

Dissertation evaluation

Ye Chen

„Reflective Practices in Teaching“

Evaluator: Doc. PhDr. Marie Černá, CSc.

Marie Černá

The dissertation is focused on a relatively new topic in the field of educational theory in general, and particularly in special education. The author's own training practice in his country, China, and his new experiences within the Mundus SEN program in Europe, are compared, and bring also motivating issues for teacher training in the Czech Republic. It is even more interesting because the research has been done in Czech schools by a non-Czech author. The abstract gives a clear idea about the following report; well selected key words are added.

The dissertation [total pages 86] is logically structured into six chapters, references and appendixes are included. The assignment is correctly presented in standard English.

Chapter one describes the background of the study, the motivation and the aim. It is followed by short explanation of compulsory education and teacher training in the Czech Republic. The stated aim of the research, "to create awareness and orientate the importance of reflective practices in teaching," has been successfully reached.

The review of literature given in chapter two provides an indication of the current state of knowledge in the respective subject. Sources are well presented in a coherent text that is dividend into three main parts: reflection, reflective practices in teaching, and conditions that influence reflection in teaching. The information is well supplemented by Sandy's own thoughts.

The chapter on research methodology offers more than explanation of the research framework. I appreciate very much that Sandy tried, and successfully managed, to describe two different approaches to educational research, namely positivism and constructionism. His commentary [p.24] is fully acceptable. **I would recommend Sandy to present how his understanding of both above mentioned approaches influenced his own work on the dissertation, during viva.** Research design is excellently described, having included three research questions that are well justified and relevant to the main topic. Assumptions, aims, research environment and sampling are also included. The methods used – questionnaires, interviews and observations, their reliability and validity – are presented in proper breadth, are clearly defined and conceived. Ethical considerations are taken into consideration during the research activities.

Chapter four deals with analysis which has been performed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this chapter the author displays his ability and skills to analyze the data based on selected research theory in the light of critically reviewed background literature. I like the author's explanations based on interviews [e.g. p.41] which enriches the text with more details, and makes it even more vital and readable.

In chapter five the findings from the analysis are presented with the linkage to chapter two, literature review, showing the author's ability to evaluate research practice based on selected research theory.

The final chapter presents general findings from the research, suggestions for future research activities, and recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and policy-makers. The evaluation of the study [pilot study, limitations, and implications for future research] is thorough. Research findings [p.63-64] provide answers to the research questions previously formulated [p. 25], although not explicitly expressed. Conclusions are based on strong evidence and research outcomes.

The assignment is correctly presented in standard English.

I recommend Ye Chen's dissertation to be accepted for viva.

Mark: excellent

Prague, August 2007


M.Černá