

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Applicant

Mgr. Gabriela Pleschová, MSc., PhD.

Habilitation thesis

The Long-Term Effects of Educational Development Programmes, Collaboration, Trust and Leadership

Reviewer

Luís Alexandre da Fonseca Tinoca

Reviewer's home unit, institution

Institute of Education, University of Lisbon

Content Evaluation

Relevance of the Topic

Gabriela Pleschová's thesis addresses an exceptionally relevant and timely topic within the field of Higher Education, namely the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Amid increasing international demands for accountability and quality enhancement in higher education, her focus on pedagogical innovation and evidence-based teaching strategies is notably pertinent. The thesis convincingly demonstrates its contemporary relevance by directly engaging with urgent questions concerning how educators can effectively improve student learning and educational quality. Through the selection of both theoretical and practical perspectives, the thesis aligns closely with ongoing international debates and responds proactively to institutional priorities for enhanced teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes.

Precision, Clarity, and Understandability

The thesis topic and objectives are formulated with remarkable precision and clarity. Pleschová articulates the research goals explicitly, clearly defining her focus on exploring how SoTL can be integrated into higher education to strengthen educational quality. She methodically introduces her objectives, providing the reader with a detailed roadmap of her research trajectory. The systematic structure—beginning with theoretical frameworks, transitioning into empirical analysis, and concluding with actionable recommendations—ensures coherence and logical flow. This deliberate organization enhances the readability of her work, allowing even those less familiar with the field to grasp complex ideas readily. The thesis successfully maintains clarity and comprehensibility throughout, avoiding unnecessary jargon and consistently situating its findings within practical educational contexts.

Contribution to the Field and Comparison with Other Works

Pleschová makes significant and original contributions to the scholarly and practical dimensions of SoTL. Her comprehensive theoretical review not only synthesizes existing international literature but also critically extends and refines key concepts in the field. Importantly, she complements this theoretical rigor with robust empirical studies, providing original data that significantly enriches the field's understanding of pedagogical innovations. Compared to other works, both domestically and internationally, her thesis excels in explicitly connecting theoretical insights to clear practical strategies. Unlike many other studies in this

field, which may remain predominantly theoretical or contextually narrow, Pleschová provides concrete recommendations that are widely applicable, directly assisting educators and policymakers to implement improvements in teaching and learning. Her thesis thus surpasses many existing studies by bridging theory and practice in a manner both scholarly rigorous and practically meaningful.

Methodology and Formal Standards Evaluation

Appropriateness and Relevance of Methodological Approach

The methodological framework of this thesis is highly appropriate and effectively aligned with its research objectives. By choosing qualitative, comparative case studies, Pleschová systematically investigates complex phenomena related to teaching practices and their impacts. The selection of methods is explicitly justified in relation to the research questions posed, demonstrating thorough consideration of methodological rigor. The thesis carefully explains the rationale behind selecting specific cases and methods, providing clear arguments regarding their suitability for capturing diverse pedagogical contexts and institutional realities. Thus, her methodological approach enables nuanced exploration and reliable findings, directly enhancing the validity and applicability of her conclusions.

Level of Analysis

The analytical depth of Pleschová's thesis is particularly noteworthy. Her critical examination of the theoretical literature extends beyond mere summarization to rigorous engagement, systematically comparing and contrasting diverse theoretical approaches. In the empirical analyses, Pleschová moves effectively from detailed descriptions of teaching innovations toward nuanced interpretations, clearly identifying underlying principles that contribute to successful teaching practices. This advanced analytical level is evident in her ability to consistently link empirical data back to theoretical frameworks, thereby demonstrating sophisticated scholarly reflection. Such analytical rigor enables the thesis to generate deep insights that inform not just theory, but also practical educational strategies and policy considerations.

Formal Criteria (Language, Citations, and Presentation)

Pleschová's thesis demonstrates exemplary adherence to formal academic standards. Her writing is scholarly yet accessible, consistently precise, and meticulously structured. Clear and coherent language facilitates reader engagement, allowing complex arguments to be followed easily. Citations are comprehensive, accurate, and adhere strictly to rigorous academic referencing norms. Moreover, the extensive literature cited includes both foundational texts and contemporary studies from international and domestic contexts, reinforcing the thesis's authority and credibility. Formal aspects—such as accurate referencing, consistent citation style, careful editing, and polished presentation—exhibit a high degree of scholarly professionalism, significantly enhancing the credibility and readability of her work.

Suggestions for Further Enhancement

While the thesis demonstrates substantial strengths across these dimensions, there remain opportunities for further enhancement. Specifically, the thesis could expand on discussions regarding potential limitations of the chosen methodological approach, explicitly acknowledging the challenges educators may encounter when implementing recommended practices across diverse institutional contexts. Addressing these issues directly could further strengthen the practical adaptability of her recommendations. Additionally, introducing comparative analyses of different educational systems or regions could deepen the thesis's international applicability, explicitly demonstrating the adaptability and robustness of the proposed strategies across varied educational contexts globally.

In conclusion, Gabriela Pleschová's habilitation thesis excels in relevance, clarity, theoretical and practical contributions, methodological rigor, analytical depth, and formal academic standards. Her work not only meets but surpasses expectations for scholarly quality and practical impact in the field of Higher Education and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

Theoretical Framework

In the thesis, you extensively review and engage with existing theoretical frameworks of SoTL and teacher development. Could you explicitly discuss how your research extends, challenges, or refines these existing frameworks? Specifically, how does your work push beyond current theoretical boundaries, adding new insights or conceptualizations to the scholarship on teaching and learning?

The thesis clearly links theoretical models of teacher professional development with empirical evidence collected from case studies. Could you clarify explicitly how you established these connections? How do your empirical findings validate, refine, or challenge the theoretical models you adopted, and what implications does this integration have for future theoretical developments in teacher education research?

Methodological Considerations

The thesis includes multiple case studies examining teaching innovations in diverse contexts. Could you elaborate more explicitly on your criteria for selecting these particular cases? What characteristics make them representative for effectively exploring the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and how do they ensure broad applicability of your findings?

Throughout the thesis, you've employed specific research methods, including qualitative analyses and comparative case studies. What do you perceive as the primary methodological limitations or challenges in these approaches within your specific research context? How have you practically addressed or mitigated these limitations during your research process?

Contributions to Knowledge

Based on the presented thesis, what would you identify as your most significant original contribution to the field of teacher professional development, and why? In what ways does this contribution provide new insights or fill gaps previously unaddressed in existing scholarship?

The research highlights numerous practical implications for enhancing educational quality and teacher education policies. Based explicitly on your findings, how can your research concretely inform future policy-making or reforms in teacher education programs? Could you provide specific examples or scenarios drawn from your thesis findings that illustrate these potential policy applications?

Implications and Recommendations

In the thesis, you provide several practical recommendations for improving teaching practices and teacher training based on your research outcomes. Among these recommendations, which would you explicitly prioritize for immediate implementation, particularly considering their potential for significant short-term impact on enhancing teacher education programs? Could you justify your prioritization in terms of feasibility, urgency, and anticipated educational benefits?

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research, you engaged closely with educators and possibly with sensitive data regarding teaching practices and professional experiences. Could you explicitly outline how you ensured ethical compliance, data protection, and participant confidentiality in your empirical studies? Were there particular ethical challenges or dilemmas encountered, and how did you resolve them?

Future Perspectives and Sustainability

Given the robust empirical evidence presented in the thesis, what specific and explicit changes would you propose for the long-term and sustainable enhancement of teacher training programs in higher education? How can your research findings guide strategic planning and continuous professional development initiatives aimed at sustainably improving teaching quality? Could you provide concrete examples or scenarios to illustrate these future-oriented proposals?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled The Long-Term Effects of Educational Development Programmes, Collaboration, Trust and Leadership by Mgr. Gabriela Pleschová, MSc., PhD., **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Pedagogy.

Date: March 28th, 2025

Signature: 