University lifelong learning: when universities are strategizing…

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Learning outcomes at the crossroad of institutional logics

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Introduction

- The European lifelong learning policy fits to what worldview ?

- What role European lifelong learning policy attributes to the systems of education, training and validation of experience, including to the universities?

- From the point of view of the European Commission, what kind of relationships should be established between these systems?

- LO as an element which contributes to implement the European lifelong learning policy, and to define the role universities should play in a knowledge-based economy
  - "a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand, or be able to do at the end of a learning process" (OJ 2008)
  - LO standardize the description of qualifications in order to compare these, regardless the way an individual acquire these qualifications

- Since September 2014, all the Belgian French-speaking HE institutions must define LO for each of their curriculum
➔ Why LO have been so successfull? (Conjuncture and institutional logics)

- Discourses

A European story

- In 2000, two main documents:
  - The presidency conclusion of the Lisbon European Council (Lisbon strategy)
  - A Memorandum on lifelong learning (European Commission)

- Europe tells a story about the world, about itsef and about its place in the world
  - Knowledge-based era/society/economy
  - Innovation as the main drive of economic growth
  - The skills needed by the labour market change quickly
  - Ageing of the European population
  → Double risk: structural unemployment & labour shortage

- Solution:
  - States, people and systems must « adapt » to the changes (mutations)
  → Active welfare state & active citizenship: lifelong learning

European systems of education, training and validation of experience organized as a network

- European learning systems must provide a (highly) certified skilled labour force

- All European citizens must have access to these systems (the « social » dimension of lifelong learning, which is actualy subjected to the full employment and the economic growth)

- From that point of view, it is necessary to remove all the obstacles to the access to learning

- One of these is the lack of mutual recognition of qualifications between the systems of education, training and validation of experience both inside a country and between European countries. And, of course, the European Commission presents itself as the most relevant actor to coordinate this mutual recognition.

- The objective of the network organization of the systems is to enhance the mobility of the learners and so to enhance the skills levels of the population.

HE, a learning system among others

- 1996: European year of lifelong learning

- 1998: Sorbonne Declaration

- 1999: Bologna Declaration

- 2000: Lisbon strategy & Memorandum LLL

- Prague 2001: LLL, knowledge-based society, knowledge-based economy; ECTS; DS

- 2002: Copenhaguen Declaration

- Berlin 2003: Lisbon strategy

- Bergen 2005: EHEA Framework; ESG

- 2008: EQF

Policy instruments

- Different policy instruments: EQF, EHEA Framework, ECTS, DS, ESG

➔ Together, these instruments aim to integrate HE system in a network of production and recognition of qualifications in order to produce active citizenship,

➔ that is, a flexible, an adaptable and a mobile workforce.

- LO contribute to this transformation. They are the materialization of an utilitarian logic.

LO in the Belgian French-Speaking HE

- Since 90's: educationalists have more and more influence on universities and promote a competence-based approach

- Since September 2014, all HE institutions must define frameworks of LO for each curriculum

- This obligation came with the implementation of EQF & EHEA Framework

- Do HE actors share the utilitarian vision of the European Commission?
- ➔ No, LO at the crossroad of institutional logics

Several institutional logics

- Public authorities: compliance logic
  - To comply with European norms

- Academic authorities: managerial logic
  - To manage programs, teaching mission and professors work

- Educationalists in charge to implement LO in their university: pedagogical logic
  - To improve the coherence of the curricula
  - To clarify the didactic contract
  - To improve the quality of learning
  - To favour a competence-based approach
  - To establish a constructive alignment
  - To clarify the relationship between curriculum and employment

Conclusion

- Several institutional logics converge on LO

- Although the European Commission, public authorities, academic authorities and educationalists do not share the same vision of the role of HE, they form an objective alliance through their agreement on the use of a LO approach

- Loosely coupled system or tightly coupled system?

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