

08.7.2024

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Title

Know-who? : linking faculty's networks to stages of instructional development / Sara van Waes ...

Publication year

2015

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 70 (2015) 5, S. 807 - 826

Inventory number

38923

Keywords

Hochschule : Verwaltung allgemein ; Fakultäten, Fachbereiche

Abstract

Research into faculty members' instructional development has primarily focused on individual skills and knowledge. As collegial interactions may support or constrain faculty's professional development in higher education, this study compared and contrasted the networks of faculty members in different stages of instructional development (novice, experienced non-expert, and experienced expert teachers). Faculty networks comprised the relations that teaching faculty members used to communicate about their teaching practice. To capture these networks, a total of 30 faculty members were interviewed. We used an egocentric network approach to examine the differences between the networks in network size, tie strength, and network diversity. Results based on analyses of variance and multilevel analyses suggested three key findings: (a) Faculty members in different stages of instructional development varied in the size of their network; (b) faculty members in different stages of development had access to different types of networks in terms of tie strength; and (c) faculty members in different stages of development varied in the diversity of teaching experience in their networks. Experienced expert teachers had larger, stronger, and more diverse networks compared

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with experienced non-experts. Novices also had larger networks, but they were characterized by lower tie strength and less diversity. These findings demonstrate that network development is not just a time–age effect, but suggests arrested development for experienced non-experts linked to limited network input. This provides important evidence for the role of collegial interactions throughout faculty’s development as a teacher. We further discuss the implications of this study in light of faculty members’ instructional development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Van Waes, Sara, E-Mail: sara.vanwaes@uantwerpen.be