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Author

SVENSSON, Lennart

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Abstract

Internationalisation of higher education is a strategic theme in current research on higher education and policy debate. Both at national and institutional levels, in many countries, internationalisation is stated to be an educational goal. However, the dominant discourse on internationalisation of higher education in research and research-based discussions tends to be framed by political, economic and organisational perspectives, rather than informed by educational considerations. There is also a tendency to place internationalisation in higher education within the conceptual frame of economic globalisation and the increasing trade in educational services worldwide. While such discussions may shed light on various organisational, political or economic issues, this research does not give a pedagogical basis for the internationalisation of higher education in terms of teaching and learning. In particular, questions relating to the internationalisation of content and learning outcomes need to be addressed. A series of studies conducted in Sweden 1999-2007 by the authors indicates that the didactical realisation of internationalisation as an educational goal can be very elusive. In our

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findings, the concrete content considered by teachers and students to represent internationalisation did not follow any clear pattern or goal. Internationalisation was assumed to be represented by some form of 'general knowledge' and general human qualities, without considering cultural differences. Institutionalised curriculum thinking as a basis for developing internationalisation was lacking. Concrete thinking was very much restricted to organisational and administrative aspects, and thoughts concerning content and learning outcomes tended to be expressed in idealised and general terms, rather than developed into clarifying and useful specifications underpinned by curriculum theory. Certain consequences ensuing from this situation are discussed, and a curriculum approach to internationalisation of higher education is suggested. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Svensson, Lennart, E-Mail: lennart.svensson@pedagog.lu.se