

## OPINION

by Prof. Ph.D. Dobrinka Lukova Todorina, member of the scientific jury in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" from the assistant professor. Dr. Alexander Ivanov Ranev in the Professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education), announced by SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts, in the State Gazette. no. 24 of 17.03.2023

**I. Summary data on the candidate's scientific output and activity**  
Ch. Associate Professor Alexander Ranev has presented a list of his publications on the realized research and pedagogical activity, as follows: 2 independent monographs; 4 independent articles published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information; 4 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in peer-reviewed collective volumes; 3 independent studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in peer-reviewed collective volumes and 1 published chapter of a collective monograph. Posts are presented correctly and accurately. They are in accordance with the minimum national requirements for entering a competition for the academic position "associate professor".

5 participations in conferences are also indicated, of which 4 with sectional reports and 1 with a poster. The associate professor candidate participated in 14 scientific projects – 13 as a member and 1 as a project leader.

It is clear from the autobiography that Ch. Assistant Professor Alexander Ranev, Ph.D., carries out activities in the following areas at Sofia University: Pedagogy, Education, Training, Social pedagogy, Socialization, Education.

He is a teacher in the main disciplines: Pedagogy, Theory of Education, Class Management, Social and Pedagogical Work at School, Work with Children with Challenging Behavior. He is the head of the practice of students from the specialty: Social Pedagogy.

His other assets are: participation in educational, pedagogical and psychological activities in Protected Housing TOGETHER and in the Partners-Bulgaria Foundation. He is also related to Special Education, as he also worked with children with special educational needs. In connection with the practical training of students from the "Social Pedagogy" specialty, Alexander Ranev interacts with a number of institutions and organizations.

His dissertation is on the topic: "The teacher as class manager", which was competently developed and defended (I was his reviewer and I can say this).

**II. Evaluation of the scientific and practical results and contributions of the creative production submitted for participation in the competition**

The scientific contributions in the publications submitted for participation in the current competition have a theoretical and practical-applied nature. As the associate professor candidate himself emphasizes, they focus on several interrelated scientific areas that are in full compliance with the announced competition, in the indicated professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education). What the contributions have in common is the realized connection and continuity between old and new knowledge, between theoretical analyzes and practical solutions (thanks to the excellent theoretical training of the author and his rich practical experience), as well as the discovery of an up-to-date interpretation of new approaches, theories, hypotheses, methodologies, principles, methods and forms of

educational activity with an emphasis on educational aspects. The following more important contributions to the creative output of Alexander Ranev can be outlined:

**1. A modern educational approach for positive-oriented upbringing and support** is structured, which is based on the ideas, strategies, methods, working tools for application in practice and concrete examples of solutions are given, which are useful for specialists in the various spheres of work with children, teachers, educators, social workers, school psychologists and parents. The author is categorical that in order to achieve lasting and sustainable results in educational work, such a comprehensive approach to behavioral support and education is necessary. **A model for working with children with challenging behavior is presented.** The basis is the idea of a positive approach when working with children with challenging behavior.

**2. A model for the procedural and instrumental application of the Positive Support** approach has been systematized. It is substantiated by conducting quantitative and qualitative research. This ensures reliability and objectivity of the created model, as well as a guarantee of applicability in practice. The applied orientation of the model is also ensured through the presented numerous case studies and examples from practice in case work in order to illustrate, clarify and substantiate the theoretical content.

**3. Summarizing and systematizing the theoretical-practical dimensions of Petar Danov's educational and pedagogical ideas, researching their projection in today's pedagogical reality.** For this purpose, a rich set of tools was used: analysis of literature by Danov's contemporaries and by contemporary authors, focus groups, observations. On this basis, Alexander Ranev **substantiates a new pedagogical system in the Bulgarian educational space by outlining the main concepts, philosophical frameworks, goals, principles, methods, as well as some controversial and unresolved issues.** The author justifiably determines that this study is the first qualitative study on this topic, as a result of which is **the structuring and systematization of this Bulgarian model, known as Sunny Pedagogy, Sunny Education, Pedagogy of Petar Danov.**

**4. Emphasis is placed on the dimensions of non-formal education within the application of the Solar Pedagogy model. The points of contribution are related to the spheres of health and physical, aesthetic, work, moral education.** Emphasis is also placed on non-formal learning and education in Solar Pedagogy. Educational works of followers of Petar Dunov were also examined, which broadens the scope of the research and enriches it with new facts.

**5. Specific support strategies are presented, features of role interactions between educator and user, basic approaches in team and individual educational work are outlined.** The importance of the role of the educator and the content dimensions of his professional profile are argued.

**6. Ranev rightly emphasizes that for the first time in our country the processes and activities in social services are considered through the prism of informal education to support the personal development of users. The characteristic forms of non-formal education are described:** continuing education, professional and educational courses, trainings, etc. for the acquisition of social skills and skills for independent living of young people who have left homes for children deprived of parental care.

**7. An important place is given to the consideration of mediation not only as a means of resolving disputes and conflicts,** but also as an educational method, since through

it the mediator sets and implements educational goals. The main goal is to highlight key competencies for applying mediation when working with children and youth based on a survey conducted with teachers and social pedagogues.

**8. Ranev rightly draws attention to the application of mediation in the social service "Monitored Housing"**. It emphasizes the need for a different context in its understanding and application. Typical parenting and educational practices are presented, specifically in "Supervised Housing TOGETHER".

**9. A theoretical-applied model and specific guidelines for working with children with behavioral difficulties are presented.** The characteristic goals, reasons, forms of work are considered. Methodology for working on a case, assessment process, building a support plan is also described. It is also indicated when, under what circumstances and in what way the application of physical effort by specialists is necessary to ensure the safety of the child and/or others.

**10. Content and practical dimensions of classroom management as a working (physical) environment are presented.** The main approaches in the understanding of the substantive dimensions of the working environment are present - time, space, hygiene, ecology, documentation. Specific practices for improving the climate in the classroom are also given, which has a favorable effect on the quality of the educational process.

**11. The class symbolism, as well as its educational dimensions within the organizational-management activities of the teacher in the class, were also investigated.** The content characteristics of the symbolic environment are also presented - functions, typology, meaning, as well as exemplary practices from Bulgarian schools.

**12. The general attitudes of students from the III and IV year of the "Social Pedagogy" specialty for continuing education and career development in the socio-pedagogical sphere have been established.** Guidelines are outlined for improving the quality of training and optimizing the learning content in the master's programs for the specialty "Social Pedagogy", as well as meeting the need for qualified and motivated personnel.

**III. Recommendations:** In the future, Alexander Ranev: 1) to continue research and analysis on Class Management - for example, on functions of the teaching profession and qualities of the teacher; 2) to develop technology for building competencies in students for effective work with students - for example, for empathic communication.

#### **IV. Conclusion:**

On the basis of the clearly highlighted significant contributing moments in the scientific research and pedagogical activity of ch. assistant professor Alexander Ranev and his demonstrated competencies for theoretical analysis and synthesis, original research searches, rich quantitative and qualitative studies, established appearances in working with students and in the overall life of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts, I give with conviction positive assessment of Alexander Ivanov Ranev for taking the academic position of "associate professor".

Date: 15.06.2023

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Todorina

