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Lecturers' second chance in their careers: An integrative literature review on the transition into researcher roles (0025)

Context

Universities of Applied Science in the Netherlands started in 2001 with an expansion of their core business teaching with research. Lecturers are confronted with novel researcher roles in combination with current teacher roles. Enhancing their research expertise is seen as fundamental for achieving a sustainable research climate.

Purpose

The aim of this study is to increase our understanding of key features of learning arrangements in newer universities to enhance the research expertise of lecturers.

Nature of the research

We conducted an integrative literature review (Torraco, 2005) on transition into researcher roles of lecturers as second chance in their careers in the context of newer universities. First, we developed a coherent conceptual frame-work based on general established theories. Second, we studied the key features of learning arrangements for the development of researcher roles of lecturers based on a systematic literature review. This study entails one vignette of our frame-work: 'working and learning in novel researcher roles'.

Methodology

The systematic review process consisted of three stages. First, we developed a search query to investigate peer reviewed scientific articles in the period 1991-2011 in Web of Science about our topic. Second, we identified potentially relevant publications by specifying criteria for in-/exclusion which resulted in 350 articles and coded the abstracts based on our initial frame-work. Third, we critically analyzed the sub-set of 50 articles with a specific focus on the 'transition in researcher roles as second chance in career'.

Findings

For the development of our conceptual frame-work we draw on Bourdieu (1977), Ashforth (2001) and on theories about Human Resource Development, e.g. Billett (2001). A striking finding from the systematic literature review is the overrepresentation of research in the paramedical sector. One of the target levels for the development of lecturers' research expertise, besides master and PhD, is the enhancement of scholarship in general (Boyer, 1990). The learning arrangements consist of a mixture of learning activities of different nature, such as mentorship, peer coaching, communities of practice, formal training, learning by doing, career support and reflection on prior experience. An often stated precondition for effective role transitions is a generous allocation of time.

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