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Abstract

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) are a principal means by which governments seek to assure the quality of higher education. A body of critical scholarship has, however, emerged in the last two decades that challenges their philosophical and practical foundations. Stephanie Allais is prominent amongst the critics. She has published extensively on the role of the NQFs that have been implemented in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and upwards of one hundred other countries progressively since the early 1990s. Selling Out Education. National Qualifications Frameworks and the Neglect of Knowledge (Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2014) is the latest in this body of work. A critical, albeit selective, reading of Selling Out Education is presented in this article. It examines certain themes and issues that are central to Allais's arguments: neoliberalism and the origins of competency-based NQFs (CBNQFs); social constructivism, economics imperialism and educational policy; the implementation, and continued proliferation, of CBNQFs; and a threat of CBNQFs to bodies of knowledge and to traditional universities. The book offers an arguably often

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highly contestable challenge to the assumptions, values and policy prescriptions that underpin the competency movement and much writing about higher education quality assurance. Selling Out Education thus deserves a wide international readership. It is, however, not just about NQFs: it is, rather, a wide-ranging political tract that argues that selling out education will only cease when capitalism has been defeated. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)