



Symposium: Challenges in developing professional knowledge, education, and practices in Swedish higher education

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5 Challenges in developing professional knowledge, education, and practices in Swedish higher education

Research Domain

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Rationale

The formation of professionals and professions is, simultaneously, a core function of contemporary universities and a field of contestation where different worldviews, rationalities and aspirations meet. In this symposium, we will present an interdisciplinary research collaboration, called PHE (Professional knowledge in Higher Education), between four academic institutions in Sweden. These institutions regularly collaborate on research activities concerning professional knowledge, professional education and learning addressing core issues for the welfare state, for social justice, sustainable development, and higher education pedagogy. We will present the main motivations for this collaboration, its goals, and examples of its ongoing interdisciplinary research. The symposium will situate our collaboration in current public and academic debates on the growing societal demand for strong, flexible, and pluralistic professional programs in higher education and in doing so, also address pressing issues related to welfare, the knowledge economy, and the labour market. Such demands pose new challenges for universities today in regard to, for example, the need for expertise and pedagogy.

Central to this collaborative project is a new interdisciplinary research school, SPETS (Studies in Professional Education and Training for Society), with doctoral students from all four institutions and inter-institutional supervision. In the symposium, five ongoing doctoral projects that represent current challenges and tensions in Swedish professional education and development will be presented. In Matilda B Svensson's research, she highlights the policy turns of teacher education in Sweden and how they affect understandings of professional knowledge. Per Holmgren and Yihua Zhang examine how digitalization impacts what is seen as valuable knowledge and pedagogy in HE today and how digitalization is used to address some of the key issues in professional programs. Reghan Borer's study concerns how public engagement is addressed in Swedish doctoral education, and Sara Svensson discusses the use of arts-based pedagogies to facilitate personal and professional development across a range of professional education programs. In Amoni Kitooke's work, he explores community-oriented aspects of professional education, particularly praxis and knowledge issues in teacher education.

These doctoral projects, in parallel with other joint activities and meeting points in this collaborative endeavour, address issues that include highly relevant intersections between digitalization, internationalisation, equity, policy and quality assurance, economic disparities, migration, and community welfare, which point to some of the challenges of developing professional knowledge, education and practices in higher education today.

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Chair

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106 Professional Knowledge Domains in Community-oriented Teacher Education: A literature review

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Research Domains

Academic practice, work, careers and cultures (AP)

Abstract

Initial teacher education through higher education courses and school-based practicums has been criticised for being decontextualised and insufficiently preparing teacher candidates to address the complexity and needs of the classroom, school, and local communities. An alternative, practice-intensive initial 'teacher training' uncritically offers a curriculum-scripted approach aimed at increasing standardised test scores but attends much less if at all to students' experiences and community needs. An emerging third approach, community-oriented teacher education (CoTE), combines learning in higher education, school-based practicums, as well as experiential learning and civic participation in community life. An unresolved question remains: what kinds of professional knowledge do CoTE practices and activities develop among teacher candidates? This literature review analyses the process phases of CoTE activities in 12 contexts and identifies that CoTE develops teacher candidates' theoretical, technical, practical, and critical-emancipatory knowledge.

Full paper

Introduction

The knowledge base of teacher education is contentious because there are contrasting perspectives on what an 'ideal teacher' needs to know, be and do (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). Stakeholders conceptualise differently the nature and purpose of education; and whether to prioritise developing teacher candidates' knowledge of subject, pedagogy, research, or change agency (Furuhagen et al., 2019). Kretchmar & Zeichner (2016) describe initial teacher preparation approaches dubbed 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0. Teacher Prep 1.0, offered through higher education courses and school-based practicums, has been criticised as too theoretical with too limited classroom practice to