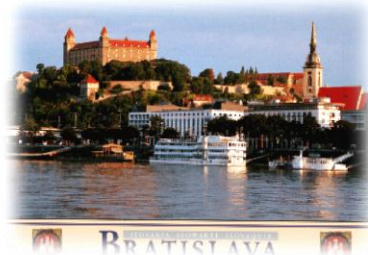


**FOURTH  
ECΨVI  
GERMANY**

# **ATTITUDES OF THE SLOVAK STUDENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT A PILOT STUDY**

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# Faculty of Education, Comenius University



## Institute of Psychology & Communication Disorders Studies Department of Psychology & Pathopsychology

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- **academic and research center**
  - / educational and school psychology, psychology of persons with various impairments and disabilities, psychology of health, didactics in psychology
- **psychological preparation within the general teacher training**
- **education and training for teachers of psychology as academic subject**
  - / primary and secondary education
- **psychological education and training of students of special pedagogy**
  - / psychology of persons with special needs



# Faculty of Education, Comenius University



## Institute of Humanities

### Department of Ethics and Civics Education

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- **academic and research center**  
/ ethics, philosophy, culture, politology
- **Education in philosophy, ethics and cultural studies within the general teacher training**
- **education and training for teachers of ethics and civics as academic subjects**  
/ primary and secondary education

A PILOT STUDY:

**ATTITUDES OF THE SLOVAK STUDENTS  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
TO PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

# GENERAL BACKGROUND

- **in SK inclusion-friendly policies introduced gradually**
  - change of the attitudes expected, but
  - decades of various kinds of segregation
- **if the attitudes to people with the visual impairment are becoming more realistic**
  - robust factor merging in: influence of media and ICT and virtual realities presented

# **GOALS of the study**

- **to study potential influence of a film with some false information related to the visual impairment**
- **to find out, if the mental scheme of the concept of a blind person was influenced by the false depiction of the blind persons by the film /personal characteristics, abilities and skills**

# Theoretical background

- **media affect critical thinking**
- **feeling of trueness**
- **alternative experience**
- **authentic emotion leads to true content**
- **affective component of attitudes = strong influence**

Mihálik, Lotman, Ramonet

# Research sample

**56** university **students** of **special education**

**20** under-graduates - **bachelor**

**32** graduates - **master**

**4** post-graduates - **doctoral**

**age 20 - 24 years.**

**100% females**



# Research method

- 1. Exposure of the film**
- 2. Providing supportive questions stimulating the narrative process**
- 3. Qualitative analysis of the written narrative data**

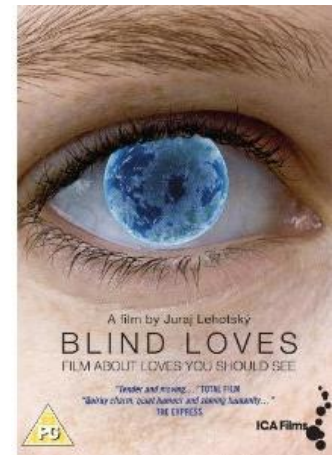
# The film



## **BLIND LOVES / Slepé lásky**

Slovak poetic documentary film  
directed by Juraj Lehotský, 2008

4 blind couples + 4 stories + 4 types of love



# Hints - supportive questions

- What **knowledge** did **you acquire** after watching the film?
- What **feelings** have **you experienced** during watching the film?
- How could you verbally describe the **main protagonists'** intimate **relationships** with significant others and the broader social environment?
- What was the **most surprising thing you learned** about the life of people with visual impairment after watching the film?
- What do you think about **the quality of the life** of the main film protagonists?

# Analysis

- 1. Narratives transcribed + qualitative data extracted**
- 2. Re-read by 3 unrelated evaluators**
- 3. Specific variable – personal encounter – observed**
4. In future - ATLAS.ti will be used

# Key-domains

1. **Knowledge:** What do I know?
2. **Affections:** What do I feel?
3. **Moral:** What moral message I want to keep or share?
4. **General concept of a person (incl. his/her diversity):** How do I perceive a specific person?

# I. KNOWLEDGE and related concepts

- **FILM-BASED NEW KNOWLEDGE**

*I was surprised that Peter was able to walk fast on the pavement or stairs... that his wife was able to knit a sweater - even a good size and that Peter managed to teach blind children.”*

- **PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE SUPPORTED BY THE FILM**

*There was some assistive technology shown in the film as we saw at the Blind Union, for instance – a Braille typewriter, tactile or speaking watch, white cane, person who is guiding a blind person...*

- **KNOWLEDGE CONFLICTING PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE**

*What I really did not like was Peter's image about the sea.*

*Although there were certain fantastic and psychedelic effects it seemed to be too real. We cannot be sure how images of a blind person about the world look like, mainly if the person has no previous visual experience.*

- **UNCLEAR KNOWLEDGE**

*I had a feeling that the protagonists had lower verbal skills... can we speak of a lower intelligence or was it due to the lack of visual stimuli that leads to restricted imagination and worse understanding of abstract concepts? ... Or was it because of randomly chosen actors?*

- **FALSE / VIRTUAL CONCEPTS**

*It doesn't matter for a person with visual impairment if the wall is 1 or 10 meters far away, especially when he is just sitting or lying. They are actually getting lost within bigger spaces...*

## II. AFFECTIONS and related concepts

- **EMOTIONAL AMBIVALENCE**
- **ADMIRATION**

*After watching the film I had mixed feelings. First I had been thinking how is it possible that these people are self-sufficient to such extend, afterwards I felt sorrow and thanked that I have no disability, but at the same time I've started to admire them. I didn't know that blind people are so independent, I couldn't imagine how their usual day looks like.*

Typical emotional dynamics: from sorrow to admiration of real / unreal abilities / skills



# III. MORAL(S) and related concepts

- **PERSONAL MORAL(S)**

*I think that it is always possible to find something in the stories – something that makes the person to think about – I've never realized, how nice, that I am having my sight, because I really cannot imagine to exist without.*

- **GENERAL MORAL(S)**

*We can only be envious of their perception of the reality. In fact, people nowadays are more concerned with very low values; they are exclusively interested in material and commercial things.*

# IV. General concept of the blind person

## 1. ALIEN

wondering people living  
in their own wondering  
world



*The main protagonists are four people creating their own world which is full of unusual images and perceptions.*

*Just after watching the film I was able to understand emotions, thinking and the life of these, from my point of view, exceptional and miraculous people.*

## 2. BEAUTIFUL MIND

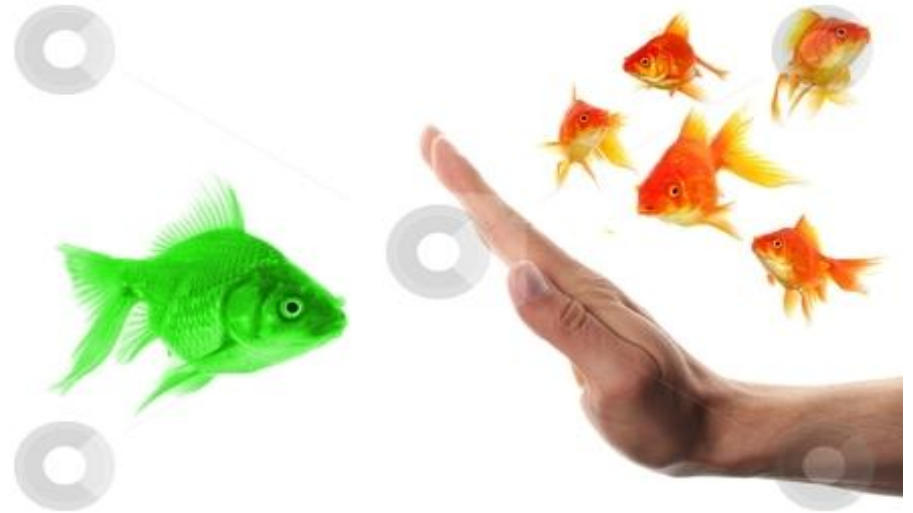
**a goody-goody blind person who is able to judge other people by his/her heart**



*Loves of visually impaired people are true; without any self-interests and vagueness caused by worshipping the beauty as such.*

*It is not important how much Money do you have on your account, if the color of your skin is black, white, blue or purple. The most important is what is inside you."*

### **3. VICTIM** **a lonely, suffering** **blind person,** **not accepted** **by the society**



*I have again realized many things just after watching the film... I got confirmed in my opinion that visual impairment is the worst disability for orientation in life.*

*The truth is that there are only a few people without a disability who would be so tolerant that they would choose to look after a person with a disability. That is why people with disabilities are usually forming relationships among each other.*

## 4. MOLE

a blind person

living in total darkness



*The whole life of this people goes on in darkness ...*

*I wouldn't be able to live in this way; that's why there arose a strong feeling of admiration.*

*Dark scenes – this is how blind people perceive their whole lives. In fact it doesn't matter if the light is on or off – it is always just the same.*

## **5. SIMPLE MAN / MONK living his simple and harmonious life**



*How little they need to be happy... how modest they are, how they accepted what they got from life. They are living very modestly, but they feel happy even from what they got from life.*

*These stories about love made me feel kind of purity and simplicity.*

## 6. HERO

**an extra-ordinary person  
fighting with all life obstacles**



*They are people who have crossed over already a lot of things, but in spite of that, they are strong and live their lives and do not give up.*

*Each of this people could have been sitting all days long at home and feel pity for him/herself – why am I blind ...*

*However they didn't give up. They continue living their beautiful lives and for many of us they could serve as a good example.*

# CONCLUSION

- ✓ The mass-media do influence shaping of the attitudes towards diversity
- ✓ Students of special education proved stronger emotional ambivalence and weakened critical judgment (exception – students with real encounter)
- ✓ Stronger emphasis on practice within special education training necessary
- ✓ Fostering understanding = effective inclusion culture + personal encounter + (not) virtual communication



# Thank you for your attention!

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