Emerging questions between teaching and research in the Italian University context: The “Sapienza” case

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Emerging issues in a global Higher Education world

Research and teaching are necessarily connected

Research aspire and enrich L&T

Research can be influenced by teaching

Students are (younger) researchers

Today it becomes important to put research into teaching and the teaching into research
Italian University landscape numbers... 2018

- 98 Universities (67 public, and 11 online universities)

- 9800 courses in all disciplines

- 1,681,146 enrolled (749,361 men and 931,785 women)
Academic promotional structures tend to favour research careers over teaching.

Professors have a high teaching load and lack resources and time for research, which has consequences for education.

Teaching may not be sufficiently informed by or oriented towards research.

Learning fails to incorporate the transversal skills that research-based careers would require.

New pedagogies that include research are seen as of minor
Critical aspects in the landscape of Italian universities

Positive aspects emerging in the Italian context
Critical aspects in the landscape of Italian universities

Persist the lecture-style instruction or teacher-centred instruction, especially for Humanities.

**Distinctions** between hard and soft disciplines also for didactic activities

Recent affirmation of **accountability** logic based on **New Public Management** for Higher Education

**Very low attention** to teaching in career progression

A disciplinary logic still persists in the teaching methods.

The logic of content prevails over learning methods

Positive aspects emerging in the Italian context
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<td>Persist the lecture-style instruction or teacher-centred instruction, especially for Humanities.</td>
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<td><strong>Relationships with students</strong></td>
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<td>Recent affirmation of <strong>accountability</strong> logic based on <strong>New Public Management</strong> for Higher Education</td>
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<td><strong>Very low attention</strong> to teaching in career progression</td>
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<td>A focus on learning outcomes (LO) and competencies</td>
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UNIVERSITY ORGANISATION

- Faculties: 11
- Departments: 63
- Libraries: 59
- Museums: 20
- University Hospitals: 2
- School for Advanced Studies: 1

STUDENTS (2015-16)

- Bachelors: 55,220
- Masters: 19,750
- Single Cycle: 19,700
- Students enrolled under old system: 7,270
- PhD: 3,235
- Professional Courses (all levels): 1,810
- Specialisation Schools: 3,800

TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION: 110,000

GRADUATING STUDENTS PER FACULTY (2015-16)

- Architecture: 1228
- Civil and Industrial Engineering: 1782
- Economics: 1645
- Humanities: 3093
- Information Engineering, Informatics & Statistics: 1118
- Law: 703
- Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences: 1430
- Medicine and Dentistry: 1452
- Medicine and Psychology: 1925
- Pharmacy and Medicine: 1976
- Political Science, Sociology and Communication: 1792

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADUATES: 18,144

ACADEMIC STAFF (2015)

- Professors: 2015
- Researchers: 1544
“Sapienza” case

From-below innovative practices in the Sapienza landscape regarding Research-based-Learning

• Directed Studies coordinated by Elisabetta Corsi at La Sapienza
• Research-oriented teaching is found in research doctorates
• Research-oriented teaching in master’s degrees
• Bottom-up experimentation of teachers with students regarding laboratory activities
“Sapienza” case

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It is mostly about:

• voluntary experiences;
• disseminated in all Italian universities;
• often not governed;
• managed independently by the individual teachers with the students;
• invisible practices, if observed from a political standpoint.
“LAST ... Training programs for teachers in some Italian universities

It is a process influenced by:

• the awareness that teaching is a skill that cannot be taken for granted

• the peculiarities of the new generation of students who ask for involvement, participation and different forms of learning

• the need to go beyond traditional teaching, which often

• the recognition that teaching cannot be considered as an individual affair of the singular teacher.

• this sensitivity is growing, albeit with difficulty and under the pressure of the external evaluation by the ANVUR Agency.

• the need of “deprivatising teaching practices” and of opening university classrooms.
Promoting some training initiatives for university teachers...

The University of Padua started a program a year ago (PRODIT Program) for teaching training and didactic innovation.

The Bocconi University of Milan has launched BETA (Bocconi Education and Teaching Alliance), mostly dedicated to the use of new teaching methods and technological tools.

The University of Rome “La Sapienza” has just launched a two-year teacher training project (QuID - Didactic Quality and Innovation).

The “Teaching large classroom” pilot training program is underway at the University of Milan-Bicocca.

The University of Naples is launching training initiatives for teachers, also through communication technologies.
All these programs have just started. Participation is often only on a voluntary basis, and there are no results available at the moment. These programs need to be monitored and analysed. We will report on this in a next meeting.
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Grazie!