

## **REVIEW**

by Prof. Dobrinka Stancheva Peicheva, Ph.D., and DSC

on the presented scientific and teaching documentation of Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov, provided for participation in a competition for the academic position "Professor" in professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Media pedagogy)

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, issue 27 of 28.07.2020

Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov is the only candidate in the competition for professor

### **Biographical data**

Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov has a university degree with honors in Turkic Studies, at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "in 1988. He graduated with honors and a master's degree in Society and Politics from the Central European University in Prague in 1992 and an Area Studies at the University of London in 1994.

He also has several postgraduate specializations - at the National Academy of Radio and Television of the Netherlands in 2002 and at the Fulbright Bulgarian Commission in 2011.

Before his teaching career at Sofia University, Assoc. Prof. Danov worked as a journalist - a reporter at the Bulgarian National Radio, an editor, host of a news and weekly current affairs program (1990-1993); deputy editor-in-chief and Chief Editor, Radio Express, producer at the BBC World Service, London. He was also executive director, Deputy Director-General, and Acting Director-General of the Bulgarian National Radio, 1998-2001. Between 2001 and 2014, he was the Program Director of the Media Development Center, Sofia, and Executive Director of the Center for Development of Communications and Human Resources in Sofia.

He defended his doctoral dissertation in pedagogy on the topic: "New technologies as an alternative to traditional education" at the end of 2011 at the Faculty of Preschool and Primary School Education at Sofia University and was awarded the educational and scientific degree Doctor in Pedagogy.

In 2016 he was elected associate professor in media pedagogy, media studies, and multimedia, and in 2019 he defended his major doctoral dissertation (DSc) on

"Media literacy - genesis, development of the idea, challenges, and prospects". Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov is also known as a translator of scientific literature. He has translated 15 books from English into Bulgarian.

### **Teaching and research activities**

The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov started in 2012. During the period 2012-2014, he worked as a part-time assistant at Sofia University. In 2014, after winning a competition for a senior assistant Professor, he started working at the Faculty of Preschool and Primary school education, Sofia University.

Only two years later, Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov already acquired the academic position of Associate Professor in Media Pedagogy, Media Studies, and Multimedia, and in 2019 he became a Doctor of Science in Pedagogy (1.2) subsequent to a successfully defense of a dissertation entitled "Media literacy - genesis, development of the idea, challenges and prospects."

During his teaching activity Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov has developed an impressively large number of academic courses, numbering 30, aimed at bachelors, masters, and doctoral students, who he reads in three faculties of Sofia University – Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology and Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication. In between, Danail Danov has also developed two post-graduate programs.

Danail Danov has also been invited as a guest lecturer to more than twenty universities, of which more than ten are abroad.

Danov has vigorous activity with the scientific guidance of students. He has supervised more than 50 student dissertations. In recent years he has supervised five PhD students, one of whom has already successfully defended his doctoral thesis.

Lat but not least, Danov has an impressive number of monographs - 8. He has published two studies and over 80 articles in various scientific journals in the country and abroad.

### **Evaluation of research activity**

Danail Danov has joined the competition for Professoes with three monographs, published in 2020 by Sofia University Publishing House. The first one, "Digitalization and Education: Innovation, Creativity, and Interculturalism" contains 168 pages, the second one, "Media Literacy – Experience Reconsidered" – is 240 pages, and his third, collective monograph is "Theoretical aspects and

applied research in media pedagogy". Along with that he adds a study, entitled "The European Media Coach Initiative as a tool for the development of media literacy in Bulgaria" and 12 more articles related to the subject of the competition.

All submitted monographs and articles do not repeat the included scientific publications in his competition for associate professor and his competition for Doctor of sciences.

In one of the major monographs presented for the current competition entitled "Media Literacy – Experience Reconsidered " – Danov shares his ten-year experience, devoted to the research of media literacy. In it he presents his understanding of the subject matter, along with a detailed analysis of the Bulgarian context of media literacy development and a comprehensive training program tailored to Bulgarian specifics.

Danov's second major monographic work, conceptualizes the growing importance of the new type of media skills and competencies of students as part of the essence of education in the new century. The included topics cover an essential part of the challenges which the new type of digital education is faced with. The monograph states that "the lack of media literacy today is not just a deficit, but a prerequisite for disabling inferiority for the future" (p. 37), sharing that this view is also defended by the European Association of viewers (<https://eavi.eu/>).

The study "European Media Coach Initiative as a tool for the development of media literacy in Bulgaria," published in the Yearbook of the Faculty of Education and Arts in 2020, presents the Bulgarian experience in creating a sustainable development model in this field. The study includes an analysis of several vital parameters - media environment, social and demographic characteristics, and education - as a basis for compiling and implementing of a training program allowing the application of such a model.

Danov's article "Media pedagogy in the context of the requirements of the European Union for the development of media literacy," published in his collective monograph "Theoretical aspects and applied research in media pedagogy" enriches his scientific work with an overview of the requirements of the European Union in the field of the development of media literacy resulting from the constant growth and application of digital technologies and tools on a global scale. It also presents a "training program in media pedagogy" which for two years now is being applied at the Faculty of Education and Arts of Sofia

University as a “training tool offering the opportunities of digitalization future and current teachers.”

The overall review of the materials, offered by Danail Danov for this competition show his in-depth interests in media pedagogy and digital literacy, modern education, and its connection with technological development. As Danov argued, they all are crucial in education, in pedagogical interaction for parents, teachers, and children.

I find the presented comprehensive training program in media literacy as a basis for a model for sustainable development of this field in Bulgaria, which in my understanding is among the key contributions of Danail Danov.

A special mention deserve also Danov’s ideas on:

- the relationship between media pedagogy and media literacy;
- digitalization as a means for professional growth of future and current teachers and pedagogical specialists;
- the type of education applied in the Bulgarian context;
- development trends related to the needs of students in modern realities;
- the changes at the personal and public level, as a consequence of digitalization,
- the thesis that the development of media literacy, such as understanding, learning, and teaching, should become an educational strategy and policy;
- the need for a new look at the practices of pedagogical interactions and recommendations for their possible optimization through the means of media literacy;
- the issues requiring consideration in media literacy training aimed at teachers;
- the nature of interculturalism as a form of coexistence of heterogeneous communities and a key factor for modern education effectiveness.

The new broader interpretation of media literacy's essence is contributing - not only as a set of skills and competence for applying digital media for different purposes and in various contexts, but also as a new educational approach directing towards the use of critical thinking, and a motivational factor for a greater civic participation.

Contributing to the development of the scientific problems, core to this competition, is the rich research project work conducted by Assoc. Prof. Danov. These include:

- specialized training program for teachers, resulting from a project, entitled "Teaching Through Media Literacy," No. SBU80020GR0023, funded by the US Embassy Program for Bulgaria. The project provides ground for the training of 500 Bulgarian teachers.
- International project, entitled European Safe Online Initiative, where countries such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, and Romania participate. The project is aimed at preparing a training program for parents on how use Internet in the most healthy manner. For Bulgaria, the project envisages the training of 500 parents;
- International project, entitled European Media Coach Initiative, joined by representatives of Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Romania. The project aims at training of trainers in media literacy and envisages the qualification of more than 100 experts in each of the above mentioned countries.

Based on Danov's project entitled: "Enhancing Media Literacy Level in Bulgaria," and approved for funding by the US Embassy in Bulgaria under contract SBU800-18-GR-0034, a training program has been developed, through which more than 100 students-future and current teachers-have already been trained.

Danov's scientific and teaching activity is also noticeable from his experience as a visiting lecturer, covering over 20 prestigious foreign organizations.

To these accomplishments we have to add Danov's outstanding cooperation with Prosveta Publishing House, RAABE Academy,

The reference to the scientometric indicators for holding a professor's position at Sofia University and the minimum requirements related to it shows that out of the 550 points required D. Danov has collected over 900 points, almost twice as necessary. His works have also been quoted in more than 30 other publications.

### **Recommendations**

My recommendation to the candidate for professor Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Danov is to go beyond the national scope of publications and aim at Scopus and Web of Science.

## **Conclusion.**

Based on the numerous scientific and teaching activity, and the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Danail Danov, mentioned in this review, as a factor deciding the result of the competition, I give my vote in support of Mr. Danov and offer the rest of the members of this academic jury that he is awarded the position of Professor in Media pedagogy and Media literacy in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Media pedagogy).

Reviewer: Prof. Dobrinka Peicheva

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Sofia