

OPINION

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 science

Professional filed: 1.3. Pedagogy of education in... (Technology and entrepreneurship education in primary school grades and Methodology of classwork in primary grades)

Faculty of Education Studies and the Arts

Department of Primary School Pedagogy

Announced in State Gazette – SG No. 48/ 28.06.2022.

The scientific jury for the competition was determined by Order No. RD – 38 – 390/13.07.2022 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 and the Arts of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The only candidate is Associate Professor **Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov**.

There were no violations in the procedure and the submitted documentation complies with the current regulations.

2. General biographical presentation of the candidate

Associate Professor Lyuben Vitanov has been a lecturer in the Department of "Primary School Pedagogy" at the Faculty of Education and Arts of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" since 1991.

He graduated with the professional qualification PRIMARY TEACHER at the University „Neofit Rilski“. He has 3 years of teaching experience as a teacher and 31 years as a lecturer at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

In 1995 he has defended PhD dissertation, since 2000 he has been an "associate professor", and since 2021 he has been a "doctor of science" in professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Primary school pedagogy).

Assoc. Prof. Vitanov presents us a respectable autobiography, from which it becomes obvious he is a member of the editorial boards of the "Primary Education" Magazine of the Ministry of Education and Culture and "Electronic Magazine for Science, Culture and Education", SU "St. Kliment. Ohridski", FNOI.

3. Teaching activity

As a university lecturer, assoc. prof. DSc. Lyuben Vitanov conducts lecture courses on the following academic disciplines (compulsory and elective): Didactics of technique and technology; Didactics of technique and technology – modern trends and approaches; Methodology of the pedagogical work in class time; Methods and techniques for active learning; Road traffic safety education; Education and play; Guidelines for work in the elective

classes; Inclusive education (together with Prof. Milen Zamfirov) in bachelor's and master's programs. All of them are in the scientific and applied field of the announced competition.

The candidate is the supervisor of four successfully defended doctoral students in professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of education in... (Technology and entrepreneurship education in primary grades and Methodology of work in class time in primary grades) and of many graduates from bachelor's and master's programs.

4. Scientific research activity

Associate Professor Vitanov'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 projects – he is the Head of 2 Projects under the Scientific Research Fund at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and he is a member of 3 others, as well as 5 national scientific and educational projects.

5. Scientific production

5.1. Compliance with 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 significantly exceeds the required minimum, the total number of points being 1048, incl. 50 points for indicator A.

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

Assoc. prof. DSc. Lyuben Vitanov is the author of 135 publications (listed in Full list of ...). For the competition, he presented a genre-diverse and high-quality scientific production, which includes a total of 29 titles (according to the List of publications...). The works submitted for review are different from those related to the acquisition of the Doctorate, the academic position "associate professor" and the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences": Monographs – 2 pcs.; Articles and papers in referenced and indexed scientific publications – 1 pc. (Web of Science); Articles and papers published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited scientific volumes – 13 items; Published chapter of a collective monograph – 1 piece; Published university textbooks or textbooks that are used in the school network – 4 pcs.; Published university teaching aids or teaching aids that are used in the school network – 8 pcs.

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.

I will focus on the **monograph "Technology and Entrepreneurship education" (2022)**, which is essentially a habilitation thesis. In an enviable volume of 324 pages, the main definitions, characteristics, types and directions of technology and entrepreneurship education in primary grades are described and structured. The work includes six chapters, 29 figures, 5 tables and 281 literary sources. The author has developed a model of teaching methods in technology and entrepreneurship at two levels: direct teaching methods and techniques and active and discovery learning methods and techniques. An important place is given to assessment and reflection, and the main issues of the organization and planning of technology and entrepreneurship education are considered. I believe that the monograph will be useful to all who work in this field.

I think that it is not necessary to dwell on all the presented publications given the fact that I am only writing an opinion, but I am obliged to state that in the publications presented by Assoc. prof. Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov there is a deep professional interest in research and study in the papers have conceptual ideas that provide the basis for innovation, modernity and efficiency in the realization of the cognitive, socializing, social-emotional processes in one of

the most important periods in human development – primary school. The supported opinions are reasoned and substantiated, expressing precisely and clearly the position of the author.

The candidate's papers are written in clear and understandable language, without unnecessary terminological burden. 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 assoc prof. DSc. Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov outlines the framework of his professional interests and reveals the focus of his research and scientific interests, in which the scientific contributions of the candidate are realized.

They are formulated in three positions: Contributions in a theoretical-systematic plan – 7; Contributions in experimental research plan – 3; Contributions in experimental-research plan - 4, a fact I like, as well as the approach in the 2-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 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 broad and structured analysis of the technology and entrepreneurship education was made. The educational content, methods and a number of techniques for the formation of technological and entrepreneurial competences, as well as the development of many transferable skills, have been analyzed and systematized. The STEM education in technology and entrepreneurship is described, systematized and analyzed, while being linked more dynamically and systematically with the education in natural sciences, mathematics and visual arts. The concept of wider inclusion of entrepreneurship in education has been developed, not only with topics, but also with specialized integrated tasks, projects and activities. A methodical approach and options for teaching and learning in technology and entrepreneurship are proposed, which combine pragmatic, constructivist and cognitive approaches to realize a balanced upgrade of active over traditional learning. Methodical approach of process-oriented learning in technology and entrepreneurship is structured and implemented in the wide pedagogical practice.

Contributions in experimental research plan

A methodology for interactive education of students from the primary teacher education majors has been created and approved. Strategies, methods, techniques for student-oriented active learning such as problem solving, project work, experiential research work, authentic learning, etc. have been developed, adapted and tested. The positive approach of learning and education in technology and entrepreneurship has been brought out in the classroom as well.

Contributions in a practical-applied plan

In the practical-applied plan, special emphasis is placed on effective teaching and learning in technology and entrepreneurship. A variety of STEM tasks and activities are described that integrate science knowledge in the elementary grades. A variety of topics, tasks and activities are proposed for a more active integration of technology and entrepreneurship education with Bulgarian language and literature, national studies, man and nature, mathematics and fine arts.

From the presented "List of citations" it can be seen that they are in monographs, referenced and indexed editions and peer-reviewed collective volumes. A total of 24 citations

were noted: in monographic studies – 7, in referenced and indexed publications – 1 (Web of Science), in yearbooks – 2 and in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals – 14.

7. Personal impressions

I have known Associate Professor Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov for a long time, as the ties between our two faculties are quite long-standing.

I have very good impressions of his activity as an author of textbooks and teaching aids. It so happened that over the years we have been members of various author collectives at the *Prosveta* publishing house, without having common publications.

I can justifiably claim that Associate Professor Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov is a charismatic and respected lecturer by his students and colleagues, who enjoys their trust.

8. Notes, recommendations and questions.

I have no major criticisms of the candidate. All materials for the competition are well prepared and documented.

I have the following recommendation for DSc Lyuben Vitanov. In his publications, he can examine more systematically the integral interactions between technology education and visual arts, especially in their intermediate fields such as artistic construction. This expansion of the scientific subject matter would be useful for the teaching methodology in the primary school stage.

9. Final assessment.

On the basis of the above, I give a highly positive assessment of the scientific, teaching and administrative activities of Associate Professor Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov. 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 merits, 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, 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 Sciences and the Arts at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" to elect Associate Professor Lyuben Vladimirov Vitanov to the academic position of "Professor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional Field 1.3. Pedagogy of education in... (Technology and entrepreneurship education in primary grades and Methodology of classwork in primary school grades).

22/09/2022
Veliko Tarnovo

Author of the opinion:


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