

Posudek oponenta disertační práce

Univerzita	Univerzita Karlova v Praze
Fakulta	Pedagogická
Obor	Speciální pedagogika
Uchazeč	Peng Yan, MEd
Pracoviště	Institut speciálněpedagogických studií, Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc
Disertační práce	Research on Support System of Inclusive Education
Oponent	Doc.PhDr. Iva STRNADOVÁ, Ph.D.
Pracoviště	Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze

Inclusive education constitutes a major imperative for most of the worlds' educational systems. Therefore the topic of the submitted thesis – exploration of inclusive education support systems in People's Republic of China and the Czech Republic is well justified. However, I believe that a number of revisions are required.

The Abstract should be written in past tense and could be structured to more clearly summarise the background of the study, methods used, key findings and conclusions.

The Introduction/Literature Review presents only a general case for the significance of the topic. The key terms and concepts are well described, though I would like to hear your voice more in subchapter 2.1, which tends to be rather a summary of inclusion quotations.

The Methods section (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) requires more detail.

The research hypothesis should provide in general “a provisional, or tentative, explanation of what is going on” (Robson 2007). In order to do so you need to provide the background for your hypothesis. For example, how did you determine that “there are no differences in school support system between China and Czech Republic in regards to barrier-free physical environment”? It would be helpful to provide numbers and/or percentages when formulating your hypothesis instead of using more general terms like “certain”, “some”, etc.

The idea of combining semi-structured interviews with a questionnaire survey is suitable for the purpose of your dissertation.

The wording used in questionnaires would require more attention (e.g., inconsistency in using pronouns – see Appendix 1). “Chapter 5: Status quo of support system of inclusive education in Czech Republic” does not provide any information regarding whether the Czech participants were completing the questionnaire in English or Czech language. If the teachers were completing the English version of the questionnaire, then the knowledge of English language must have been one of the selection criteria for participation in the research. This of course might contribute to a limitation in the research (e.g., was the knowledge of English language sufficient?). If the translated questionnaire was used, it needs to be part of appendices. In such case the process of a questionnaire translation and its verification needs to be acknowledged.

It is stated that interviews were conducted with teachers and parents of children who have special educational needs. Participants were only from China, which brings a question to the interview results validity. I believe that using the services of a translator, the researcher could have approached the Czech participants as well. In addition it is not obvious under what basis Xinjin No.1 Primary School was chosen for interviews. How were the interview participants approached? Did the participants receive “invitation letters” and if so what information was included (e.g., purpose of study, assurances of confidentiality)?

How many questions were used in the interviews? Examples of interview questions should be included to demonstrate how the questions targeted the area of the researcher’s interest. (Appendix 5 provides only a broad idea about the areas of the researcher’s interest). What prompts were given during interview and how were these given? The author needs to describe the process utilised for sorting and coding data.

A number of quotes are provided, which gives a general sense of the teachers’ and parents’ perceptions. These quotes give a richness and texture to the findings.

Using descriptive statistics, t-test and one-way ANOVA was a reasonable solution for conducting data gathered via questionnaire.

I appreciate that the results are arranged in synoptic tables and include comments and possible explanations of data. The subchapters on legislation provisions in China and the

Czech Republic would be more suitable in chapter two (or following this chapter) and not as part of data analysis. It is also a pity that Peng Yan does not mention “The National Action Plan of Inclusive Education” (which was accepted by the Government in early 2010) in Chapter 5 “Progress of inclusive education” (see page 97).

The Results section brings interesting information. What is the researcher’s opinion about the contradictory results from Chinese teachers’ saying on one hand that students with SEN could obtain academic improvements due to inclusive education (66.3%) as well as promote social and emotional development (79.6%), though at the same time they believe that the needs of students with disabilities would be best served at special, separate settings (78.6%)?

It is not surprising that Chinese and Czech teachers highlighted the lack of knowledge and skills connected with inclusive education. What would be the researcher’s opinion regarding the best way to improve teachers’ pre-service and in-service education in order to best apply the inclusive strategies?

Upon evaluating the open questions in the questionnaires, it would have been better to provide numbers and/or percentages when listing teachers and parents responses rather than using more general terms like “most”, “several”, “some”, etc.

Chapter 6 presents interesting comparisons between China and the Czech Republic. As demonstrated in exhibit 6.1, most teachers in China have education on a Bachelor level while Czech teachers on a Master level. What is your opinion about the level that is necessary for teacher education?

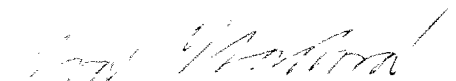
The entire thesis needs to be edited for clarity, spelling, grammar and consistent use of “tense”.

Conclusion

The thesis of Peng Yan, ME.d **fulfils** the criteria set by School Law No.111/1998 Sb. for awarding scientific titles, **but only in the case that the researcher will present at viva in written form all missing information from the methods section** (see my comments above). Based on this condition and on a successful viva presentation, I suggest awarding Peng Yan, ME.d with the academic title Ph.D.

Závěr

Posuzovaná disertační práce Peng Yan, ME.d **vyhovuje** podmínkám stanoveným školským zákonem č. 111/1998 Sb. ve znění dalších předpisů pro udělování vědeckých hodností, **ale pouze v případě, že k ústní obhajobě dodá v písemné podobě chybějící informace k metodologické části práce (viz uvedené připomínky).** Na základě doplnění chybějících údajů a úspěšné obhajoby disertační práce navrhuji přiznat Peng Yan, ME.d vědeckou hodnost Ph.D.



Doc.PhDr. Iva Strnadová, Ph.D.

Prague, 20th May 2010

OPPONENT'S REPORT ON DISSERTATION WORK

Title of Work: Research on Support System of Inclusive Education
Author: Peng Yan, ME.d.
Study Field: Special Education
Opponent: doc. Mgr. Kateřina Vitásková, Ph.D.
University: Palacký University, Olomouc, Faculty of Education

The evaluated dissertation work consists of 178 pages and 7 enclosures, which greatly exceeds the requirements placed on a dissertation work of this type. The text is dividend into 9 main chapters (to be added that the selected form of numbering of sub-chapters to a certain extent makes orientation in the text more difficult) within three major units. A separate chapter on Conclusion is missing. The concept of the work is rather unconventional but this does not have any negative impact on the extent and quality.

Individual chapters are lined up in logical order and constitute a cohesive unit leading from a theoretical insight to the author's own empiric research section, which culminates in a model of inclusive approach. At first, the text commences with a preface and an introduction. The best part of the text is devoted to a research examination based on questionnaire and interview methods. The conclusive third part is an interesting analysis of a model of inclusive education in China.

The selected topic presents an interesting and topical issue which is immensely beneficial within the comparative international context of the Czech and Chinese conditions. The objective of the work was, according to the author herself, to examine differences between the systems of inclusive approach in the Czech Republic and the People's Republic of China. The objective has been, according to my view, met and even exceeded by overlaps to many relating fields with a significant contentual profoundness.

The theoretical part – Section I – focuses gradually on definitions clarifying terms, such as inclusive education, inclusion, supportive systems within inclusive education and research methodology. Individual views are becomingly compared, the author attempts at explaining, in an apposite way, not only the terminology but also the relating philosophical concept and legislative anchoring. Generally, this section is, however, when compared with other parts,

somewhat less substantial. The second part of the work aims at describing the research examination; the third one sets the above-mentioned model of ideal supporting inclusive approach in China. Conclusion is devoted to the issue of family and its task within the inclusive system. The text is suitably accompanied with numerous diagrams and graphs, which supports its comprehension (even in relation to its significant extent).

The research section brings description of a quantitatively supported research. I would think there might have been a bit less hypotheses. Research conditions and applied methodology are described in detail and the individual partial results are analysed and discussed. The author endeavours, in the entire text, to intertwine other links to hitherto published sources. The author utilizes graphical and chart references, states statistically supported results. In the research focusing on the People's Republic of China, the research sample consisted of 120 teachers from 36 common primary schools. Quantitative research is accomplished by qualitatively supported interviews with teachers in inclusive education, administrators and parents of children in inclusive education – this sample is significantly smaller. The Czech part of the examination involved 45 teachers from 16 schools in the Olomouc region. Research results are objectively well-founded and represent a significant contribution to changing the position of special pedagogical theory and practice within the international context.

The list of secondary literature amounts to over 160 references to monographic as well as serial publications, which are not processed in a currently valid norm for bibliographical quotations. In some instances reference to ISBN or the imprint date in periodical data, are missing. The author is attached to the international system, which is less strict, whereas this decision will have to be justified in the course of the defence procedure.

I have a few comments on the formal and contentual realization of the dissertation work:

- In the work, the term “disabled people” is applied – could have been substituted by a more euphemistic and periphrastic equivalent “people with disability”, etc.
- There are linguistic mistakes (have gotten, etc.).
- The method of stating direct and indirect quotations is not unambiguously differentiated (unless the author substitutes inverted commas by changing formatting of the text, which is, however, again, not possible to trace in the whole text, method of application is non-uniform).

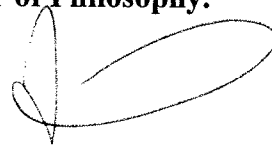
- Graphs should have been referred to in the text.
- In the work, formal ways of text formatting keep changing but it is not clear whether they relate to direct or indirect quotations.
- Some parts of the text are not explicitly related to a concrete source (e.g. page 14).
- Sources from Wikipedia are not advisable for the purpose of dissertation work.
- Too frequent use of formulations in the form of questions.

In spite of the above-mentioned formal or contentual objections, it can be said that the dissertation work of Peng Yan, ME.d., meets, from the complex point of view, the general methodological requirements for this type of work and, with its outputs, it contributes to enriching the special pedagogical theory and practice. The author showed sufficient ability to work with professional literature and conduct an independent research.

Queries and recommendations for the defence procedure:

1. How would the author evaluate the level of applicability of her results in practical life?
2. Why did not she select formally more unambiguous way of differentiating direct and indirect quotations, or why did she use a formal method, which is not clearly ambiguous?
3. Does the author find her results applicable also within the field of international special pedagogical inclusive practice? Where do any possible limitations lie?

Conclusion: The evaluated dissertation work of Peng Yan, ME.d., contributes to the field of special pedagogy and enriches it with new findings. That is why I recommend the presented dissertation to be allowed for the defence procedure and, following successful defence and successful execution of the doctoral examination, I also propose to appoint the author with the scientific - academic title Ph.D. – Doctor of Philosophy.



Olomouc, 16.5.2010

doc. Mgr. Kateřina Vitásková, Ph.D.
opponent