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A view from within the English further education sector on the provision of higher education : issues of verticality and agency

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Abstract

This article considers aspects of higher education provision in general further education colleges in England, as seen from within the further education sector. It argues that there is a need to examine what are the defining features of higher education, who determines them, and the risks and advantages of structuring further and higher education vertically, so that given subject areas are taught at several levels within the same institution. Evidence is given to show that the funding, qualifications and inspection regimes applying in England to the majority of provision in general further education colleges are increasingly different from those in universities, giving less agency to both staff and students. This raises questions both about the extent to which the differences rationally reflect the different nature of the learners and their courses and about the implications for expansion, differentiation and participation in undergraduate education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)