Mentoring Student Training: What do mentors do?

Abstract

In this paper we look into the role of mentors in student training given it is of paramount importance and at times both unknown and undefined. We studied this issue through research conducted in three Spanish universities using Creswell’s biphasic model along with sequential data triangulation. We obtained information by interviewing mentors and applying an electronic questionnaire. The results show that basically mentors are available for students in student training, facilitate their integration in the center. The study indicates that conceptualizing and operationalizing mentoring functions is difficult, however, they set up a reference for the development of student training.

Keywords: mentor, mentoring, teaching practice, student learning

Introduction

Student training (Practicum) is often used as a term equivalent to “putting academic knowledge into practice” (Derrick & Dicks, 2005; Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2006), “induction” (Collinson et al, 2009) or “internship” (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Schön (1992) suggests the following definition: “a situation intended and set for the task of learning a practice (…) that (…) is in the middle ground between the world of practice, everyday life, and the esoteric world of college”. On the other hand, Zabalza (2013) speaks of practicum, internship, field training and on-the-job training as “training stages that college students carry out in real professional contexts (p. 19).

Therefore, student training can be defined as an opportunity to implement and transfer the knowledge previously learnt during initial training to a professional