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PEER-GROUP MENTORING FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS SUPPORTS THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

BACKGROUND

University teachers' challenges:

- No pedagogical qualifications required
- Teaching competences less valued than research competences.
- Individualistic culture where teachers have to manage challenges alone.

Peer-group mentoring has been effective in school context in supporting teachers professional development.

However, no research on peer-group mentoring supporting university teachers professional development exists. 2) 3)

WHAT IS PEER-GROUP MENTORING (PGM)?

- Facilitates participants' learning from each other by sharing experiences and reflecting on them.
- Utilizes group of fellow colleagues as valuable resource.
- Group facilitator is also a member of group.
- Based on socioconstructivistic theory of learning. 1)

AIMS OF STUDY

1. How did the peer-group mentoring work at university context?
2. Did the programme have effects on participants, and if so, what kind of effects?

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Nine month facilitator training

- Participants 13 senior lecturers from different disciplines
- Face-to-face meetings
- Peer-group meetings for facilitators
- Reading materials about PGM
- Facilitating monthly meetings of 4-6 teacher group

Eight Peer-Mentor Groups (30 participants)

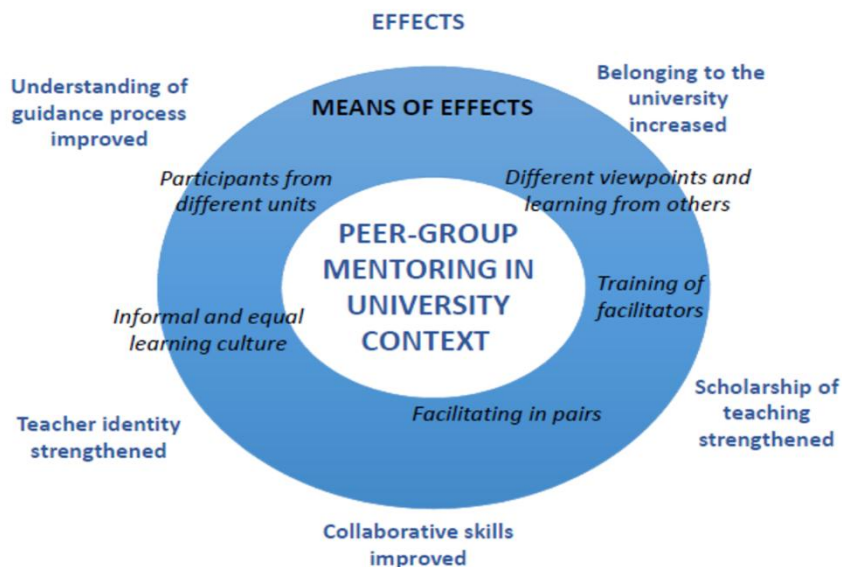
RESEARCH METHODS

Interviews of facilitators (N=12)
Questionnaire for participants of peer-mentor groups (N=28)
Inductive content analysis



FACILITATORS' TRAINING PROCESS

RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS

ØPGM proved to be excellent social practice for developing university teachers professional development.
ØPGM supports informal and equal learning culture.
ØPGM makes good use of academics' immense resource.
ØPGM strengthens the identity, self-confidence, and well-being both facilitators and group members.

- 1) Tynjälä, P., Heikkinen, H. L. T. & Jokinen, H. (eds.) (2012). Peer-Group Mentoring for Teacher Development. Online publication. Taylor & Francis eBooks.
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- 3) Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., Heikkinen, H. L., Markkanen, I., Pennanen, M., & Gijbels, D. (2015). Peer-group mentoring as a tool for teacher development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), 358-377.