

Initial coding of focus group transcripts by COST Action 15221 MC.

Name of transcript(s)

MUFG6
MUFG1
MUFG5
MUFG2
MUFG3
MUFG4

1. What has been the single most important factor that has contributed to your success as a researcher, writer, teacher and learner?

'Being open to things'
Collaboration - good relationships
Curiosity
Knowledge - how it happens and how it is communicated
It isn't one factor - it is multiple factors
Feedback from the broader academic community
Mobility - international platforms and projects
'My personality'
The institution and the associated community
'... to be exposed [to] the otherness, meaning to allow yourself to be in an unknown environment and contemplate, discuss and develop the other ... this interdisciplinary approach'
'educated scientific curiosity'
'training abroad'
'Perseverance' 'working and working and working'
Being a constant learner, need for learning
Spending some time outside university and then coming back
Freedom of choices
Sheer pleasure
Interest
Engagement and communication - human interaction
Strong will
Seeing my work as important
My whole understanding how knowledge happens and how it is communicated (knowledge = social product)
Interaction with others
Need to overcome lack of formal training
A bit of luck
Teacher science of education:
 Personal factors: joy, curiosity, interest, motivation
 Interpersonal factors
 Environmental factors: people, mentors, colleagues, networks
Period outside the university: to learn new methods
Social support

Commitment to success
Background
“Educated scientific curiosity”
Training abroad
Teachers
“Never give up!”

2. What have you found most difficult in your career to date and how have you managed that challenge?

Lacking confidence at the beginning
Coping with negative feedback
Negotiating university processes and politics including promotion
Finding work - getting a job
Balancing work and prioritising
People management and leadership
Knowledge transfer is difficult: ‘ “reinventing a bicycle” instead of using proven solutions’
Communication
‘to reinvent yourself’
Coping with limited ‘academic structures’ that don’t recognise the discipline and keep it ‘marginal’
‘How to avoid useless work’
‘How to find the proper people’ [to work with, collaborate with]
People management
Balancing the sides of my professional life
Juggling a variety of roles (fragmented work)
Time management
Lack of freedom
Feeling lonely (when working from home)
Professional career vs. family life (challenging esp. for women)
Responsibility for other people’s lives and work
Admin work
Balancing research and teaching
No formal training and opportunities to learn after getting the degree - resulting in the need to try hard and travel
Interdisciplinarity and going to the new fields that are not understood or recognized by the institution
Insufficient centralised supports
Setting up a new Institute/centre/ study program/ lab
Variety of roles is challenging
Different deadlines – certain things must be done in a certain deadline
Time management: Finding time to do research (deadlines not that strict) besides admin, management and teaching duties
Children/family vs professional career
Manage staff and responsibility for other people à emotional challenging
Taking one day a week off: no E-mails, no telephone
How to avoid useless work?

How to find proper people for working in a team?
Creating an environment for successful research, or teaching
A lot of management problems, as management of academics is very different to the management of professionals
Balancing professional life and devoting enough time to research

3. What habits or what about your disposition (professional demeanour) contributes most to your success?

Professional values: Integrity, respect, equality, fairness
Optimism - 'incurable optimism and [positivity]'
Joy
Enthusiasm, desire to learn new things, to push outside one's comfort zone
Global approach - 'exchange of good ideas'
Passion and belief - 'if you think it is important you will just simply do it for the sake of the joy of scientific advancement'
Faith that you can make a change
Commitment
Sharing - 'this joy of sharing'
Working hard - 'never giving up'
'Openness ... and ... sensitivity to the other'
Respect
'Resource investigator'
Respecting time which is our most valuable resource - time management
Motivating people
Imagination
Ability to work fast (read fast, write papers fast)
Ability to work under pressure
Honesty in research
Willingness to sacrifice your time
Supporting colleagues
Determination, perseverance
Willingness to improve things
Creativity and innovativeness
Responsibility
Connection to the realities of the world
Collaboration with colleagues (both in research and in teaching)
Self-reflection and self-criticism
Open-mindedness and ability to listen
Making my work relevant in the classroom
Collaboration
Ability to work very quickly
To work under pressure
Being ambitious and creative, enthusiastic
honest
helpful (especially while working with students/young people)
focused
Optimistic

Being a resource investigator
Being a good team member to find innovations and bring them to the team
Being able to share knowledge and teach others
Being very strict about schedules and times, for meetings and so on
Being as organised and as ordered as possible
When managing a larger group of people, delegating responsibilities

4. What do you want to do next and what (besides more time and resources) would help you to achieve that goal?

Return to research: 'research leadership'
Challenge myself with a new set of questions
International research and mobility
'Flow'
To be more alert - to build on the 'traces'
To see more people learning with better results ... to concentrate on developing community skills
A better balance between my academic area and my family life
To create environments for self learning; 'where ... people can find their own way, not to impose the ways'
To know better how our institutions 'may move'
We have to 'make use of our freedom'
To keep on working together - collaboration, community
Publish two books
Go back to research full time; publish
Write a new research project
Focus more on the world around us (awareness)
Focus on 1st semester students and help them with learning and writing
Apply for a research project
Inspire students in their learning (esp. those who are 1st generation at university)
Devote more time to new projects
Focus on dissemination and transfer of results
Establish writing studies in Germany (bachelor programme)
Help students to be more prepared for their studies
For the institution to acknowledge where students are coming from - recognition of diversity
Apply for research funding
Want to work outside university
Do research for "everyday life" and non-specialists
Having a better structure incl. stable staff, secretary, tutors, young researchers, ...
Want to add statistics training
To write a book
Let the younger colleagues take things/responsibilities over (try to delegate things to younger colleagues)
Technical support, resources, structure
To publish two new books that will cover personal experience in teaching, to share information with colleagues and students
Quit a managerial position and go back to research

Reactivate a number of projects that have been dormant
There are some very technical projects to implement
To write a textbook in cooperation with colleagues
students the ability to more easily interact. Usually these things represented in a
very analytical,

5. What advice would you give to an early career colleague hoping to succeed as a researcher, writer, teacher and learner?

Be open. Get involved. Balance admin with research ('but prioritize research').
Link - make connections: 'talk to as many people as you can and get advice
'Just to keep questioning, keep questioning, questioning until you are totally
exhausted' and to get joy and 'happy moments' out of that
Explore incessantly
Establish 'your own world of scientists' - 'find people who will give you a good
intellectual bettering in life ... People who inspire you'
'Loving what you are doing ... [being] very well within yourself'
Communication
Mobility
Hard work
Being passionate and respectful of others
Do what you are interested in. Do what you do best. Self-education.
Think about setting your goals - what do you want your career to be. You need
to aim higher than what is adequate. Confirming to yourself that you want to be
a researcher.
Find social support.
Publish in the right journals
Networking (colleagues, conferences)
It is human centred
Don't get bogged down in admin work
Build up a rapport with your students
Use any opportunity to learn
Go abroad
Connect with people, learn from the experience of others
Learn from everything
Be persistent, don't give up at the first obstacle
Work hard because you can change the world
Joy is very important
Always follow your strong interests
Ask experienced researchers and teachers what they think is going to happen in
that field in 10 years
Try not to get bogged down in the admin
Connect
Go abroad
To help our students to go deeper with their studies - to reinforce for our
students that higher education in an intellectual activity
Do what is interesting for you personally - this is the main thing in research
Don't do what you are not able to do
You have to understand what is your personal life purpose

And to understand this purpose, you must to understand what you can do the best

Self-education

Continuous development and following your own interests

Do what you are interested in, focus on a specific interest

Try to build a network

Need to be very careful and think a lot about setting your goals and setting them high; not setting them too high, but finding a team to work with that has this philosophy, of setting goals high and continuously raising the bar, but doing it in a way that's not just fantasising about

Need to be careful in choosing this, in finding a mentor, a supervisor, someone that knows how to set these goals

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