

15.8.2024

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**Title**

Fostering meaning : fostering community / Charles Anderson ; Velda McCune

**Publication year**

2013

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 66 (2013) 3, S. 283 - 296

**Inventory number**

35065

**Keywords**

Studentenschaft : Studienverhalten

**Abstract**

This article acknowledges the value of using communities of practice as a perspective to illuminate learning and teaching in higher education but argues that preceding work has given insufficient attention to: the particular kinds of trajectories, commitments and intentions displayed by the participants in undergraduate courses; the knowledge practices and distinctive stances in relation to knowledge around which these 'communities' centre and the conceptualisation of the nature of communication and the particular challenges for the creation of meaning within higher education learning communities. It addresses these gaps by closely examining these matters and bringing to the fore the distinctiveness of learning communities in higher education. Based on this analysis it argues that effective teaching requires the creation of transitional spaces and hybrid discourses that allow for movement and change, and characterises learning communities in higher education as 'spaces of the in-between'. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Anderson, Charles, E-Mail: c.d.b.anderson@ed.ac.uk