O P I N I O N

by Prof. Plamen Legkostup, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences,
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"St. Cyril and St. Methodius"
for the assessment of participants in a competition for the academic position of
"professor"

Field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical sciences
Professional field: 1.3. Pedagogy of education in ... (Methodology of training in technology and entrepreneurship in primary school grades)
Faculty of Education Studies and the Arts
Department of Primary School Pedagogy
Announced in the State Gazette – SG No. 48/ 28.06.2022.

The scientific jury for the competition was determined by Order No. RD – 38 – 391/13.07.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". At the first meeting, I was assigned to prepare an opinion.

1. Compliance of the procedure and the submitted documentation with the current regulations.

The procedure for conducting a competition for the academic position of **"professor"** is published in the State Gazette №48/ 28.06.2022 and on the University's website. The contest is an initiative of the "Primary School Pedagogy" department at the Faculty of Education Studies and the Arts (FESA) of Sofia University (SU).

The only candidate is **Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Ivanov Tsanev, PhD.**

No violations were committed in the procedure and the submitted documentation complies with the current regulations.

2. General biographical presentation of the candidate (education, qualifications, professional experience, etc.).

Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Tsanev has been a lecturer at the "Primary School Pedagogy" Department at the Faculty of primary and preschool education of SU since 1987.

In 1984, he graduated from the Faculty of Pedagogy of VPI – Blagoevgrad, majoring in "Preschool Pedagogy". He has 3 years of teaching experience as a teacher and 35 years as a lecturer at "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia.

After a successful defence of his PhD thesis, in 1999 he received a doctorate in pedagogy, and in 2005 he became an "associate professor".

The candidate performed the following administrative activities: Head of the "Primary School Pedagogy" department (2009-2011); Deputy-Dean of FESA (2011-2019); from 2019 to now – Technical assistant to the dean for electronic and distance learning and business activities; from 2009 till now he is the Administrator of the e-learning system of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts.

Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Tsanev presents us a respectable autobiography, from which it is clear that he specialized in LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY, Great Britain; he received an additional

professional qualification "Specialist in design and conduct of online training" at the Faculty of Pedagogy of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". It is worth noting the fact that in 2006 and 2015 he was a member of the commission for State Educational Standards and curricula on information technologies for 1.-4. grades.

3. Teaching activity.

As a university lecturer, Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Ivanov Tsanev gives lecture courses on the following academic disciplines (compulsory and elective): Didactics of technique and technology; Constructive-applied activities; Methodology of information technology training; Didactics of technique and technology; Constructive-technical and applied activities in occupational therapy; ICT training methodology in RCHO; educational software for children; Digital competence and digital creativity; Origami for teaching purposes in undergraduate and graduate programs. All of them are in the scientific and applied field of the announced competition.

The candidate is the supervisor of three doctoral students, one of whom has successfully defended numerous graduates from bachelor's and master's programs.

4. Scientific research (artistic) activity.

Assoc. Prof. Tsanev's participation in scientific forums and projects shows that there is a deep scientific and theoretical-applied interest in the issues of the competition. He has experience in working on national and international projects – he is the head of 6 national projects and participates in 2 international and 8 national scientific and educational projects. After the award of the scientific title "associate professor", he participated in all the editorial boards of the proceedings of the FESA conferences.

5. Scientific production.

5.1. Compliance with the scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position.

The candidate has fulfilled the minimum national requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. From the submitted certificate of compliance with the national minimum requirements for occupying the academic position "professor", it is clear that it greatly exceeds the required minimum, the total number of points being 1,303.29, incl. 50 points for indicator A.

5.2. Content analysis of the presented scientific works for participation in the competition.

Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Ivanov Tsanev is the author of 76 publications (listed in Full list of ...). For the competition, he presented a genre-diverse and high-quality scientific production, which includes a total of 27 titles (according to the list of selected scientific publications...). The works submitted for review are different from those related to the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and the academic position "associate professor": Monographs - 3 nos.; 1 book based on a defended dissertation thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"; Articles and papers published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited scientific volumes – 7 items; Published university textbooks or textbooks that are used in the school network – 9 pcs.; Published university teaching aids or teaching aids that are used in the school network – 7 pcs.

The presented publications logically overlap with the scientific interests of the candidate and are in the thematic field of the competition. Those who are co-authors are correctly indicated.

I will dwell on the **monograph "Technological learning in the field of constructivism" (2022)**, which is essentially a habilitation work.

Within 199 pages, current issues related to the contemporary projections of constructivism in technological education are discussed. A comprehensive review of the main theoretical and applied aspects of constructivism as a theory is made. Based on a substantive and practical analysis, a point of view about the essence of teaching and learning in technological education, quite different from the one traditionally accepted in Bulgaria, has been examined. Structurally, the book contains the following parts: an introduction, ten independent sections, a conclusion and references. The author has been driven by the desire to capture and clarify the constructivist thesis on learning and teaching in the field of technology, with a special emphasis on technology and entrepreneurship education in the primary school grades.

I believe that the monograph will be of benefit to all who work in the field of technological education.

I can't pass by the **monograph "The Art of Origami in an Educational Environment" (2022)**. Not so much because I am one of its reviewers, but because the problem discussed in it is extremely relevant, especially how origami in the field of education manifests its developing pedagogical possibilities. Within 130 pages, illustrated with 56 figures and diagrams, the pedagogical and therapeutic possibilities of the art of origami for the development of memory, attention, dexterity and fine motor skills of the hands, discipline, responsibility and precision in the work process, the development of imagination, the readiness to write, etc.

I think that it is not necessary to dwell on all the publications presented, given the fact that I am only writing an opinion, but I am obliged to state that in the publications presented by Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Tsanev there is a deep professional interest in the research and study of the conceptual ideas in the articles and reports, that provide the basis for innovation, modernity and efficiency in the realization of the cognitive, socializing, socio-emotional processes in the most important period of human development – childhood. The supported opinions are reasoned and substantiated, expressing precisely and clearly the author's position.

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

6. Scientific- theoretical, practical-applied, artistic and other contributions.

The scientific production of Associate Professor Nikolay Tsanev outlines the framework of his professional interests and reveals the focus of his research and research in the field of Technological Education; Information and communication technologies in education; Electronic and distance learning; Training and qualification of teachers; Modern pedagogical theories and practices in which the candidate's scientific contributions are realized.

They are formulated in three positions: Contributions in a theoretical-systematic plan - 6; Contributions in experimental research plan – 3; Contributions in experimental-research plan – 5, a fact I like, as well as the approach in the 3-page long "Reference to Contributions ..." to cite the publications from which it was derived after each contribution.

A comprehensive summary of the applicant's achievements is reflected in the contributions. I accept the main contributions of the scientific production formulated by the author. They are characterized with 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 proven models for optimizing activities. I rate them positively. I will highlight some of them that I consider the most significant, without belittling the others:

Contributions in a theoretical-systematic plan

A thorough theoretical study and review of the scientific field of technology and entrepreneurship education methodology was made on leading issues; In a broad theoretical plan, the main characteristics of constructivism are systematized, as one of the leading theories in world education, and a different point of view on the essence of teaching and learning in technological education is revealed than the traditionally accepted approaches in Bulgaria; In a theoretical-systematic plan, the thesis is developed that through constructivism, students' knowledge is built upon, interactive learning is realized, and the attention of specialists and teachers of technological education is directed to innovative didactic approaches; Through a theoretical study, basic pedagogical and methodical issues related to using the art of origami in an educational environment have been systematized; A wide range of issues related to revealing and substantiating the scientific-theoretical foundations of the essence and features of models and modelling in various aspects have been investigated.

Contributions in experimental research plan

By using theoretical analysis and synthesis of the didactic reality characteristic of technological learning from appropriate topics and concepts, **a technology** based on the constructivist approach was created; A model for the additional qualification of teachers for the successful use of new information technologies in an educational environment has been developed; A model for implementing a distance form of learning through the electronic platform MOODLE is proposed.

Contributions in a practical-applied plan

In a practical-applied plan, a special emphasis is placed on technology and entrepreneurship education in elementary grades by integrating theoretical concepts into practically developed guidelines and tools for conducting technological education; A model for constructing technological training based on an author's concept, applicable in technological training in the conditions of the Bulgarian education system, is presented; Numerous textbooks and teaching aids for primary school have been created and implemented in teaching practice based on a modern methodological approach in the study of technology and entrepreneurship; A didactic technology of work in a constructivist style was developed for conducting lessons in technology and entrepreneurship classes; Models for conducting classes are proposed, which are adapted to the Bulgarian conditions for expanding and upgrading the knowledge and skills of the students, related to the use of origami for educational and therapeutic purposes.

From the presented **"List of citations"** it can be seen that they are in monographs, refereed and indexed editions and peer-reviewed collective volumes. A total of 25 citations were noted: in monographic studies – 11, in refereed and indexed editions – 3 (Web of Science), in yearbooks – 3 and in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals – 8.

7. Personal impressions

I have known Nikolay Tsanev for a long time, as the ties between our two faculties are quite long.

I have very good impressions of his work as deputy dean and head of department.

These are also my impressions of his activity as an author of textbooks and study aids. It so happened that the three of us, together with Lucia Angelova, developed the teaching aids: "Fairy tale games. Educational direction Gaming culture and recreation" (2005) as well as in 2009

"Skilful and capable friends" (for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd groups), described by the candidate under numbers 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the "Teaching Aids for Kindergarten" section of the Complete list of publications and correctly **not included** for participation in the contest.

I can justifiably claim that Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Tsanev is a charismatic and respected lecturer both by his students and his colleagues, enjoying their trust.

8. Notes, recommendations and questions.

I have no significant criticisms of the candidate. As I wrote above, I appreciate his scientific contributions positively, but I think that some of them could have been summarized and shortened in volume.

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

I have the following question for Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Tsanev: Is it possible and to what extent through the art of origami 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 school age?

9. Final assessment.

Based on the above, I give a highly positive assessment of the scientific, teaching and administrative activities of Associate Professor Nikolay Tsanev. With the presented monographs and the other scientific publications, he fully meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for occupying the academic position "PROFESSOR". The observations I have had over time give me reason to assert that the candidate possesses exceptional scientific-research and academic-teaching contributions, which are the result of his achievements as a colleague established in the pedagogical community with his own positions and attitude to the pedagogical reality. The fact that he is an author, university lecturer – theoretician and practitioner who works actively for the creation and qualification of pedagogues gives me reason to confidently recommend to the respected scientific jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education Studies and the Arts at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" **to elect Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Ivanov Tsanev, Phd** to the academic position of **"Professor"** in professional field 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of training in ... (Methodology of training in technology and entrepreneurship in primary school grades).

22. 09. 2022 Author of the opinion: 

Veliko Tarnovo (Prof. D.Sc. Plamen Legkostup)