

Review of: "Encounters with Others: Student Growth through Fieldwork Studies in Rural Areas"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This article, "Encounters with Others: Student Growth through Fieldwork Studies in Rural Areas" is about an interesting aspect for higher education (HE) institutions and for their managers, especially on how HE institutions could work with regions which are facing population problems.

The abstract is clear and complete, it mentions exactly what the article is about. Reading the introduction, the reader understands the aim of this research and its contribution. The article presents a strong theoretical background and most of the literature used is up to date. The introduction of the Japanese context is essential to better understand the results. In this part, try to improve the layout of the figures, because they aren't clear. Also in one figure, the terms used in the legend are not the same as those used in the text, which can lead to confusion.

After this section, as a reader, I felt a little lost because the author doesn't present the methodological approach. The author must include a section about methodology adopted, including the sample size for each group (not only for young people - in this case you give another name "graduates", try to use the same terms); a paragraph about the instrument used (it was the same for graduates and others? Which topics were covered?); a descriptive analysis about the individuals who formed the samples; and, if the author used any content software for the analysis.

When the author presents the results maybe if including a table which relates the main interview questions to the results, would allow a better understanding of that results.

Before the discussion section, the author could include a "conclusion" section where he could summarize the main conclusions obtained from the content analysis of the interviews.

It is missing a research limitations section.

Finally, I suggest that the author, after reviewing the above-mentioned parts, think a little more about the title, since in my opinion the term "others" is not clear and is rather subjective.

I believe that the manuscript needs few reviews.