Background to study

Extended working lives are here! The lifting of the default retirement age in the UK, rising life expectancy and demographic change throws the spotlight on extended working lives; the place of older workers; their engagement and professional learning needs. Older workers are defined as 50+ years (ONS 2013)

Conceptual framework: focuses on socio-cultural processes and relationships

Through the lens of capability theory, the study recognises the possibility of achieving capability; that is flourishing. This is context dependent. The framework focuses on the social context and is responsive to individuals. The model provides a rationale for older workers’ learning as valuable. The framework also acknowledges the significance of individual biographies in relation to workplace learning which lead to differing perspectives.

Focus of research

Key words: extended working lives, professional development, learning, higher education

An exploration of understandings of older workers in professional roles in a higher education institution:

and perspectives of professional development and learning

Draws on perspectives of management

Overarching Research Question:

What is professional development for? Older workers and management perspectives in a HE case study in England

Q1 What modes of professional development do older workers find valuable in HE?

Q2 What modes of professional development does management perceive as valuable for older workers?

Q3 What are the differences and how might they be addressed?

Summary of methodology/methods

An interpretative, qualitative approach

• case study
• multi-strategy methodology
• Initial interviews to gather base information.
• Wider survey
• Semi-structured detailed interviews
• Data analysis – thematic coding

Intended Sample

• Professional staff over 50 years
• Management with strategic input
• Human Resources/Staff Development
• HE Equalities Adviser
• Union personnel

Findings – Aims

To generate new perspectives on what older professional staff and management understand about learning and professional development of older workers

• new insights into vocabulary, practices and approaches for professional development
• recommend strategic responses.
• policy implications

References


d.bingham@ioe.ac.uk