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Contemporary discourses on the education of doctoral supervisors: A critical analysis of doctoral supervision course plans

Education of doctoral supervisors has been a part of higher education pedagogy in Swedish universities for the last three to four decades. In this conference paper we will analyse eight course plans from doctoral supervision courses in Sweden to identify dominant discourses on the education of doctoral supervision, with a particular focus on the construction of doctoral supervisors' professional knowledge and practice. This is done through a critical and pragmatic discourse analysis of doctoral supervision course plans collected from six universities and two university colleges in Sweden. The achieved variation in the empirical material we selected course plans from two "senior" universities, established for more than 100 years ago, two universities established between 50-100 years ago, and two universities as well as two university colleges established for less than 50 years ago. Based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and a pragmatic discourse analysis, which draws on Dewey's transactional perspective and Foucault concepts of power, the course plan texts will be analysed and discussed in three interrelated steps: (i) conducting a transitivity analysis, focusing on participants, processes (material, mental, verbal, relational), and circumstances; (ii) identifying the main discourses constructing reoccurring patterns of professional action in relation to supervision practice; and (iii) discussing implications for supervisors professional knowledge base, as well as for power relationships in supervision practices. Through these steps, we will closely scrutinize the purposes, goals, contents as well as the teaching and learning activities of the course plans. There will also be a focus on common areas that are addressed by the course plans, the differences that could be identified, as well as what are missing and not given in the documents. Based on our critical analysis, we will suggest possibilities for

considering vital issues in relation to future courses on supervising doctoral students.

Keywords: course plans, discourse analysis, doctoral supervision, professional knowledge.