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Author

WINBERG, Christine

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Abstract

South African higher education institutions are increasingly under scrutiny to produce knowledge that is more relevant to South Africa's social and economic needs, more representative of the diversity of its knowledge producers, and more inclusive of the variety of the sites where knowledge is produced. Only a small percentage of South Africans are graduates of universities or technology institutes, and these graduates are not representative of the diversity of the South African population. As a result there is a shortage of skills to address the country's reconstruction and developmental needs. This places a burden on higher education institutions to expand access to their programmes, and to ensure that their programmes are relevant to the developmental context. Policy makers have found in the Gibbons [Gibbons, M., et al. (1994). The New Production of Knowledge. The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies. London Sage Publishers] thesis on "Mode 2 knowledge production" a rationale for the transformation of higher education through the inclusion of practices which are less abstract, less discipline bound and closer to those processes which characterise the

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diversity and distribution of knowledge production in the wider society. Nowotny et al. [Nowotny et al. (2001). Re-thinking Science. Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty. Cambridge: Polity Press.] have taken Gibbons' thesis further and have described society itself as becoming increasingly 'Mode 2'. In a Mode 2 society, differentiation is replaced with integration, and networks of knowledge producers conduct their work in transdisciplinary teams across widely distributed sites. Such 'transgressivity' both pushes knowledge production systems forward and distributes and diffuses knowledge more widely throughout society. In this paper, it is argued that there is a need for higher education practitioners to engage critically 'and constructively' with the knowledge bases of policy directives to ensure that the new teaching and learning processes and systems adequately prepare students for the complexity and diversity of South African society, and enable them to contribute meaningfully to its reconstruction and development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen), Winberg, Christine, E-Mail: winberg@pentech.ac.za