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The impact of university context on European students learning approaches and learning environment preferences / Ronny F. A. Wiersta, Gellof Kanselaar, Jos L. van der Linden...

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Abstract

This article describes experiences of 610 Dutch students and 241 students from other European countries who studied at least three months abroad within the framework of an international exchange program. The Dutch students went to a university in another European country and the foreign students went to a Dutch university. By means of a questionnaire students' perceptions of three main characteristics of the university learning environment were measured concerning the home university, the host university and the ideal learning environment. The students were also asked about their way of learning at the home university and at the host university, in particular about the extent of constructive learning and reproductive learning. Evidence was found for the influence of aspects of the learning environment on the two learning approaches; e.g., a learning environment characterized as student-oriented discourages reproductive learning and promotes constructive learning, especially when conceptual and epistemological relations within the learning domain are stressed. The learning environment preferences of the students were partly related to their learning orientations at the home university, but they were strikingly similar for students from different countries. There was a strong preference for those learning environment aspects that promote constructive learning. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Author for correspondence: Wierstra, Ronny F. A., E-Mail:

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