European University Institute

Responding to the changing needs of post-doctoral researchers: Ten years in perspective

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Teaching and training in a transnational perspective

MAX WEBER PROGRAMME FOR POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

Multiple contexts

Diverse professional needs

New challenges facing early career scholars

- Institutional and professional demands have increased, especially since the global financial crisis of 2008

- HE institutions are becoming increasingly selective in their hiring procedures, and asking more of young scholars in terms of their research and teaching.
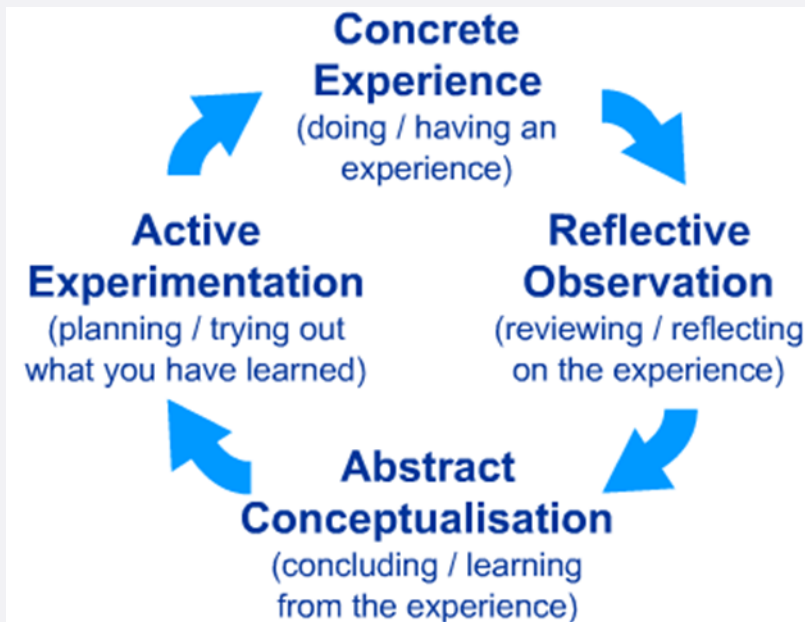
MAX WEBER PROGRAMME FOR POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

THE FIESOLE GROUP

Academic Communications Skills

Training Components

Max Weber Programme training activities: reflecting on best practices in three main strands

1. Teaching

2. Publishing and presenting research

3. Preparation for the job market and career development

Reflective learning in a transnational perspective

Concrete Experience (doing / having an experience)

Reflective Observation (reviewing / reflecting on the experience)

Abstract Conceptualisation (concluding / learning from the experience)

Active Experimentation (planning / trying out what you have learned)

Adapted from Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall

EUI

Pedagogical principles underlying FIESOLE Group teaching

Keywords:

Observation, reflection, action, interaction, and 're'-action*…

*reaction: meaning both in response to and to do again

Organising and delivering pedagogical support

Three modes:

- **Teaching**

  workshops/short cycles of lessons: specific writing aims; public speaking skills; job market; course design, etc.

- **Facilitating**

  providing support in obtaining peer feedback: Writers' Groups (peer feedback on writing for publication), peer feedback on research presentations; micro-teaching, etc.

- **Coaching**

  Individualised support: feedback on successive versions of a research paper, coaching in public speaking, job application support, etc.

Strand one: Teaching 2006-2007

- large number of non-native speakers of English trained in non-Anglophone countries
- various workshops on different aspects of teaching, fostering mobility and career advancement in the EHEA
  - e.g. introduction to teaching and presentation skills; teaching to large groups; organising space and classroom management; seminar management skills

Strand one: Teaching 2007-2008

Move to transnational approach:
development of teaching practice scheme

- <u>Before: Micro-teaching</u>: Feedback from multiple perspectives – self, peer and expert from within (FG EUI) and outside (FG College d'Europe), written and oral, immediate and staggered, 'live' and filmed
- <u>During: Teaching practice weeks</u>: initial setup put in place
- Always: attention to interactivity and space for reflection

Some salient characteristics of current offerings on teaching

- <u>Micro-teaching</u>: more systematic focus on interactivity and on learning outcomes

- <u>Teaching practice weeks</u>: organized to explicitly encourage reflective practice, e.g. Teach-reteach – fellows teach the same lesson to different groups of students

- <u>Teaching statements, portfolios</u>: provide evidence of reflection on teaching

- <u>Structured space for self-observation and reflection: eg.</u> fellows review own videos and carry out tasks designed to encourage reflection

Strand two:
Publishing and presenting research

From language skills
to a social practice approach:

- Use of corpora to increase awareness of disciplinary norms

- Increasing emphasis on 'occluded' genres necessary for academics, e.g. grant applications, book proposals and relative correspondence

- Increased attention to phases involving interaction with journal editors and publishers eg 'Revise and resubmit' workshop

Strand two:
Publishing and presenting research

From individual genres
to an integrated view of academic oral skills

- Covering the entire span, from research communication to the classroom e.g. research presentations, question-answer sessions, teaching, acting as a discussant

- Taking ELF nature of international academia (and the international classroom) seriously

Strand three: Preparation for job market and career development

- Increasingly central

- Individual coaching:
  – Professional support in a 'safe' setting

- Increasing involvement in preparation for job talks, interviews, teaching demonstrations:
  – Collegial support and peer feedback

Weaving the strands
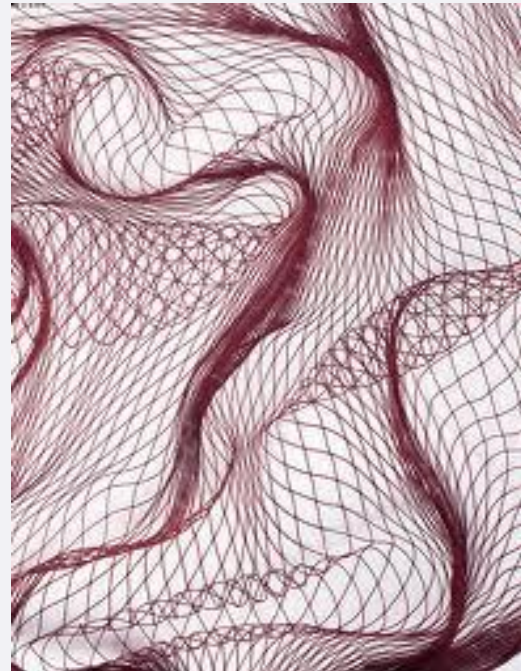
Providing pedagogical support to postdocs

- Needs analysis

- Attention to individual profiles and prior experience

- Appropriate mode of support (teaching, facilitating, coaching) at appropriate time

- 'Just-in-time' support e.g. coaching/facilitating peer feedback just before a job talk

Integrated «meshed mode» pedagogical approach in the MWP

- Book proposal workshop (co-taught with faculty members from disciplines)

- Fellows write a book proposal > feedback (one-on-one coaching)

- Proposals discussed in writers' group (facilitating)

- Fellows revise a book proposal > feedback (one-on-one coaching)

Concluding remarks

- Moving from a concept of 'training' to a concept of 'fostering autonomy'

- Shift in EAP professional profile from teacher to Higher Education professional

- FIESOLE Group: innovative and informative 'community of practice'