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Students' and Teachers' Experience of Globalization/Internationalization 'of' Higher Education - Emphasizing a pedagogical stance in an internationalized teaching and learning context: Four empirical studies conducted in Sweden.¹

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Abstract: The conclusions in this paper are drawn from the results of four empirical studies. It has been important to take an empirical approach in the investigation, concerned with internationalization of higher education, since even though plentiful of studies over the last decades have been concerned with internationalization in/of higher education, it has not been from the perspectives from the teachers and students and their experiences of aspects of internationalization in relation to their educational context (that is, as a student, and as a teacher). The phenomenon of internationalization in higher education has, even though frequently investigated during the last three decades, been addressed as unclear, vague, ambiguous, and obscure, and has not become clearly conceptualized in an educational practice. Various phenomena complexes have however been typologically outlined, dealing with internationalization in terms of various ideologies or in terms of doctrines, or as a state of things, or as an overall process, emphasizing various foci and relating these to various components. What is emphasized in this paper is a shift from an overall external perspective to a relational experienced based perspective, viewed as the description of students' and teachers' experiences and understandings of an internationalized educational context. The results show that the participants did not share a mutual understanding of the phenomenon of internationalization, or a shared curriculum (understanding). This leads to consequences in teaching and learning approaches, based on the various experiences/understandings of the phenomenon of internationalization in relation to teachers and students experiences. The results imply that the main reason for the perceived lack of clarity concerning 'internationalization' relates to a lack of teachers pedagogical/didactical theoretical awareness with consequences for students in teaching and learning situations, when issues/topics/matters/aspects of internationalization are focused on. This study has been conducted within the educational context Swedish nurse education. *It is argued that (the) internationalization of curricula and the view of learning of aspects of internationalization within internationalized contexts of higher education, must head for a change.*

A shift in perspective - makes an important difference

In Swedish higher education, focus on issues related to internationalization of program delivery has up to now mostly been from an ideological or/and organizational perspective,

¹ This paper is based on the results from four empirical studies. The studies are not exhaustively described and only some parts are highlighted in this paper. The results are published in four papers (see references) and published in September 2005, as a part in a PhD thesis at Lund University in Sweden: University Press. The idea is to invite for debating on the issue, concerning 'internationalisation of higher education'.

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that is, influenced mainly by external environmental perspectives and internationalization discourses of various kinds, rather than working from an understanding based on students' and teachers' experiences of an internationalized teaching and learning context. The gain in acknowledge and enclose an experienced based perspective, is that this we will give us a good description of how (overall) intentions have been transferred into practice.

Internationalization of education has up to now been viewed rather as a matter of a social and interpersonal construction leading to a presumption of humanism as being good *per se*, and in terms of 'instrumentalism', in a form of pragmatism, also presumably taken to be good *per se*, and in terms of 'educationalism', drawing on 'bildung/ausbildung' and linked to life long and life wide learning traditions. Also Humanism and democracy have been represented as ideologies that are assumed to support internationalization and globalization in higher education. *These are however viewed from a meta-level perspective where internationalization builds on good intentions per se' and hence, therefore are assumed to be 'good per se', but still not made explicit from a pedagogical/didactical point of view described through an empirical approach, underpinned by an experience and understanding (contextual framed) by the teachers and students involved.* It will be a great challenge for policymakers as well as teachers to acknowledge the importance of and to view and understand internationalization of higher education from a didactical and pedagogical stance, rather than entirely relying on various predefined constructed and socially determined discourses at work. It became evident through the conducted four empirical studies, made by the author of this paper, that despite the teachers' teaching dedication, expertise, and personal devotion concerned with aspects of internationalization in Swedish nurse education, teachers did not have a shared didactical/pedagogical culture or curriculum, concerned with a shared understanding of internationalization and its pedagogical considerations. Student likewise, experienced the phenomenon of internationalization as obscure, and fractured, and also, evidently, the students did not shared an distinct experience of a mutual curricula in relation to aspects of internationalization within Swedish nurse education contexts.

The literature, supported by curricular objectives in higher education, also suggests that, despite internationalization of higher education, internationalization itself has been a focused issue for decades, and yet it is still experienced as vague and obscure in teaching and learning contexts. I will argue that the main reason appears to be that internationalization has been dealt with from primarily a non-pedagogical stance, and the impacts and forces have been primarily pre-determined by external environmental perspectives and discourses, rather than by research based on students and teachers experiences of practice concerned with internationalization in/of higher education. This of course does not imply that the former approaches are of no importance, however what it does imply is that the latter is under-investigated and under-theorized and neglected the whole of the discussion that might lead to the understanding of the phenomenon of internationalization in higher education in general, and in Swedish nurse education in particular.

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General background concerning Higher Education in Sweden

A report by the Eurydice European Unit², argues that the goals of Higher Education in Sweden, underpinned by stipulations in the Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) are firstly, to rest upon scientific ground and approved experience and research. It also suggests that universities and university colleges “are to promote understanding of other countries and international matters in their activities”(ibid. p. 485). Overall the report asserts that, “internationalization of education and research is regarded as an important element in the quality work of universities and university colleges” (ibid. p. 485). The report outlines students and teachers exchange programmes as the most common aspect of internationalization in higher education.

In Sweden the government has increased the emphasis on the international dimension of higher education, encouraging all university and college units in their development towards an international and global change concerning higher education in general. Swedish higher education has been continuously reformed and evaluated with the aim to being positioned to take part in this social process known as internationalization and, in a wider sense, globalization (Jarvis 1996; Knight 1999; Källemark & Van der Wende, 1997; Van der Wende 1996, 1997; Waters 2001). Looking back, the concern with internationalization in various curricula for the Swedish higher education has increased in a distinct way (SOU 1959:45, UHÄ 1981, Strömholm, 1994)³, as well as looking forward, anchored through the present government policy for higher education in Sweden (SFS 1993:100; Källemark & Van der Wende, 1997). In a report about education and research for strategically internationalisation, published by The National Agency for Higher Education in Sweden (HsV 1998:16), it was stressed that a shift of perspective viewing Sweden in relation to the rest of the world, should be emphasised. A need to strengthen an international competence meeting the future demands of the changing surroundings and promote an increased international collaboration for solving global issues, was asserted as overall crucial concerns.

Also, the influences of curricula objectives (stated by The National Agency for Higher Education in Sweden (ibid)) are of some importance in relation to internationalization of higher education in general, in terms of the emphasis on the importance of life long learning⁴. Lifelong learning is focused on the learners’ perspective and a personal *profit/benefit* in terms of a deep understanding in relation to what educational content that is focused on in any educational context in higher education in Sweden. It is held important that each individual

² See <http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/LLL/EN/cover.pdf> (26/4/05)

³ The aim is not to describe internationalisation in higher education in Sweden in a historical sense and will therefore not be outlined in this paper, however the overall assertion rest on the notion of the ‘democratisation’ process in the Swedish society and the liberal education process that has been an ongoing from the post war (of the second worlds war) period and forward. In English see: “Two decades of reform in higher education in Europe: 1980 onwards, Sweden - National description”. Brussel/Sweden: The Eurydice European Unit (2000). www.eurydice.org Date 04/04/2004.

⁴ Drawing from the term ‘Bildung’, the term ‘Life-long-Learning’ should be comprehended as a process. Life-long-learning could be viewed in a twofold way: as product and as a process, involving education that is related to a formal educational context and limited in time even though possible as some kind of a recurrent event, and involving knowledge and learning ‘over time’ as a continuum, both ways assumed to be both informal as formal in character.

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learner⁵ become a concerned and participated actor in his or her own learning-processes. Consistent with the implication in higher education in Sweden of today, the view held in this study is that a deep approach in teaching and learning in any formal learning contexts opens up and support a relational approach to learning concerned with intercultural knowledge content. *What*, related to aspects of internationalization in an learning context become an *collective issue* of importance, but also acknowledge the importance of humans' individual experiences and understanding and meaning (that is, variations in ways of experiencing) related to any of the learning objectives focused on in teaching, within a higher educational context.

Expressed somehow metaphorically, one could speak of *a relational self regulating/adjusting companionship*, in the intertwining of the individual and collective learning structure. Such a view of learning would imply a holistic approach to learning and emphasizes a relationship of a relational character unified by an existential self-realized/self-discovered aspect. In terms of self-awareness as allied with the experience in learning, held by the person concerned, intertwined with the totality of the educational experiences, a relational self-regulating/adjusting companionship implies that this is mainly developed through an understanding of intercultural knowledge when internationalized teaching and learning take place. This became evident in data through the discernment of a personal-growth aspect in relation to learning and knowledge of intercultural character⁶.

The four empirical studies

In this study carried out in relation to Swedish nurse education in higher education, 24 students nurses were interviewed (Wihlborg, 1999, 2004a), and a survey with 60 teachers (Wihlborg, 2004b) as well as a follow-up interview study (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005/in press) with 18 teachers (where nine interviews were analyzed in more detail). The study was aimed at describing the phenomenon of internationalization as experienced by the participants. The data was analyzed using a qualitative approach, with the support of the computer program: HyperQual and NVivo.

This paper draws on the results of these interviews with students and teachers as well the survey study with teachers within higher education (Wihlborg, 1999 [study I], 2004a [study II], 2004b [study III]; Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005/forthcoming [study IV])⁷ that is concerned with explorations of students' and teachers' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon of internationalization. It is the authors' recommendation that the investigation of the empirical studies and the results should be regarded as 'basic research' framed and grounded in a discourse that takes a pedagogical/didactical stance, within the continuum process of internationalization in/of higher education. The results, based on an empirical qualitative research approach are supporting a beginning/front line, of a establishing a discourse tradition, emphasizing a pedagogical and didactical perspective. A perspective concerned with internationalization of/in higher education involving intercultural learning in

⁵ Meaning a 'learner' within any (formal) educational context in higher education.

⁶ This will be outlined in another paper/in progress.

⁷ Ahead, in this paper, references to study I, II, III and IV is also representing the studies conducted by Wihlborg, 1999, 2004a, 2004b; Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005.

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terms of 'variations' in knowledge and meaning and understanding, where a phenomenographic approach in teaching and learning is advocated as one possibility for achieving a deep approach in learning of aspects of intercultural character.

A deep approach in learning - a phenomenographic approach

According to the phenomenographic approach, students' learning is described in terms of meaning, understanding and experience. A number of phenomenographic studies has discussed learners' approaches in terms of a surface and deep approach to learning (Marton & Säljö, 1976, 1986; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Booth, 1997; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999, among others).

The terms 'holistic' and 'atomistic' can be related to 'a deep' and 'a surface' approach to learning, Marton et. al. (1977) and Marton (1988) and Marton and Säljö (1986). Drawing on Marton (1988) Forms of learning can be described as follows: if connecting the *how* aspect (that is., the act of experiencing, of organising and of structuring) and the *what* aspect (that is., that which is experienced, the content) in learning, and outlining the relation as a logical structure, then, the *how* aspect is connected to a *holistic* and *atomistic* approach in two of the following ways. In the holistic approach there exists a focus on the whole in relation to the parts, and in the latter, the atomistic approach, there exists a focus on the parts (of some object). These forms relates to different structures of *how* the *what*, is organised in approaches in learning.

The *what* aspect is connected to a *deep* and *surface* approach in two of the following ways. In the *deep approach* there exists a focus on the 'task', and in the *surface approach* there exists a focus on the 'signs' on the word-level of the text (that has to be understood by the learner)(Marton 1988, p. 66)⁸. Biggs (1999) says about approaches to leaning that:

A surface approach refers to activities of an inappropriately low cognitive level, which yields fragmented outcomes that do not convey the meaning of the encounter. The deep approach refers to activities that are appropriate to handling the task so that an appropriate outcome is achieved. The surface approach is therefore to be discouraged, the deep approach encouraged - and that is my working definition of good teaching. (ibid. p. 60).

To explore a phenomenon such as internationalization of higher education and ways in which to achieve internationalized teaching and learning and discern if an atomistic versus holistic approach and a deep versus a surface approach is present in an educational context, became underlying research intentions in all of the studies, as well as attempting for to elucidate, if critical thinking was a necessity and an essential ability involved. In the results, various approaches to teaching and learning are discussed in all of the four studies and the results were discussed further (in a wider sense) incorporating critical thinking⁹ as an important feature in students' learning.

Overall description of the results of the empirical studies

⁸ Interpreted and rewritten by the author of this paper.

⁹ Not discussed in this paper in a thorough way and will be addressed further in a coming paper.

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Three domains concerned with internationalization were revealed¹⁰. They can be described as 1) concerned with formal issues in higher education in relation to internationalizing the Swedish Nursing Education; 2) concerned with students and teachers exchange programmes between countries; 3) concerned with educational (knowledge) content related to issues/matters/topics and aspects of internationalization. The last domain is twofold in character and can be divided into 3a) teaching and learning of medical-technical educational knowledge content, and 3b) teaching and learning of intercultural educational knowledge content.

Firstly, it is a question of being aware of the qualitative differences of the three domains concerned with internationalization. Then the issue will be to raise questions concerned with *what focus* and *what must be done* to strengthen, support and emphasize efforts in issues related to internationalizing nurse education: Is it all of them that need attention or do some more than others? Also the question of adopting a learner or a teacher perspective, in the empirical studies. teaching, came to the fore in the results from the empirical studies. The question concerned with taking a distinct shift, from an *external meta-level* approach (that is., a standpoint taken from an external international environment) towards a pedagogical/didactical and experienced-based approach emphasizing intercultural knowledge content, has emerged from the studies as being *the most* important one. This raises other questions, concerned with ontological and epistemological grounds in relation to teaching and learning, grounded in a curriculum theory (supporting curricular objectives), to support such a shift. The importance for *pedagogical awareness per se*, involving intercultural pedagogy (or an internationalized teaching and learning pedagogy)¹¹ in higher education as well as in the nurse education, needs to be emphasized not only as important, but necessary and essential as well, if a shift towards an internationalized teaching and learning are to take place. Conclusively, this assertion is claimed to be held important in all higher education.

The results outlined in Curricula theoretical terms

In all studies (I-IV) overall three characteristically different **main areas/parts** concerned with internationalization can be described, that answer the *What* aspect. These main parts have been developed with a backdrop against which the current curricula objectives and policy documents for higher education and the Swedish nurse education may be examined. Two areas/parts are framed as being primarily of organizational character (exchange programmes and formalities in higher education); one part is framed as being of educational content character. The latter is twofold (medical and technical, respectively intercultural educational content):

- **1) Exchange programmes** for students and teachers - internationalization from an organizational perspective, and as increasing possibilities in general involving possibilities for students in participating in an exchange programmes, and as

¹⁰ The results are not outlined explicitly; see the four papers individual results.

¹¹ There are some differences between intercultural pedagogy and the approach taken in this paper: an internationalised teaching and learning, however, admittedly the distinction towards intercultural pedagogy must be made clearer. This will however not be discussed in a thorough way in this paper.

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competition - formal validity. For instance in terms of being able to live and work as a nurse abroad, to become mobile in an international market in general.

- **2) Formalities in higher education** (between countries) - internationalization from an organizational perspective, and as an internationally valid Swedish nurse education, and as competition - formal validity. For instance with a focus on a comparison between countries various rule/credit systems¹² and curricula objectives.
- **3a) A medical and technical knowledge/content** focus and increasing possibilities in general; and as an internationally valid Swedish nurse education involving a medical-technical competence and accordingly nursing capabilities. The term *competitive* became evident as to be part of a question concerned with education as a whole, that is, competing with other countries' education programmes as to be valid for working in other countries, when having accomplished the goal to become a qualified nurse, and developing capabilities of medical-technical character. Competitive became a question of experiencing that a high quality as regarding competences of medical-technical issues were provided through the educational content, compared with other countries nurse education.
- **3b) An intercultural knowledge/content** focus and intercultural competence and desirable nursing capability; and as a Swedish perspective on nurse education programmes; and as intercultural knowledge; and as opening up boundaries between countries, or a free flow between countries; and as the need for focused (knowledge/capability) exchanges between countries. Intercultural knowledge, competencies and ability became evident as to be a question concerned with the nurse education as a whole, that is, when having accomplished the goal to become a qualified nurse, and developing capabilities and ability of intercultural character. Focus became a question of experiencing that a high quality as regarding competencies of intercultural issues were provided through the educational content.

A teaching didactic approach

Questions concerned with *What* and *How* teaching are considered in terms of rationales for methodological assumptions and how teaching is carried out according to present discourses on learning. Teaching becomes then a question concerned with educational constraints, methods and outcomes. In the studies it became a question of *How* the educational content (aspects of internationalization) are taught and conceptualized by teachers and students. And *What* (based on educational content focuses) became a question concerned with the outcome of students learning, and teachers ideas about what the student needed to learn in terms of (aspects/features of) internationalization.

In all studies the participants were asked if they were familiar with the curricula objectives for higher education in general and for Swedish nurse education in particular. The three main

¹² The Bologna Declaration and the new ECTS (credit) system had not been completed when the analysis of the fourth empirical studies was in its final. Lifelong learning and the Bologna Declaration see; http://www.google.se/search?q=cache:TZgY5slV2FQJ:www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/report_SjurBergan.pdf+ECTS+credit+systems&hl=sv Date: 10/10/2004 and www.bologna-bergen2005.no Date:07/05/2005

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areas reflect what students and teachers held to be intentions of internationalization, concretized in the nursing programme with which they were involved. How students were taught and how teachers claimed they were teaching, concerning aspects/features of internationalization, became most evident in study III and IV.

Both students as well as teachers (however teachers more thoroughly asked in the studies concerning teachers [III-IV], were asked if they were familiar with what was meant by the assertion that higher educations should rest upon a scientific ground and approved experience and research. They all said that they were in some sense aware of this phrase, ranging from vaguely aware to more distinctly aware. The interpreted meaning (in phenomenographic terms the intentional meaning), that this phrase implied for each of the participants, underpins the contextual frames that has been staked out by the participants (I-IV), concerned with how teaching methods in use supported a learning of various aspects of internationalization. This also involves the notion the participants had of certain principles in higher education held as important as regards to students learning such as: critical thinking, reflexive/reflective thinking, abstract thinking and the capability to problematise. The latter part concerning the *practice* of important principles in higher education came to the fore in the studies when the choices of teachers teaching methods (III, IV) became apparent, and also, through investigation of how the students conceptualized the meaning of internationalization as a whole (I, II).

How became a question connected with learning as being a process, and concerned with teachers' approaches in teaching and students' view on how to learn about (aspects of) internationalization (that is., what content, by which methods, *how*). Viewed from the students' perspective¹³ this was described either as being informed about an existing exchange programme and about formal rules between countries and other such formalities. However, the students also described an experience, in describing a holistic approach¹⁴ in teaching (performed by the teachers) when aspects of internationalization were in focus (see further the individual studies for instance: [Cat 1-5] in study I, and [Cat 1-3] in study II). In large part the description ranges from participating in exchange programmes to expecting international literature as a *tool* to work with in their education and being confronted with research issues/matters/reports, as well as meeting with international lecturers and trainees from various countries, lecturing in the programme and being a natural element/feature in their educational experience. Some students wished to become *interculturally knowledgeable* and indirectly supported the idea that a holistic approach in teaching was desired ([Cat 3 and 5], in study I, and, [Cat 2 and 3], in study II). Teachers' views of the use of teaching methods of relevance are in large described as: ranging from giving information about formalities and exchange programmes: as well as transferring knowledge in terms of *story telling* about (aspects of) internationalization (see both organizational and educational perspective, in study III). Further, they range from preparing students for studying abroad and classroom lecturing to classroom discussions, essay writing, using reflective focus group sessions (see for instance

¹³ Based on students interpretation of curricula objectives concerning any internationalization of higher education and the nurse education as well. This should be taken into consideration and is held as relevant for all/everything that is discussed in relation to the participants 'didactical awareness'.

¹⁴ This came to the fore through the *students' ways of thinking of internationalization* as to be holistic or atomistic in character, and how they had experienced the performances of teachers, when they teach about aspects of internationalization.

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forms of teaching and studying in study IV). Teaching methods are assumed to be underpinned by teachers' approaches to learning, as to be either atomistic/fragmentary or holistic in character, in the latter case aimed at a deep approach in students' learning outcomes.

What became a question concerned with that of learning the educational content (that is., aspects of internationalization) through the teaching methods in use, leading to an *outcome* important for the role as a nurse and the nursing profession as a whole (an outcome that is assumed to be process related). The participants' (teachers) view of a learning outcome is assumed to be supported by a didactical approach, which in turn govern the participants' interpretations of the prevalent view of learning as stated through the curricula objectives. Viewed from a student perspective, it was shown as their idea of a learning outcome as a whole (that is as a product) based on their experience, meaning and understanding of internationalization, varied. These ranged from students believing that to work and live abroad as a nurse would become possible and was their main goal and/or to become more knowledgeable about medical/technical issues and/or to be able to understand other cultures' habits, life ethos and norms (for mentioning some aspect examples). In the latter case some students believed that they as individuals had/would, experience some (kinds of) personal growth by achieving an understanding of other cultures (see studies I-II). And *What*, held as adequate by teachers, became evident in their ideas about the students' learning outcomes in terms of students' capabilities, ranging from becoming EU qualified as a nurse and/or be inter-culturally knowledgeable, incorporating a humanistic and democratic view of humans in general (see studies III, IV).

The field of '*subject didactics*'¹⁵ concerns two major perspectives; a subject didactical perspective and a student didactical perspective, the former in taking an exterior stance and the latter taking an interior stance. The *What* aspects are concerned with, what an educational content denotes or conceptualizes that would point out its line of demarcation in comparison with other subjects, and the *How* aspect is concerned with the understanding of the educational contents connotation. The *Why* became a question of the importance of internationalization in nursing science in general.

The subject perspective

What in the studies could be pointed out as *Nursing Science*, even though this could be a bit problematic, since nursing science is interdisciplinary in character. However, in relation to the empirical studies' aims focusing on the phenomenon of internationalization, this generated no conflict for the participants. The reason is that the participants were free, in respect that they, themselves, constituted the contextual frames, the meaning and understanding of internationalization had according to their own understanding of the phenomenon, in general as well as against the backdrop of the curricula intentions of nurse education as a whole. The curricula intentions stated that internationalization should be present throughout the educational content, described as *a red thread/general feature* running through all of the educational content present in the nursing program. The students, as well as the teachers, framed the phenomenon of internationalization as mainly medical/technical or intercultural in character, across all subject areas comprised in Nursing Science (see study I, II, III and

¹⁵ [Linked to the Swedish 'skolämnesinnehåll' and 'ämnesteorietisk bakgrund']

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study IV, case 1, 2 and 3). The two main areas characteristics were experienced in a range between being both intertwined as to be separated. Some participants also acknowledge both main areas as essential for internationalization of higher education, others only one or the other.

How is in the studies a question of (the) learning of aspects of internationalization, which in all studies showed to be intertwined with the two major subject areas mentioned above (each comprising several issues, topics, knowledge areas and so on, in Swedish 'ämnesövergripande' 'cross-subjects/interdisciplinary'). The major subject areas combined with the students' interpretations of the meaning of learning of aspects of internationalization, are described in terms of how they conceptualize their understanding of internationalization in terms of a holistic and respectively a fragmentary approach, an approach that varied largely between students (Wihlborg, 1999, 2004a). The teachers' visions, beliefs etc. about the students' need for learning of (aspects) of internationalization against the backdrop of nursing science and 'the idea of' the nurse/nursing profession varied largely between teachers as well (Wihlborg, 2004b, Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005/in press). The *How* was showed through teachers' conceptualization in terms of their meaning of internationalization. This was viewed in terms of a holistic and respectively atomistic approach¹⁶ in teaching, and varied largely between teachers¹⁷.

Why, in relation to matters/topics/aspects of internationalization within the 'nursing education programme', ranged and became evident from the students' perspective in terms of important valid formalities in order to be able to live, work and study abroad about other cultures ethos and life habits (Wihlborg, 1999, 2004a). And the *Why*, viewed from the teachers' perspective can be described in terms of 'desirable nursing capabilities', and 'intercultural competence' (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005/in press), which focuses on the teachers' visions and ideas concerning the importance of aspects of internationalization and internationalizing the nurse education. The teachers' view(s) of how the students assimilate nursing and intercultural competencies and ability are mainly based on teachers' own personal experiences, used as a knowledgebase, and being taught as story telling (Wihlborg, 2004b, Svensson & Wihlborg, 2005/in press).

The student perspective

The perspective is concerned with questions of students and indirectly teachers conceptions (that is teachers' views on students learning and learning outcome) of aspects of the phenomenon of internationalization for one, and for another, their ways of thinking of internationalization, as a conceptualized whole. In the four empirical studies it is outlined as qualitatively varied ways of experience and understanding internationalization of higher education. Described on an abstract collective level (highlighted key aspects described as illustrations in the categories and the themes, in all of the studies) these are in turn, mirrored through (the) individuals (students as well as teachers) various ways of understanding and experiencing the phenomenon of internationalization in higher education within Swedish

¹⁶ In the holistic approach there is a focus on the whole in relation to the parts and vice versa, and in the atomistic approach, there is a focus on the parts (of some object or/and learning matter). On holistic and atomistic, deep and surface approach, see Biggs, 1999; Marton, et al., 1977; Marton, 1988; Marton & Säljö, 1986).

¹⁷ Descriptions of the variations: see the individual studies, due for making delimitations in this paper, text wise.

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nurse education. Questions concerning whether an atomistic/surface or holistic/deep approach was present in teachers teaching of students and students learning of aspects of internationalization, became evident.

The *What* aspects are concerned with what an educational content denotes or conceptualizes that would point out its line of demarcation in comparison with other subjects, and the *How* aspect is concerned with the understanding of the educational contents connotation. The *Why* became a question of the importance of internationalization in nursing science in general.

Intercultural knowledge and a shift towards a pedagogical stance in higher education

Is it possible to talk about global knowledge or knowledge supporting global understandings, or perhaps learning of cultural change(s) as a form of knowledge related with learning about aspects of internationalization, or should the question be raised differently? Also, how can an internationalized teaching and learning become achieved?

The question(s) raised in a pedagogical sense concerning intercultural knowledge would concern the what aspect and educational content, that is the denotation of an educational content and the relation and distinction towards other aspects (or issues/matters/subjects) focused on in an educational context. Also, it will concern theoretical assumptions on learning and a didactical reflected internationalized teaching and learning. In a phenomenographic sense, internationalization would be concerned with learning, describing any aspects of internationalization as open for various meanings and understandings, which are delimited only by the choice of what aspects of internationalization (depending on each educational context). However, the approach in learning is continually underpinned by the assumption that variations of meanings and understandings would be acknowledged. Any chosen aspects of internationalization is put into relation with adequate educational content, and furthermore, supported by a deep approach in learning from a students' perspective.

Waters (2001), discusses the path of globalization through time and its influences in social science from the 16th to the 19th centuries. He discusses "three arenas through which globalizing processes take effect, the economy, the polity and culture" (Waters, 2001, p. 22) and points to the global idealization and reflexive individuation of today. He maintains that "the new world chaos" equals "globalizing cultures" (p. 182), and says;

...as material interdependence increases and as political sovereignty is whittled away, trans-national, inter-societal connections eventually become more dense and important than national, intra-social ones. The central features of this acceleration are compression of time and its elimination of space, and an emerging reflexivity or self-conscious intentionality with respect to the globalization process. (p.182).

Intercultural learning involves learning about social phenomena and global changes and would involve a flow of understandings between people. Robertson (1992) and Waters (2001) discuss a form of emergent holistic consciousness. On a global level, this would involve cultures being connected to a complex collective whole, a form of collective consciousness. Intercultural learning would be in the form of transnational meaning and understanding and experience. As mentioned by Svensson (referring to Hannerz, 1992), "culture is based on creation of meaning." (Svensson, 1998, p. 124). Svensson raises the question of the nature of

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cultural changes and the meaning of culture and says that “transnational cultural flows represent conditions for the flows between cultures and flows between cultures mean cultural change. The flow and the change have their basis in the cultural nature of man” (Svensson, 1998, p.122). Svensson discusses education as flows between cultural contexts and the relation between cultural elements in relation to education and says that:

“Cultural changes dependent on transnational cultural flows are here seen as a matter of how externalizations of meaning within one culture are dependent on externalization of meaning within another culture. This kind of dependence and influence is only a special case of relations between externalizations of meaning. The character of such relations is a main preoccupation within education as a discipline, although they are not usually referred to in those general terms.”(Svensson, 1998, p. 124.)

Until now the concern with the internationalization of higher education (universities) has been at an organizational level, closely linked with economical-political demands and presumptions and assumptions of various kinds (Adler, 1997; Chaffee & Jacobson, 1997; Sporn, 1996, among others). What have been discussed are universities in relation to an external international environment. Bartell (2003) for instance claims that over the two last decades worldwide, universities have “come under increasing pressures to adapt to rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces emanating from immediate as well as from broader post-industrial external environment” (Bartell, 2003, p. 43). There has also been a focus on academic and *organizational climates and cultures in higher education*, which belongs to an organizational perspective and closely linked to economy, politics and approaches in policy (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Austin, 1990; Rhoads & Tierney, 1990). However, contrasting this outlined background on how internationalization is mainly addressed, I will argue that very few, if any qualitative investigations, have been carried out *concerning the experience of aspects of internationalization* as interpreted by students and teachers in terms of teaching and learning. What is called for is a bottom-up perspective, compared to and unlike what has been done in previous research, in other words, research that make the meaning and understanding of students and teachers experiences come to the fore. What they experiences that internationalization of higher education mean, that is, what to learn (educational content) and how to learn (approaches to learning) about aspects of internationalization, research which is a highly under-investigated approach compared with previous organizational oriented research about internationalization.

Further Discussion

Knowledge constituted through an awareness of cultural change(s) as a part in learning in higher education in general. Questions concerned with, if it is possible to talk about global knowledge, or knowledge supporting global understandings, or whether the question should be raised even differently, were addressed earlier. First, if making an attempt in answering the question(s) concerning the assumptions that an internationalized teaching and learning must rest on a deep approach in learning and a student (learners') perspective must be established, both must be claimed as essential parts for constituting and developing intercultural knowledge and competencies in an educational context in higher education.

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Learning of social phenomena and understanding global changes in relation to educational contexts specifics, as well as drawing on general intentions stated for all higher education would involve flows of understandings between humans. It is important to consider the matter further, not only at a meta-level, but rather from what is meant, following Svensson's (1998) claim that "culture is based on creation of meaning." (ibid. p. 124). If we agree on the importance of meaning as experience based, then we must consider this in 'the constitution of knowledge'.

The idea of de-contextualization and re-contextualization of knowledge and meaning, assumed to be developed through a relational ontological view on learning rejecting a Cartesian dualism (see for instance Marton and Booth, 1997 and Svensson, 1997) leads to and involves changes in how humans experience and constitute meaning and understanding in relation to their surrounding world.

The question is, whether this can be considered to take place in terms of a collective awareness, viewing variations of experiencing a phenomenon/aspects of a phenomenon, here aspects that according to Marton & Booth (1997) describes a dimension of variations (and in this case, ways of experiencing aspect of internationalization within a specific educational context). This view holds that on an abstract level it will be possible to both describe and in teaching (practice) comprehend a collective shared knowledge.

If we starts to raise questions concerning whether it is possible to talk about global knowledge, or knowledge supporting a global understanding. This will then also concern ontological and epistemological assumptions as well as involving questions about content issues, put in relation to teaching and learning. The phenomenon of internationalization concerns learning in terms of variation of meaning and understanding in relation to cultural content. The super-complexity of societies, when meeting through higher education and universities, can be characterized as (a) conceptual turmoil. However, what may be similar in higher education between cultures is the character of learning. Supporting a deep approach in learning could be a common concern. A similar approach in learning, an acknowledgement of variations in ways of understanding objects of knowledge will be essential features, which can be agreed on. For instance, it is assumed that in order to support and broaden the learners' experience and understanding of nursing, it is necessary to confront him/her with qualitatively various meanings related to a learning issue (of intercultural character). That is, various meanings to be parts of connoting any knowledge object, will give a broadening of the students' experience dimension, which in turn could lead to a conceptual change in understanding and viewing a phenomenon.

Conclusions

This papers' concern was with a pedagogical/didactical perspective and an investigation has been made to describe internationalization of higher education, in terms of making the pedagogical and didactical approaches in praxis visible. The paper outlines how internationalization come to the fore within in an educational context, in terms of educational (knowledge)content and approaches to teaching and learning (in the Swedish nurse education). *Such an approach*, in terms of what educational content is focused on and how it is taught based on students and teachers experiences and views of internationalization within

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the Swedish nurse education in a higher educational (learning) context, *to investigate the phenomenon of internationalization* of higher education has been little or not used. The author recommends to frame and ground this research in a discourse within the continuum and ongoing process of internationalization in/of higher education. A qualitative research approach should be a discourse tradition, emphasizing a pedagogical and didactical perspective/stance concerned with internationalization of higher education from the perspective of student' and teachers' experiences. Higher education in Sweden should build on scientific knowledge (in a broad sense) and be on tested experience.¹⁸ The principles of the promotion of students *critical thinking and reflexive (thinking)* abilities as well as the ability to be able to problematise in reasoning, are of importance and emphasized in curricula (SFS 1992:1434; SFS 1993:100;)¹⁹. The suggestions put forward in this paper, would support the development of these crucial and emphasized principles in higher education, since a deep approach and variations in ways of experiencing is aimed at in teaching and learning situations.

Fundamentally different ways of viewing internationalization of higher education. The concept of internationalization in the context of higher education can largely be understood according to Mestenhauser's (1998)²⁰ and by Ellingboe's (1998) definition, here described by Ellingboe (1998):

“as the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system. It is an ongoing, future-oriented, multidimensional, interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused, ever-changing external environment” (ibid.p.199).

Bartell (2003), referring to Ellingboe's (1998) and Mesterhauser's (1998) views on internationalization in higher education, is extending the meaning of the concept of internationalization, by saying:

“that internationalisation conveys a variety of understandings, interpretations and applications, anywhere from a minimalist, instrumental and static view, such as securing external funding for study abroad programs, through international exchange of students, conducting research internationally, to a view of internationalisation as a complex, all encompassing and policy-driven process, integral to and permeating the life, culture, curriculum and instruction as well as research activities of the university and its members” (Bartell, 2003. p. 46).

Bartells' (2003) notion of enlargement/broadening, referring to Adlers (1997) and Lapiners

¹⁸ See English translation: <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/02/15/40/d894190c.pdf> Date:2005/03/29

¹⁹ See http://www.eng.hsv.se/en/iwt/startpage/startpage_en.jsp?home=location Date: 2005/03/29

²⁰ These 'areas' are not this papers' focus, for an overview on representative examples concerning: 1) research of agenda for the internationalisation of higher education and ground rules for internationalisation which primarily focus on 'educating for global competence' consisting of a theoretical framework of: curriculum, international education, organisational changes and intercultural competence, described from mainly, a university-wide level, collegiate level and an individual level see: various contributes in Mestenhauser, J. A. & Ellinboe, B. J. (edt) (1998) "Reforming the Higher Education Curriculum". The American Council on Education. Phoenix/Arizona: The Oryx Press.

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(1994) views' on internationalisation and globalisation of higher education, concerns the assertion that it is helpful to make a distinction between internationalisation, and the concept of globalisation, in applying three phases to internationalisation: a multidomestic phase, a multinational phase, and a global or transnational phase, whereas globalisation can be viewed "as an advanced phase in the evolving process of internationalisation." (Bartell, 2003, p. 46-47). Bartell maintains, "that internationalisation may be viewed as occurring on a continuum" (Bartell, p. 51) and, that "higher education can no longer merely espouse universal values at the rhetorical level but must promote understanding through interpersonal, cross-cultural, international and shared experience." (Bartell, p. 51). By referring to Gumpert & Sporn (1999) and Cohen (1997), Bartell (2003) says, that one example in higher education (since the issue of internationalisation/ globalisation, has mainly be discussed from a political-economic perspective, authors remark) could be " exemplified by distance learning technologies [e-learning], including interactive teleconferencing, enabling students located thousands of miles apart on different countries to interact in real time in a virtual classroom/.../At the institutional level, the challenge and the opportunity are to globalise the entire research and scholarly enterprise" (Bartell, 2003, p. 48).

Various earlier curricula objectives have, as mentioned, maintained and further reinforced the importance to encourage, support, and emphasis and develop internationalization, in higher education in Sweden (SOU 1973:2), and this is most probably something that is valid in a worldwide perspective, in all countries (to some extend). In later curricula objectives and policy guiding concerning higher education, this range from more general to particular aims. For instance, one of the main goals of the Bologna Declaration from 1999²¹, is to continue "to establish a more complete and far-reaching Europe, and in particular building upon and strengthening its intellectual, cultural, social and scientific and technological dimensions" (p. 1). One of the issues of the Declaration concerning higher education is about developing the ECTS system [i.e., establishment of a system of credits/The European Credit transfer System].

The office of the National Agency for Higher education in Sweden has, in a paper named "The Changing Face of Higher Education in Sweden" (2000), outlined some of the present trends and tendencies and changes in Swedish higher education concerned with education without frontiers²². This paper however mainly focuses on formal rules and competitiveness between countries' educational programmes aiming at a global education market and identifying external definitions and 'markers'. This is in contrast with the questions raised concerned with students' and teachers' conceptions of internationalisation from an empirical approach, describing educational knowledge content of intercultural character and, furthermore, taking a didactical/pedagogically stance in the Swedish nurse education in higher education. The latter mentioned focus, ought to be discussed by policymakers, and as to be regarded to be highly emphasised, if not to risk to be left out, when trying to understand the phenomenon of internationalisation in higher education. Especially important since curricula theory world wide emphasizes on 'long/wide-life learning and a student perspective in learning. Conclusively, what is missing (but called for by many authors) is an empirical and

²¹ See http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf, Date: 15/3/2004. And <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/02/04/71/35a9acf7.pdf> Date: 29/3/2005

²² See http://www.weng.hsv.se/en/FileServlet/doc/83/the_changing_face_2003.pdf Date: 29/3/2005

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qualitative research discourse, exclusively grounded in a pedagogical/didactic perspective and concerned with students' and teachers' experiences.

The importance of pedagogy as a human activity in an international context. Gadamer (1976, 1993, 1994)²³ would say that the dialectic of experience has its own fulfillment not in definitive knowledge, but rather in that openness to experience that is encouraged by experience itself. Furthermore, as addressed by Bacon (2000)²⁴ and other empiricists, many experiences that reach out to us run against our expectation. Elements that emerge in the relation between experience and insight, and are fundamentally negative, have a huge impact on our experience, according to Bacon. Therefore, still in the spirit of Bacon, one might say that insight is more than the knowledge of this or that situation. Insight always involves an escape from something that deceived us and held us captive, and always involves an element of self-knowledge and constitutes a necessary side of what we call experience in a deeper sense. Insight is something to which we come (Bacon, 2000/1605). Ochs (1986, 1987) claims that language is socio-cultural in nature, holding that language acquisition processes and behavior must be examined for their sensitivity to social order and cultural ideology (Ochs, 1987, p. 305). She says that “most people who have spent time in a foreign culture, struggle to communicate in a language not their own, have experienced situations in which they can understand literally each utterance but cannot understand the point of the discourse that is the outcome of the utterances in sequence.” (Ochs, 1987, p. 306), implying the importance of an understanding of the cultural context (involving symbols, signs, norms, attitudes, ethics and others) and that an understanding of language alone is not sufficient.

Derrida (1973, 1978a, 1978b) drawing on Nietzsche (1968) and the change of terrain and on subjectivity, acknowledged the concerns of rethinking traditional humanist pedagogical practices, and argues in favor of rehabilitating the subject in order to deconstruct it and reposition it in a historical-cultural complexity; not, as some anti-Nietzscheans²⁵ claim to liquidate the subject, but rather to enrich it. Derrida (1993)²⁶ claims that technique have obliterated locality, and maintains that democracy in its future shape must be thought of in global terms. Derrida problematises the liberal humanist discourse and says that democracy comes down to the question of transcending borders. The Western concept, in its mission, its axiom, in its languages and the Western concept of state and sovereignty acts as a limit (Derrida, 1993, 1994). Peters (2003), referring to Derrida (1994)²⁷, says that the dominant tradition (the liberal humanist) needs to be deconstructed and opened up to interpret the concept of the political system in a different way, and Peters (1998, 2003) maintains that “a critical pedagogy of differences’ of a genuinely multicultural and internationalist pedagogy suitable for the future is located at the interstices and in the interplay between a ‘democracy to come’ and a ‘subject to come’, a global subject whose critical function it is to both initiate and

²³ See also: Warnke, G. (1987). *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

²⁴ Here referring to Francis Bacons essay *The Advancement of Learning* (original published in 1605).

²⁵ Critique of the idea of deconstruction and, in some sense, rationales hold in poststructuralism. Not further discussed in this thesis. See, for instance; Ferry & Renaut (1990, 1997).

²⁶ Original: Derrida, J. (1993). *Spectres de Marx*. Paris: Editions Galiléé: Derrida, J. (1994). *Specters of Marx, the state of the debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf. Paris: Routledge.

²⁷ Peters (2003) refers to Derrida, J. (1994), Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida, transcribed by J. Christian Guerrero. Philadelphia, Villanova: Villanova University, 3 October 1994.

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interrogate the International” (Peters, 2003, p. 327).

Pedagogy and learning are very much activities that build on assumptions concerning peoples’ lifeworld, socio-intercultural contexts and formal educational contexts, as well as framings of such contexts, of interactions between people and so forth. By its very nature, learning from the learners’ perspective is assumed to involve an aspect that is in some way existential in nature, in terms of the learner’s beholding of learning. Today, this is expressed as lifelong and lifewide learning. As a reasonable consequence, one might assume that learning altogether would become concerned with how we can learn from a holistic viewpoint and, logically, start rather from the assumptions of variations, which would per se include various ways of experiencing something (as experiencing a object of learning). In education, it would become a question of how we can teach according to a holistic approach. This would build on the idea of using variations of experience²⁸ in an educational context to give access to and open up a base or a pool of knowledge, but also, to understand the educational context as an (integrated) whole.

As suggested in this thesis concerning the learning of intercultural content, it would be possible to start from a field of variations based on students’ various ways of experiencing the educational intercultural content focused on, and doing what Trigwell (2000)²⁹ describes as the core issue in all teaching: “teaching as helping students change conceptions” and “helping students change their/.../world views.” (Trigwell, 2000, p. 77) In other words, by supporting a deep approach in teaching aiming a deep approach in students’ learning where the main intentions are to understand and be able to relate ideas to previous knowledge and experience, and interact on educational content from a critical stance, and to be able to use organizing principles to integrate ideas and relate evidence to conclusions and arguments (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton *et al.*, 1984, among others).

Constraints to educational change and the need for a curriculum theory with a focus on ‘variations of culturally flows’ in social science(s). Barnett (2000, 2003, 2004)³⁰ claims that, “we live in an age of supercomplexity” (Barnett, 2004, p. 65), and by drawing on Readings’ (1996) book *The University in Ruins* and Readings’ view that we have “passed through the phase of ‘the university of reason’ and ‘the university of culture’ in the past two hundred years, the university is now ‘the university of excellence’ in an age of systematized quality systems.” (Barnett, 2004, p. 64). Readings’ suggestion, according to Barnett, is “that the university might become ‘a community of dissensus’” (Barnett, 2004, p. 64), and as Barnett says, “conceptually, the ideas on which the modern university was built—truth, knowledge, reason, communication—all stood in the dock as mere detritus”(Barnett, 2004, p. 65), leading

²⁸Any hypothetical experience that is present in a learning context at a certain time. Marton describes a phenomenon and the way of experiencing a phenomenon as the complex involving all the possible ways of experiencing it, and on an imaginary level meaning those ways already found as well as those not yet found, and that the way of experiencing the phenomenon in question is related as parts and whole, also implying that any phenomenon is inexhaustible (Marton, 1986; Marton & Säljö, 1976ba, 1976b)

²⁹Also discussed in research by Trigwell & Prosser (1996, 1997), concerning changing approaches to teaching.

³⁰ Barnett’s problematised description summarizes the overall up-to-date view of the complexity involved in the changes in the university’s’ future role, in addition to what is put forward by other authors referred to in this thesis.

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to an end of the universal. The question that still remains is how should the very idea of the university as an institution of higher education in the sense of a global entity be visualized and, furthermore, without falling into the pitfall of exchanging one internationalization ideological approach for another, claiming one to be worse, good and/or true in comparison with others. Barnett's (2004) wonders "how might we understand 'the university' [and] can higher education be any longer taken to offer a liberal education?" (Barnett, 2004, p. 71). Bartell maintains the need for the universities and their new universal purpose as "compounding our conceptual turmoil, enabling us internally (ontologically) to handle the uncertain state of being" (Barnett, 2004, p. 72). If one agrees with Barnett on this and the living *in an age of supercomplexity*, the discourse concerned with teaching and learning in higher education and internationalization and globalization, drawing on the results in this thesis and what has been discussed earlier, should be given a pedagogical/didactical stance.

Globalization and the need for curricula change will, according to the author, become in the decades to come, the great challenge in higher education worldwide. This change was also mentioned by other authors, but, as claimed here, is fundamentally of a different kind since what is suggested is emphasizing a pedagogical/didactical stance rather than a organizational one, where the approach is the most common way of dealing with internationalization of higher education. Curricular change and educational change³¹ should primarily take place from a pedagogical/didactical stance. Curriculum objectives and rationales should agree with a holism, as to be open for both contextual possibilities as to be aware of contextual constraints, this in turn is suggesting that the relational character in learning implies, that there are no contextual influences in learning without an experiencing subject (individual), both on an individual as a collective level (according to the phenomenographic tradition). A human who constitute an understanding and meaning, through the contextual experience, but nevertheless acknowledging variations in ways of experiencing objects of knowledge. This implies an awareness of possible flows of elements, supporting people (students and teachers) in the constitution of meaning and understanding. What is called for is a curriculum theory involving ontological and epistemological rationales of internationalized teaching and learning.

A didactical approach to internationalization (of higher education and in the Swedish nurse education) is interesting for several reasons. The main reason is that the practice would be able to critically reflect on what is meant by internationalized teaching and learning, and for what reasons and by what claims the concretised interpretations of (the) curricular objectives that represent internationalization of the educational program, exist. And if something is missing then what are the ontological and epistemological arguments for claiming what should be included in achieving curricular objectives regarding internationalizing the education?

What can be elaborated on and ought to be further discussed by policymakers concerned with higher education in general in Sweden is whether the four areas described in the Swedish nurse education program are actually in line with the intended aims of curricular objectives concerned with internationalization? If so, what are the arguments for achieving the objectives

³¹ The theme, educational change, is continuously viewed in for instance, *The Journal of Educational Change*. Kluwer Academic Publ.

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of internationalizing the education by focusing on these areas? And also what are the arguments for claiming that these are (the most) essential and sufficient? And if they are not essential and sufficient, then what is the plan for the future?

According to Svensson (1998) “to deal with the flow of culture, there is a need for a meaning of culture, that is focusing more on the elements of culture, their constitution, nature and relations.” (p. 15). Svensson, referring to Panikkar (1991), asserts that it is between meaning on an individual level, the nature of man, and the meaning of culture, that we have to conceptualize elements of culture, that it is a dynamic view of culture, and involving both, in a relational activity of an “individual cultural activity” and a “collective culture”(Svensson, 1998, p. 15).

How do people learn form another culture? By learn we mean how they change their externalizations of meaning in relation to externalizations coming form another culture. Although we do not see this change as mainly a matter of acquiring or reproducing the given externalization, the relation to the given is fundamental to the understanding of the change together with the reaction to one’s own context of experience and tradition. (Svensson, 1998, p. 127).

The above view, can be reflected on in combination with cultural flows as an “exchange of culture between people representing different cultural traditions”, Svensson (1998, p. 19) who goes on by saying “the combination of a focus on cultural elements and cultural flows is fundamental to an educational perspective and an educational perspective is fundamental to a deeper understanding of the creation and flow of cultural units.”(p. 19).

My conclusion is that, though internationalization of higher education is highly emphasized by writers in the educational sphere, no discourse has yet been established investigating the phenomenon from a pedagogical stance, raising questions of a didactical character when constituting knowledge and an understanding of the phenomenon in relation to curricular objectives stated for higher education.

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