Dissertation evaluation

Title of dissertation: Learning How to Learn in Inclusive Secondary Education. Facilitating Awareness of Educational Needs and SEN in 'Learning How to Learn' Processes.

Author of dissertation: Dhyan Vermeulen

Evaluator: /Tudor)   PhDr. Iva Strnadová, Ph.D.

Outstanding piece of work!

With regard to assessment of individual educational needs of a person, recognition of individual learning preferences is of great importance. Consequently, learning styles become a central subject of educational-psychological assessment and of assessment done by the teacher. Therefore the topic of the dissertation – the facilitation of processes in which students develop awareness of their learning styles and educational needs – corresponds with up-to-date trends in research focused on learning process.

The dissertation is logically structured into five chapters, bibliography and appendices. I especially appreciate the video which could be well used for in service teacher trainings.

You demonstrate the ability to critically analyze relevant literature. Moreover you seem to be independent and self-confident in learning through research-based activity. You select good examples to support your arguments. The research is based on well-defined terms and concepts as clearly shown by chapter two. Furthermore your professional practice as a post service trainer in educational consultancy is reflected throughout the text.

The objectives of the research – awareness of learning styles, awareness of educational needs and competencies for self-advocacy – have been attained. The action research approach was a good choice in terms of reaching the dissertation objectives. Hypothesis as well as research questions are fully acceptable.

You demonstrate critical understanding of action research method in chapter four.

Chapter five displays your ability to analyze the data gained by self enquiry assessment tools (concretely Learning Style Inventory (LSI) and Multiple Intelligence learning style test (MI-LS) for students and pre and post research questionnaires for teachers) as well as by peer-to-peer interviews. I highly appreciate your ability to arrange the data and to put into context quantitative research results with quotations of individual students. This ability is even highlighted by using mind-maps allowing a deeper understanding of studied phenomena. The conclusions are commented on the basis of the reviewed background literature.

The suggestions for the viva:

- What might be the ways to encourage the teachers to support the awareness of learning styles and personal educational needs of students in inclusive settings?
- In chapter four you come up with the question to be answered in the future – "What are the skills students need to be good self-advocates?". Do you have any ideas – based on your professional experiences and results obtained via your research – how could this question be answered?

During your work on the submitted dissertation you have demonstrated on one hand ability to work independently with great responsibility and enthusiasm, on the other hand ability to accept suggestions of your supervisor. Well done!

The submitted dissertation is a work of distinctive standard. I recommend the dissertation to be accepted to the viva.

Evaluation: 1

Prague, 5. 8. 2007

PhDr. Iva Strnadová, PhD.