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Abstract

This study focuses on the discourse of an intercontinental on-line Master's programme in adult learning, using English as the lingua franca of the programme and involving four collaborating universities in Sweden, South Africa, Canada and Australia. The programme is highly interactive, emphasising communication between students. Taking the variation in participation as the point of departure, a discourse analysis aiming at analysing the contingencies contributing to the pattern of communication in the programme was undertaken. Data consist of a variety of texts on-line web-documents, written notes, and narratives that participants wrote about their lives related to participation in the programme. The use of English as the lingua franca contributed to a mistake anxiety, which for some students was hampering their communication in the programme. Aspects of the material world such as the vast differences in the efforts and costs for participating in the

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programme were also highly interrelated to the shaping of socio-culturally situated identities among the students and thereby contributing to the variation in frequency in participation. The results show that the official discourse of the programme as a text, with its emphasis on equity, change and development, gets subordinated to the discourses produced and reproduced by the students in the programme as a discursive practice and social practice. The students' accounts reveal that there are fragments of an alternative discourse emerging, based on mutual concern and friendship, which might suggest a potential for changing the communicative patterns in the programme. (HRK / Abstract übernommen), Abrandt Dahlgren, Madeleine, E-Mail: madab@ibv.liu.se