



The “Heroic Journey”: Managing the pedagogy and development of Business Studies teachers

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Aims and objectives of the paper

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 - Danias, Nikolaos, 2022, The “Heroic Journey”: Managing the Pedagogy and Development of Business Studies Teachers. Strathclyde Discussion Paper in Economics, Paper 22-06. Available at: https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/1newwebsite/departmentsubject/economics/research/researchdiscussionpapers/22-06_Heroic_Journey.pdf
- The paper attempts to identify the steps of the tutors’ transformational journey through the Management Development Programme (MDP) of the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom in academic years 2015-20, along with the acts and stages in Joseph Campbell’s “Heroic Journey” (Campbell, 2008).
- The author was the MDP Year 2 Coordinator in the 3 academic years 2014-17, and the MDP Director in the 3 academic years 2017-20.

Research Questions

- The paper examines the elements of the pedagogical approach for the tutors of MDP 2015-20, analysing this approach into its components, theoretical and practical. The paper provides insights into tutors' transformational experiences in the MDP 2015-20.
- The research questions:
 1. How might the consideration of Campbell's (2008) Heroic journey be used to explore the development of MDP tutors?
 2. How might this theoretical framework for understanding the MDP tutors' development be used to better inform the design of MDP tutors' experience?
- The theoretical approach presented in the paper could also be used to manage skill development and performance in teams that rely on knowledge-based competencies and specialised skillsets, and for which specialised competent labour is scarce.

The Heroic Journey by Joseph Campbell

- The “Heroic Journey” was presented in the literature by Campbell (2008), in 1949 for the first time, and constitutes a framework through which one can look at the myths that exist in various civilisations—with many of these dating back to ancient times—and see how these myths are created and structured in a generally similar fashion. Several steps make up the journey of a hero in this model, and we frequently find that almost all these steps are always present in all heroes of human civilisations.
- The similarity in the structure of all these stories has led Campbell to the adoption of the term “monomyth” to signal the fact that these are not separate and different myths with different stories told in them, but instead these are separate myths that are largely similar when looked together.
- Campbell (2008) has used 17 stages to describe the journey of the hero, with these 17 stages organised in 3 acts:
 - Departure
 - Initiation
 - Return

The Management Development Programme

- The key theme in MDP 2015-20, which has been so in the previous versions of the programme, was employability enhancement.
- The programme aimed to equip its students with “graduate attributes”: business awareness, team working skills, report writing skills, presentation skills, debating skills, research skills, critical thinking qualities and other abilities, and did so by providing a framework for learning, and asking students to actively engage with it during the MDP classroom sessions.
- The nexus of MDP’s 2015-20 pedagogical approaches, the breadth of the topics covered and the need for coordination to ensure uniformity in teaching and assessment and feedback practices, meant that the MDP tutors should receive guidance and training by the programme. MDP tutors’ skills and approaches were taught and developed by the programme to ensure quality of teaching delivery.

The tutors in MDP

- The MDP 2015-20 tutors had to be competent teachers to deliver the sessions and such tutors were difficult to be found on an annual basis by the programme in sufficient numbers. It was assumed that new tutors that applied to join the programme had no concept and no understanding of what the programme was and how it was implemented.
- MDP 2015-20 developed its tutors' skills and competencies through its mechanisms and structures, putting into practice an MDP's pedagogy for tutors. MDP supported, trained and developed its tutors and empowered them to deliver its classes.
- Junior Tutors of MDP delivered their teaching supported by the programme's structure.

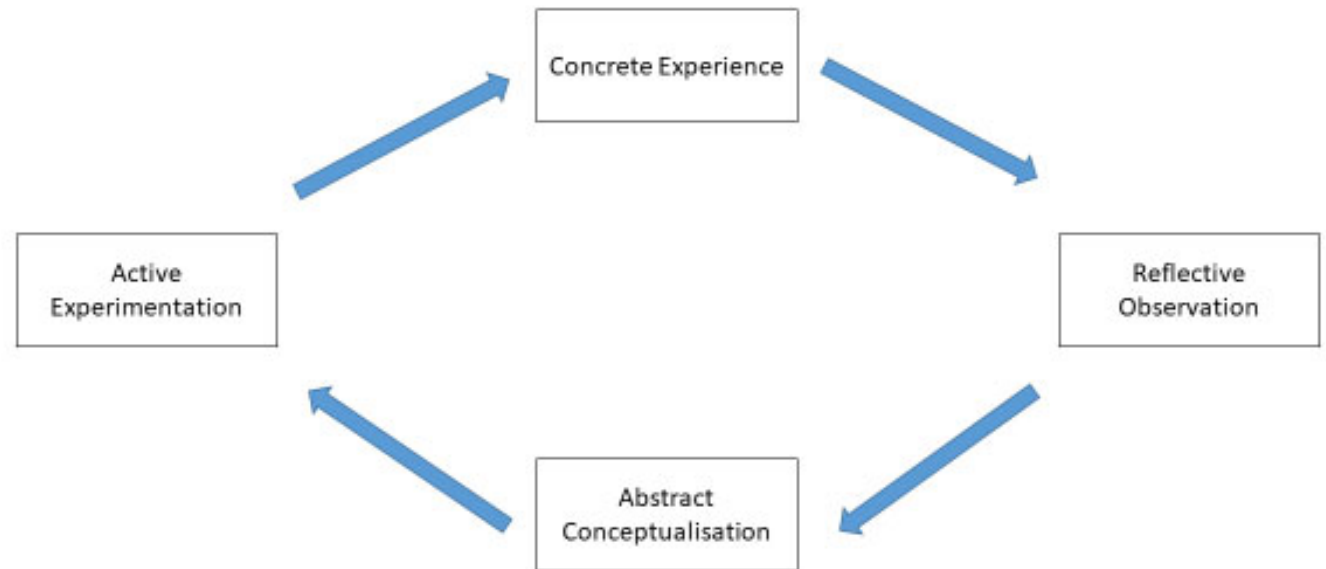
Teaching Team meetings

- To achieve uniformity in teaching delivery and meeting the classes' objectives amongst several tutors, an effectively operating Teaching Team was put in place.
- The MDP 2015-20 teaching team meetings were organised on a weekly basis and were the main point of contact between the programme and the tutors.
- This was designed to be a process through which all the relevant information regarding the MDP classes would be communicated, and it was a two-way process between the tutors and the MDP leadership.

Senior Tutors and Junior Tutors & The MDP Director

- Tutor development and training was implemented through:
 - the MDP teaching team meetings
 - the peer support system of matching Senior Tutors with Junior Tutors
 - the MDP Director's open-door approach for tutors to seek support regarding their roles in the programme.
- The MDP Director took care of the day-to-day operations of the programme and also planned for the long-term success of the programme.
- Meeting the developmental needs of the tutors was paramount, as this was the path for having a competent MDP teaching team in the future.

David Kolb's Experiential Learning Model



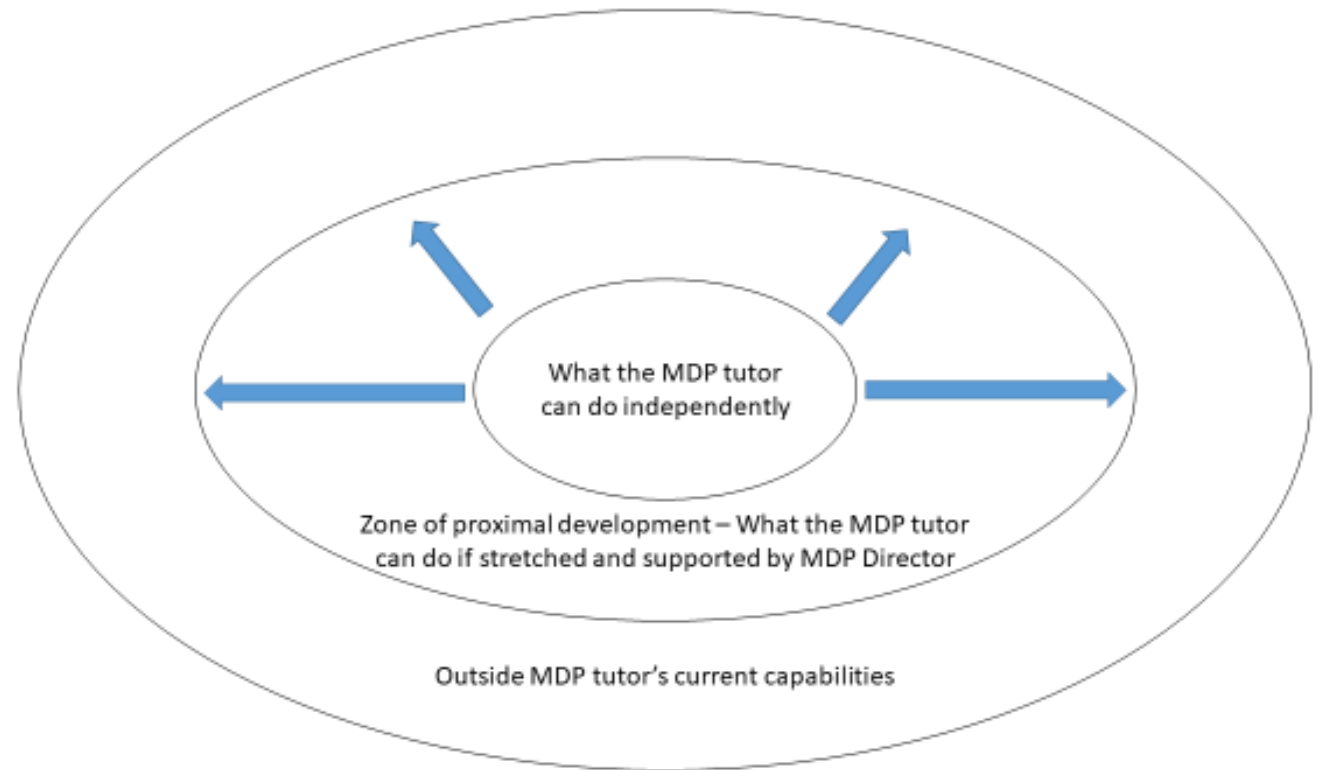
Educational Theories used in MDP tutor development - Slide 1 of 2

- **Social Constructivism**
 - Social constructivism is a key educational approach that MDP 2015-20 utilised in designing its support for tutor development.
- **Scaffolding**
 - MDP 2015-20 provided a setup that the tutors utilised to develop their teaching skills. The practice of providing this setup is called “Scaffolding”. MDP tutors were brought into a safe structured environment and asked to perform teaching-related tasks that they were comfortable with and other such tasks that they could perform, but needed support to do so.
 - That support was offered by the MDP Teaching Team meeting and by the system of pairing Junior Tutors and Senior Tutors.

Educational Theories used in MDP tutor development - Slide 2 of 2

- **Threshold Concepts**
 - The support that MDP 2015-20 offered to its tutors allowed them to develop and to improve. This was a gradual process, in which the tutors were guided through MDP's activities for tutor development and were expected to reach a certain point in their development in each step before moving into the next step.
 - These points were the Threshold Concepts of MDP 2015-20 tutor development. Tutors were expected to understand certain aspects of MDP before being asked to take on a more advanced role.

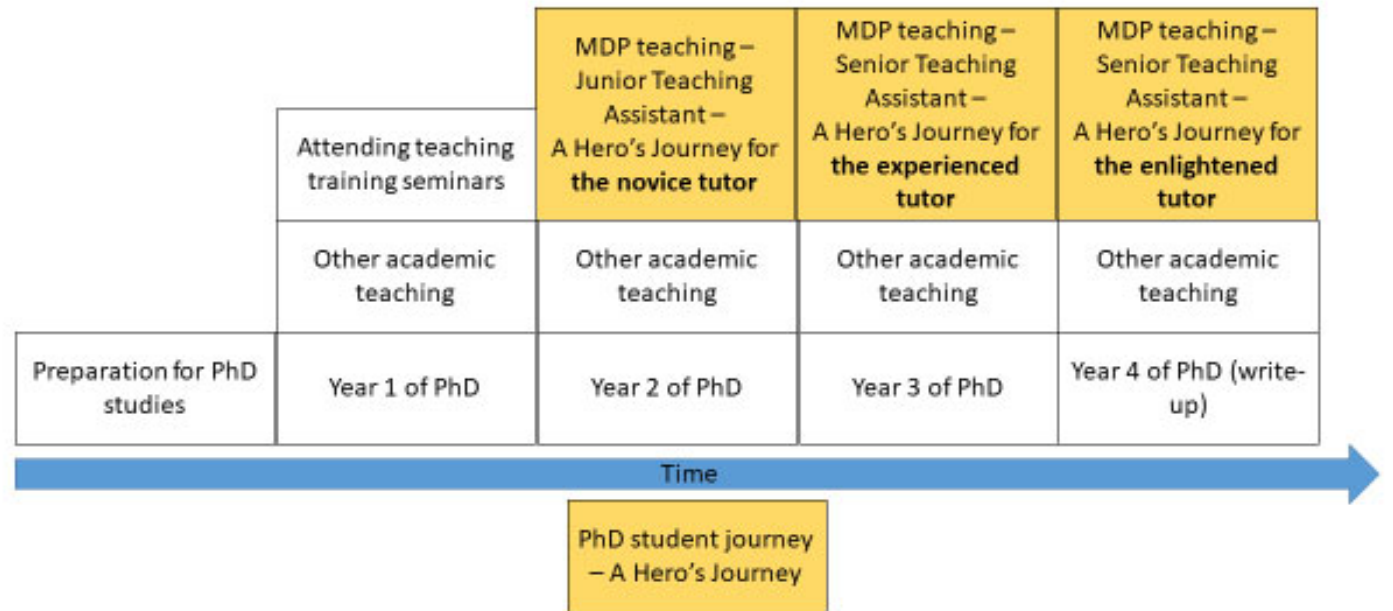
Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development



The Heroic Journey of the MDP tutors

- To better understand how MDP 2015-20 tutors evolved during their participation in the programme in the role of tutors, we use the roadmap shown in the next slide.
- The tutor moves from being initially a “**novice tutor**” into being an “**experienced tutor**”, having attained an overview of the MDP pedagogy. This involves understanding the MDP’s structure, methods, educational philosophy, and learning objectives.
- A further stage can be identified in MDP tutor development where the tutor becomes an “**enlightened tutor**”, moving beyond the level of the usual development than an experienced tutor achieves.
- The “enlightened tutor” is an academic teacher who is able to design class material and class activities and then deliver them, meeting the learning objectives of the class. The “enlightened tutor” is the tutor who has gone beyond acquiring the skills and knowledge that most MDP tutors achieve during their time in the programme, and has reached a point in their development as an academic that they can make meaningful contributions to the MDP curriculum.

PhD student's Heroic Journey roadmap for MDP tutors



Conclusions

- In the “Heroic Journey” of MDP 2015-20 tutors were asked to overcome several Thresholds. To do so, they used the programme’s support to proceed with teaching skills development, expanding their Zone of Proximal Development, as per the Social Constructivism theory.
- MDP 2015-20 offered a significant developmental opportunity for tutors. The “Heroic Journey” allowed the tutors who took this journey to transform. This transformational experience might have been different for each tutor. However, the skills and the abilities gained by the tutors were in line with the programme’s needs.
- Tutors who were in MDP 2015-20 for more than one academic year, returned to the programme to repeat their “Heroic Journey”. Through continuous “Heroic Journeys”, they achieved a much larger transformation. They started as “novice tutors”, they became “experienced tutors”, and sometimes they managed to become “enlightened tutors”.