

Dissemination of Information and Competences in Order to Improve the Quality of Education

Carla De Angelis *

Abstract

The reforms previewed from the process of Bologna are to meet consisting realization of difficulties if the customers do not know them and what's more if the modalities and instruments are not characterized to perceive the international sharing of the value and the quality of knowledge and education.

The research is carried out in two Italian universities. It tries to confirm these hypotheses and above all, to introduce the used research strategies as innovative methods in order to produce “learning”.

For the collection and analysis of the data it is previewed to resort to the documentation and to supply a mixed questionnaire to a representative sample of the first year students selected in all faculties of Roma Tre University and the faculty of psychology of L'Aquila University.

The questionnaire and its data processing furnish an incontrovertible proof of action research.

Key Words: Reforms; International Sharing; Questionnaires;

I would like to highlight some research project elements being held in the Universities of L'Aquila and Rome Three.

This project was born because Italian university and Secondary School students believed, as well as their teachers, that even those training in Specialisation University schools, are almost in the dark regarding that which is foreseen in the both in the Bologna process and merit reforms in action in Italy. This doesn't exclude exceptions, as Secondary School and University teachers involved in European projects like ERASMUS, SOCRATES, Tempus network or those which, due to ministry or rector nomination, are sent as official representatives to the European Commission meetings, or yet those experimenting the European dimension in initial teacher training as in some specialisation school courses for secondary teaching of the Universities of L'Aquila, Rome Three, Florence and Venice).

The verification of this hypothesis has as a priority, soliciting at an institutional level and among students, the knowledge that bad, or worse, no information of the reforms foreseen in the Bologna process risks obstacles for success: surely, lack of information compromises our training system's value and quality affirmation in an international context, the possibility of finding work within Europe, besides the attempt, also underway in our Country, of creating a common European space for Secondary instruction.

The project, therefore, follows the objective of developing for University students, university courses in which I and my three colleagues teach and use the knowledge of the reforms due to the Bologna process, to reinforce value and revelation knowledge at a European level of the diploma wanted by the students.

Obviously the project wasn't born with only these goals.

A fundamental dedication, in fact, has been that of projecting and using the whole study as a didactic strategy, in creating experiences and useful learning environments for motivating, structuring and giving meaning to learning in a European dimension, and developing transversal- competency learning (affective-relational and cognitive) common in the different courses taught by us.

* Prof.Dr., L'aquila University Roma Tre University, Italy

In the European school system, the obligation of integrating the instruction system with the training one, within the national and international work market, has already been attributed to pedagogy.

A first evaluation of the results obtained seems to confirm the project hypotheses and those objectives needed by many teachers, in relation to the necessity of teaching renewal, with respect to deep academic tradition, essentially based on the direct lesson.

It's for this reason that from the beginning students have been involved in research, even those in short-degree first year, that attend our disciplines: didactics, pedagogical projecting and experimental pedagogy.

And it's for this reason that space has been given to the development of social and relational competencies, and the value of transversal-competency learning has been recognised (namely: exploring, doing conjectures, understanding and developing procedures and their use in field application, solving problems) as has always been solicited only in scientific engineering-mathematics field.

Our Rome Three students have participated in the study procedure definition to point out the reform-art state and student problem perception (they asked themselves: should data be collected doing interviews or giving a questionnaire? What other faculties should we contact, and why? What sample to choose, and why? How can we recognise and define a control sample? How can results be elaborated? Etc.). Specialisation School for Secondary School attendees of the University of L'Aquila have, in fact, made up the control group, even of discussion, useful in testing and defining our main study instrument: the questionnaire namely "EXPECTED CHANGES" (See Power point number 1).

The questionnaire-making phases, its handing-out to different faculties and result re-elaboration have quickly resulted in sustaining-didactic forms for both motivation and dedication, and mostly for the conviction that success depends on giving a sense to what you do.

In short, to the students who have done this study with us a reality homework (confirmed for real) within an action research has been given: if from this an indication is deduced, it regards our faith in learning organisation, and in any other form of learning favoured by the "University" organisation; mostly one has tried to associate the ways of learning institutionally consolidated in the system, with those, some even occasional, but in some way provoked and foreseen.

In fact, even if soliciting a behaviour guided by rules and principles explicitly teachable from the students, independent research and social construction of meanings has been encouraged. Didactic practice and the method of research have been outlined, in order to give enough space to the independent internal organisation of student group work, and to the development of activities agreed upon. This has given meaning to the study and has gained efficient results for the initial project hypothesis.

Obviously, giving up traditional didactic perspective that follows a pathway guided by a hierarchical order, with specific functional practices, and giving way to a didactic itinerary organised form, characterised by instability, from continuous decision-making and problem-solving, means being able to point out and use the training system in which cognitive fragments work in unstable balance and to make the most of its potentials. In fact all this allows for the development of the Secondary School and University organisation, that is their ability to recon figurate, adapt and think themselves within an education framework that by 2010 we hope will be common throughout Europe..

Before illustrating some study results, (re-elaborating the answers to the following "open" questions of the questionnaire), we must clear something up: it certainly isn't possible in these 20 minutes to refer all the study, nor to completely explain the debate that made one do it basically with a questionnaire, mostly opinion, knowing that, according to contemporary sociologists, means supposing

that anyone can have an opinion, this isn't true. Then if it isn't possible in these 20 minutes to give all results, that go far beyond those that the other Italian colleagues will comment, we'll do our best to transmit a Research Project for the Acts publication, in a definite and complete report.

If the answers given by about 250 student interviewed, through bewilderment, uncertainties, student admission of their own misunderstandings highlight the importance of knowledge and information circulation about the reforms that the European Commission, the Minister of Science Research and the Italian Rectors are realising, the pedagogical-didactic set-up of the lessons developed in our courses on the project theme and the strategy up to now used to do them , principally action-research.

It may be worth noticing that to develop an empathetic relationship with the students during the lessons, to enhance their personal reflection capacity and, where possible, to reinforce their self-esteem (self concept) autobiographical construction, and then the theoretic-themes in-depth study tied to personal experience reflections (why have I chosen this degree course? Does this degree course exist in other European universities? what training paths and contexts are proposed? What national and European opportunities are there? How can we encourage and make the most out of them? what does the Bologna Process foresee in merit) have been privileged at first. This phase has been fundamental mostly in motivating the involvement of the students themselves, and in promoting knowing that teaching-learning is more generally a consequent life-project, that can't be intended as predefined model-use, but needs an availability to test project hypothesis.

The work of the students involved in the project has continued much beyond the end of the first semester lessons, such that in the second semester, even if following and studying other subjects ,it was possible to make them hand-out the questionnaire for Engineering Faculty students (even as they were able to carry out matriculate relationships and with the Faculty President Secretary Personnel and elaborate results). By the way, allow me to make one consideration: an advanced Country can't be quality-training guarantor, moreover in evaluating the institutions that give it and its training products, one can't but consider, along with quantity indicators, quality ones as fit programs, didactic strategy innovations and mostly, the capacity to do researcheven, according to us, by the students! This reflection is much more opportune here in Italy, these days: finally, the Government has approved a rule-system that disciplines the National Evaluation Agency of the University system and Research (Anvur in Italian language) structure and functioning, that will have to evaluate integration and mutual support between didactic and research university activities.

In conclusion, a brief note on a theme tied to the possibility of increasing education quality, a priority objective for all countries wanting to turn into reality what the Bologna Process foresees: we're dealing with the final diffusion expectancy even of what is done in universities. These schools, where I teach, should prepare new teachers at a European level: those teachers that soon will have to operate in the European instruction common space, having to orientate their students towards strongly international study and work paths.

All European countries, not only Italy urgently need initial quality teacher training, along with good professional training and constant professional updating. The complexity of the daily formation task is tied to the difficulty in following conjunctively, the different instruction system goals and the consideration of the marked heterogeneity of the user (of cultural levels, of learning habits, of interests, etc.). To win the formation task complexity challenge, the teacher will have to be competent both under the *cultural profile* (relative to knowing), and *didactic profile* (teaching methodology, involving pedagogy, general and disciplinary didactics) and *relational one* (concerning the ability to relate with students and so on). Besides this, the teacher will have to be well-informed, through constant *praxes-theory web*, in realising school activities.

But....but.....firstly, terminology confusion not only afflicting Italian and European SSST (Secondary School Specialisation Teaching), but also the Erasmus academic offer, or the Comenius assistantship will have to be overcome. Such a disorder is found not only in discipline name and context, but also in different competitive areas of SSIS institutional figures diverse functions. (In some European countries, for example, differing from Italy, the didactic or laboratory -teacher figure coincides with that of the apprenticeship supervisor!).

In conclusion, we wish to deduce from this brief note the promotion of the European space for Secondary teaching as a common program for initial formation pathway harmony for European teachers, which depend on the capacity to diffuse and participate in the European dimension value of training. In fact, even when the formation system is consolidated, as in the Italian one, we must intervene with stimulating actions to increase quality and efficacy (maybe even a research such as ours can be useful). Besides, if the strategies and the rules must come from the initiatives taken at a high level (government, Ministry, etc.), their implementation must be trusted to low levels (teachers, students, researchers, etc.). In any case, only by putting together the initiatives from bottom to top will ensure change, and in this sense I wish that right from this symposium, a research cooperation can be born.