

## 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

Marvi Remmik, PhD

#### Reviewer's home unit, institution

University of Tartu, Viljandi Culture Academy, Estonia

Interest in developing university teaching has seen exceptional growth only within the past decades with some seminal works emerging in the 1990's. With the growing interest in developing university teaching there is a growing need to understand the processes by which academics develop their teaching and themselves as teachers. It has become clear that universities do not thrive on research alone, but they need to focus on teaching and fostering the future generations of scholars as well. Here is already compelling evidence that educational development initiatives, including those supporting student-centred learning, yield desirable changes in teaching practices in the short term.

Research on university teacher development is very much needed in order to understand the premises upon which departments, faculties and institutions can support the initiatives targeted at developing teaching, learning and the teachers themselves. It is precisely this need of research that the habilitation thesis of Gabriela Pleschová, and thus contributes in important ways to literature in the university pedagogical domain. Gabriela Pleschová's work explores the long-term effects of programmes focused on enhancing academic teachers' teaching through student-centred learning and reflective teaching.

The theoretical foundation of the research explore student-centred learning and reflective teaching, two concepts that educational development programmes often aim to facilitate programme participants embrace and enact in their teaching practice. The concepts selected are suitable in light of the research questions. The author is clearly well-read into prior research based also on the latest research literature. The research participants at all institutions, approached programme graduates included those having successfully finished the programme five to twelve years ago.

The research questions focus on the programme graduates' descriptions and interpretations of their experiences, how they understand and interpret student-centred learning five and more years after completing the educational development programme? Do they continue to reflect on their teaching five and more years after graduation? And what do graduates' institutions and the broader national context

play in shaping their ability to implement student-centred and reflective teaching practices?

The research is somewhat limited in terms of its methodological approach, and the author might have been better able to shed light on the phenomenon of university teacher development by methodological triangulation. It remains a little unclear what methodological approach was used, nonetheless, the chosen data collection and analysis methods are appropriate to answer the research questions. It is a bit unclear how well the research manages to grasp the latter (the participants' interpretations of their experiences).

The data collection and analysis steps are described in a detailed and straightforward manner, and the descriptions of the analysis matrices are exhaustive, thus increasing the reliability of the study. The rationale behind selecting specific cases, provide clear arguments regarding their suitability for capturing diverse pedagogical contexts and institutional realities.

The author of the study has also adequately analysed the different limitations of the study.

The thesis contributes with new knowledge to the field. The research serves an important function in that it could be used as reading material for early career academics to support their reflection. Especially four distinct paths make explicit the various positions from which an individual university teacher may construct his or her conceptions of teaching at university and of him/herself as a teacher in this context. I see that these four paths have potential to inform university pedagogical training. I find particularly valuable part of this thesis concluding section that highlights what higher education institutions can learn from the four institutions whose educational development programmes are analysed in this study.

In conclusion, Gabriela Pleschová's habilitation thesis stands out for its relevance, clarity, theoretical and practical contribution.

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

My questions relate to the methodological considerations and future perspectives

1. When you planned the study design, did you consider other options? If yes, what other alternatives could have been used and what opportunities it would provide?
2. As there was always one interviewer from the same institution as the interviewee, how was the reliability of the data collection and analysis ensured?
3. Were there particular ethical challenges or dilemmas encountered, and how did you resolve them?
4. Based on your own experience as an academic developer, what recommendations would you make to your institution to develop and support university teachers?

**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: 25. 4. 2025

Signature: