publications are in the following scientific genres:

- ✓ **Monographs** – 2 (two) pcs. (main habilitation thesis and monographic thesis based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "PhD")
- ✓ **Publications** in scientific magazines and collections - 11 (eleven) pcs., of which:
 - articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 2 (two) pcs.
 - articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 8 (eight) pcs.

- studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 1 (one) item.

The reports in scientific and scientific-practical conferences - 6 (six) pcs., of which in international conferences in the country - 3 pcs. and in national conferences – 3 pcs. (*the reports are part of the publications in scientific journals and collections presented above*).

The habilitation thesis, with which Associate Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, participated in the competition is entitled "Digital Transformation - Competence and Creativity in Kindergarten and School". Its total volume is 232 pages.

The research is related to the key competences in the European reference framework and the skills of the XXI century. **The author's research interests are oriented towards the pedagogical aspects of forming digital competence and digital creativity in kindergarten and primary school**, as part of the already started process of digital transformation in global education.

The monographic work follows the logic of the scientific genre and is structured in an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. It is well balanced in terms of content: the first two chapters present theoretical dimensions of the researched problem, and the other two chapters also have a practical-applied orientation related to the research done. The study covers a total of 334 recipients, represented in three main research groups - 187 parents of children from 1 to 11 years of age, 70 kindergarten and primary teachers and 77 students from 1st to 4th grade.

In the first chapter, an analysis of basic concepts is made through the prism of the competence approach: for new literacy and for key skills in the digital world. On this basis, the theory of literacy and its modification in the XXI century has been enriched. The author makes a thorough analysis of the modern legal framework and educational documentation in the context of the digital transformation, of key competences and educational content in the Republic of Bulgaria and their synchronization with the requirements of the European Commission.

The second chapter covers the analysis of the generational characteristics of the "Alpha" children and the peculiarities of their digital socialization based on the author's research among elementary school students, parents and teachers. To prove the author's position, a large-scale study was organized and conducted, which focuses on researching and clarifying the position of parents and teachers regarding the use of

digital means by children of preschool and primary school age, as well as to identify the level of digital adolescent literacy, according to the data of these socialization agents. The research interest seeks to reveal in full the peculiarities regarding the digital socialization of children and students.

In order to expand the research search, a review of the existing experience in the application of digital technologies in preschool education was made and a justified model for a digital kindergarten as an educational ecosystem was proposed, as well as options for the application of digital technologies in the cognitive work with children of preschool age.

In the last structural integrity of the monographic work, the author offers pedagogical approaches for the formation of digital competence and digital creativity in primary school. Models for digital transformation in school education are presented in countries where the use of digital tools, media and learning resources leads to a high level of post-student success.

The conclusions drawn indicate that digitization is a mandatory part of the overall educational transformation in educational institutions - kindergarten and primary school, and the responsibility and challenge for the formation and development of the digital competence of today's children lies before the pedagogical community.

The second monographic work "Media literacy in primary school", which is based on a defended dissertation for the award of an educational and scientific degree "PhD", emphasizes the need for the formation of media literacy in students already at the initial stage of the basic educational degree.

Structurally, it consists of an introduction, four chapters, conclusions and a conclusion with a total volume of 392 pages. The text is illustrated with figures, schemes, tables and diagrams.

In it Assistant Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, offers an author's model for the formation of media literacy of students in 1st to 4th grade. A curriculum was constructed with exercises, tasks, didactic and developmental games with the application of media technologies. I dare to say that this is the first complex research on the problem in our country, developed after a thorough theoretical justification, tested in a learning environment and introduced into educational practice. Five author's options for the formation of media literacy through extracurricular forms of work are proposed. They are described in detail, including sample thematic distributions. Through this model for the

formation of media literacy, a basic educational level of media culture of the young student is achieved.

In **other publications**, Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, presents her scientific statements, analyzes and research results related to the name of the announced competition:

- theoretical and applied aspects of digital competence in kindergarten and primary school (publications with no. - 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13);
- theoretical and applied aspects of media pedagogy (publications with no. - 2, 9, 11, 12);
- the methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature at primary school age (publications with no. - 5, 9, 11);
- primary education and modern educational technologies (publications with no. - 5, 8, 11);
- the pedagogy of higher education (publications with no. – 4, 6, 7, 12);
- non-formal education (publications with no. - 6);
- improving student-teacher interpersonal relationships (publications with no. - 3);
- media communication (publications with no. - 10).

5. Quality of scientific production and other activities

The qualitative characteristics of the scientific publications of Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, are evidenced by the *9 citations* found in the scientific literature in publications by Bulgarian authors, *of which 5 (five) are in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes and in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals - 4 (four)*.

From a linguistic point of view, the publications of Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, are characterized by terminological clarity, presentation style and word selection in the texts.

The results achieved in the research and applied scientific activities confirm Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, as a scientist with a certain individuality and her own style in the work.

Assistant professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, participates in scientific research projects, and the results of the studies are yet to be published in Bulgarian publications and in publications indexed in global databases with a high impact factor.

6. Scientific contributions

The publications presented by Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, in terms of volume and quality, are evidence of gradual and purposeful development over the years of her professional activity.

In the attached list of scientific contributions, Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, reasonably presents her achievements from a personal point of view.

In accordance with the theoretical-applied nature of the research conducted and the publications made on them, the scientific contributions of Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, are differentiated into nine main areas, presented in detail in the scientific publications.

6.1. The following contributions can be singled out as the most significant in scientific and theoretical terms:

6.1.1. An analytical overview of the main concepts of new literacy and the key skills in the digital world has been made, as a basis for the competence approach in education, through which the theory of literacy and its modification in the XXI century has been enriched.

6.1.2. The modern regulatory framework and educational documentation regarding digital transformation, key competencies and educational content in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as their unification with the requirements of the European Commission, have been analyzed.

6.1.3. Based on an analysis of the existing global experience of digitization in kindergarten and school in the field of improving technological efficiency in the educational process and forming the new skills of the XXI century, a model for a digital kindergarten as an educational ecosystem and options for applying digital technologies in cognitive work with children of preschool age has been developed.

6.1.4. A theoretical model was developed for the formation of media literacy through extracurricular forms of work of students in the 4th grade and five technological options for learning.

6.2. To the practical-applied contributions from the scientific production of Assistant Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, related to the topic of the announced competition, **I would like to single out:**

6.2.1. Developed and tested diagnostic instrumentation for measuring the level of media literacy, which was applied to the "input" and "output" of a pedagogical experiment with students;

6.2.2. A developed experimental model for the formation of media literacy through extracurricular forms of work with an attached experimental curriculum with 30 thematic lessons, including exercises, tasks, didactic and developmental games with the application of media technologies. The approved experimental model for the formation of media literacy and an experimental curriculum were initially introduced into pedagogical practice.

6.2.3. Empirical research was conducted among students in the primary educational stage, parents, children's and primary teachers, the theory of the generational characteristics of "Alpha" children and the peculiarities of their digital socialization was enriched. Based on this, scientifically based conclusions and recommendations regarding pedagogical work with children and students have been formulated.

6.2.4. The readiness of children's and elementary teachers for the digitalization in education has been investigated with the aim of critical selection and competent use of digital resources in the educational process.

7. Teaching

Since 2021 Assistant Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, is a full-time lecturer at the Burgas Free University.

The teaching work of Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD, is voluminous and thematically oriented in several directions. This is evidenced by her scientific interests oriented towards:

1. Media pedagogy;
2. The methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature in kindergarten and primary school.
3. Formation of digital competence and digital culture, of scientific competence.

The products of the scientific research activity of Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD, find application in the lecture courses and seminar exercises led by her:

- Health and Environmental Education – Bachelor's degree (PNUP);

- Information competence in communications – Bachelor’s degree (PNUP);
- Creative techniques – Bachelor’s degree (PNUP);
- Working in a multicultural environment – Bachelor’s degree (PNUP) and Master’s degree (PNUP, NUPCHE, NUPIT, IPNPO);
- Digital competence and digital culture - Master’s degree (PNUP);
- Methodology of teaching Bulgarian language and literature (ed.) - Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree;
- Current pedagogical practice in kindergarten and primary school - Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree;
- Internship practice in kindergarten and primary school - Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree;

Each of the mentioned academic courses has a developed author's curriculum, tailored to the specifics of the relevant educational program and educational-qualification degree.

The specified academic disciplines are also developed in the learning management system MOODLE.

The topics of the academic courses, the developed curricula and the evaluation of the students are proof of the motivation and scientific preparation of Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD, to take the academic position of associate professor in PD 1.2. Pedagogy.

The list of conducted disciplines presents Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD, as an experienced and necessary teacher for the Center for Humanities.

Based on the results of the conducted research, she constantly updates and enriches her lecture courses.

Among the students, Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD, enjoys the authority of a teacher who is empathetic and ready to respond in solving problems related to their studies.

Proof of this is the Student Club "Mission TEACHER" created last year, which brought together students from pedagogical educational programs. Its supervisor and inspiration is Assist. Prof. Zl. Dimitrova, PhD. Already in the first year of its existence, the club made a serious contribution to the enrichment of student events at BFU.

On the initiative of the "Teacher Mission" student club at the TsChN, headed by Assistant Professor Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, a series of scientific events and applied

activities were organized and held - lectures, "workshops", a round table with employers, a happening.

1. "Working with children and students to overcome problem behavior" with Mariana Pencheva, school psychologist.

2. "Theatrical Creativity" with Assist. Prof. Georgi Vassilev, PhD, director.

3. Workshop "To awaken children to art" with Dobrin Peltekov, musician.

4. Art workshop "The teacher - storyteller" with Prof. Pepa Miteva, PhD, TskHN.

5. Public lecture "Mission teacher - a look into the future" with Prof. Maria Alexieva, PhD, TskHN.

6. Happening with the children of the 1st grade of the "Anton Strashimirov" Elementary School and the "Moryache" Elementary School.

7. A children's holiday, dedicated to the Day of the People's Awakeners.

It should also be noted her active participation in the organization of student internships, candidate student campaigns, in the holding of meetings of the Pedagogy Program Council and the Academic and Scientific Council of the Central Academy of Sciences in discussing educational and scientific issues.

8. Conclusion

In view of the research qualities, the teaching career and the professional experience accumulated in it, I evaluate as convincing the candidacy of Assist. Prof. Zlatina Dimitrova, PhD, for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy, Media Pedagogy in the Higher Education Department: 1. Pedagogical sciences, Professional direction: 1.2. Pedagogy at the Burgas Free University, at the Center for Humanities and the Program Council for Pedagogy.

28.01.2023

Burgas, Bulgaria

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Prof. Maria Aleksieva, PhD