

## Dissertation evaluation

Suzana B Soo

### „Pathway to Inclusion: Attitudes towards Inclusive Education of Intellectually Disabled Children in the Czech Republic“

**Evaluator: Doc. PhDr. Marie Černá, CSc.**

The dissertation is focused on children with intellectual disabilities, their experiences with school attendance in both inclusive and special schools. The attitudes of special teachers and parents are the main objectives of the dissertation. The abstract provides a clear idea about the following text. Relevant key words are included.

One of the most comprehensive dissertations I had the pleasure to read [109 pages of the text, 154 pages in total], it is very well structured into six chapters, each of them divided into detailed subchapters, altogether creating a readable and coherent text. The assignment is correctly presented in standard English.

Objectives of the study are stated in chapter one with references to the history and current situation in the field of education, including the political and social context. It is pity that in such a copious, many-sourced text some inaccuracies remain, in particular on page 6: “In 1960s, Jan Comenius advocate ..... “{Jan Amos Komensky/ Comenius 1572 – 1670}. The problem statement includes two well formulated major research questions connected with the aim of the study which is also clearly elaborated, from both international and Czech perspectives.

In chapter two terminologies of the main issues related to the topic of the dissertation are presented based on a large number of literature sources. The author uses appropriate resources, many of them the most recent ones, as well as are the websites utilized. The literature review provides a clear indication of the state of knowledge in the respective subjects; namely, intellectual disability, special education, inclusion, inclusive education, teachers', parents' and communities' attitudes towards people with intellectual disability and their inclusion.

Chapter three dealing with research methodology introduces the design of the research. The qualitative approach, and characteristics of participants are also described. Description and justification of methods – observation, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews - follows. Validity and reliability, as well as ethical issues are also included.

Chapter four provides detailed analysis of the collected data. The author shows advanced skill not only in analyzing data but also in structuring the details into a meaningful and contextualized unit. Her commentaries are excellent. I also like the use of quotations by the research participants that enriches and well illustrates the scientific text.

The discussion and research evaluation presented in chapter five takes into consideration many phenomena which are relevant to the main topic, displaying the author's ability to critically evaluate her own work in connection with the background literature.

Fully acceptable and well defined conclusions are presented in the last chapter together with recommendations. As a special educator herself, Suzana shows here her ability to link background literature, research outcomes, understanding of the theme she selected, and her own ideas resulting from professional experience. It is without any doubt that the dissertation, "Pathway to Inclusion....." brings new insight into inclusive education practices in the Czech Republic.

**I recommend Suzana B Soo's dissertation to be accepted for viva.**

Mark: excellent

Prague, August 2007



M.Černá