

Jenni Kantola & Seppo Penttilä

From building professional identity to developing communities: Literature review on the meanings of university mentoring programmes

Mentoring has been used for a long time as a tool for peer support and guidance in universities, but in recent years, the demand for strengthening work-life connections and the goals of continuous learning have contributed to the growth of mentoring. This literature review looks at ten years of research that dealt with mentoring across organisational boundaries in universities and maps what kinds of meanings the university mentoring programme produces for the mentor, the student being mentored, and the actors around them. Three relationship levels can be identified from the literature: individual, bilateral, and multilateral. Mentoring should be viewed as a multi-level network of meaning, where in addition to the relationship between the mentoring pair, the mentoring programme builds connections from organisations to the surrounding business life and society. The literature review reveals how individual-centred previous research is and highlights necessary research openings at various levels.

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