Mellan akademi och lärarprofession

Integrering av vetenskapliga och professionella mål för lärarutbildningens examensarbeten

Anders Råde

Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av Rektor vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i Humanisthuset Hörsal E, fredagen den 4 november, kl. 10:00.
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Abstract
The aim of this thesis is to study the relationship between the overall academic and profession-oriented goals for the degree project in Swedish teacher education. The methodology includes analyses of 26 syllabi, reviews of 33 scientific papers, interviews with 24 supervisors and analyses of 84 published degree projects. The introduction of a degree project in teacher education in many European countries, as well as in academic professional programs in general, can be understood as being a part of a trend towards academization of teacher education programs. At the same time, however, there is another trend in higher education, a “practical” trend, which upholds the importance of profession-oriented goals. While it is a main ambition in higher education to bring these two types of goals closer together and, if possible, integrate them, these two trends can interfere with each other. The interference can be seen as a new version of the long-running issue of theory versus practice in academic professional education. This study of the purposes, implementation and outcomes of the degree project shows that there are both possibilities and hindrances when it comes to integrating the academic and the profession-oriented goals. Firstly, the three degree project models in European teacher education, i.e. the traditional thesis, the portfolio and the action research model, all allow for the integration of the two kinds of goals. Secondly, five of the goals are conducive to an integration, namely those involving subject knowledge, data collection methods, documentation skills, analysis skills and distancing skills. However, as was mentioned above, the thesis also points to certain factors that may hamper such an integration. Firstly, the academic goals often tend to be seen as more important than the profession-oriented ones in a degree project. Secondly, there are eight goals that may make the integration difficult. Three of these are academic, namely academic level, priority of supervisors’ academic qualifications over their professional qualifications and academic writing, while five are profession-oriented, namely broad knowledge, experience-based knowledge, artistic knowledge, didactic skills and normativity. This thesis analyses the possibilities and difficulties involved in an integration using Bernstein’s concepts of vertical and horizontal discourse. As the academic goals belong to the vertical discourse, they can give teacher students an understanding of why professional activities are done in a particular way, and enable them to critically assess teaching situations, while the profession-oriented goals, which belong to the horizontal discourse, can give them an understanding of how to perform professional activities and introduce them to the practical aspects of teaching. A final conclusion of this thesis is that there are many ways in which academic and profession-oriented goals can be integrated in the teacher education degree project. A successful integration would result in a degree project that incorporates two different perspectives, an academic bird’s-eye-view and a narrower, more profession-oriented one with a closeness to the teaching practice.

Keywords
Academic trend, higher education, horizontal discourse, practice trend, vertical discourse