Final Learning Symposium

eucen 2018 Autumn Seminar

Embracing Cultural Diversity in University Lifelong Learning

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BSM, Balmes 132, 08008 Barcelona | Spain

Policy recommendations of HE4u2 – analysis and critique

The participants of the workshop discussed the HE4u2 policy recommendations, which were introduced by Katharina Resch and Francesca Uras. Participants came from the areas of research and practice, but not from policy itself, (so the target group of the workshop was not there). All agreed that diversity is a hot topic in HE at the moment. Three questions were posed: How useful do you find the guidelines? How much new information / innovation is contained from your perspective? Which other claims or policy statements do you have / are missing?

The discussion was interesting: participants claimed that statistics and numbers are generally missing from the HE4u2 policy recommendations and that policy makers do refer to numbers if available. Also, a new approach "reverse diversity teaching" was discussed in line with "reverse mentoring", which means that BAME teachers or students teach diversity instead of majority teachers or students. Also, the connection between active citizenship and diversity was discussed in the workshop and how to bridge these two concepts. From practice, experience shows that actions are oftentimes paid from outside the university which might lead to a disengagement of universities in diversity issues. In this case, funding comes from the outside, but this can make diversity activities invisible within the university. So, the disconnection of management and practice was further discussed.

In the last part of the workshop, the effects of such policy papers were talked about among participants. The HE4u2 policy recommendations seem to be a good starting point for national or regional consultations, but they have to come alive in face-to-face discussions with policy makers and this is still to be done. A question for the future: How can policy makers be engaged and involved in the best possible way?