

A contribution to higher education internationalization process. Some teaching experiences at *Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze Riabilitative delle Professioni Sanitarie, University of Padova*

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ABSTRACT

This article regards the experience gained in the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze Riabilitative delle Professioni Sanitarie* (President Prof. Daniele Rodriguez, Padova University) on the activation of an internationalization process of the course.

Firstly it sought to identify the main motivations of university courses that can lead to the activation of an internationalization process, according to the international literature.

Secondly, the intrinsic motivations of the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale*, are discussed. Medium and long term goals that the degree has been placed about are exposed.

It was also narrated the experience of a lecturer that has taken its course in English language and the assessment carried out by students involved. This part of article addresses suggestions for lecturers who wish to hold their course in English, using cooperative learning didactic method as well.

Moreover, there are also drawn other consequential initiatives arising from the Physiotherapy Degree about the same topic and regarding the experience of an academic tutor and a project for training and supporting clinic mentors.

Finally, in the conclusions are considered ways that internationalization perspectives might be introduced, or activities 'scaled up' and the responsibility that we, as educators, have to prepare our students as world citizens.

Key words: higher education, internationalization process, teaching, English, lingua franca, medium instruction.

RIASSUNTO

Questo articolo riguarda l'esperienza acquisita con l'attivazione di un processo d'internazionalizzazione del corso del Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze Riabilitative delle Professioni Sanitarie (Presidente Prof. Daniele Rodriguez, Università di Padova).

Si è cercato d'identificare, secondo quanto riporta la letteratura internazionale, quali sono le principali motivazioni che spingono le Accademie ad intraprendere processi d'internazionalizzazione. Sono inoltre esposte le motivazioni intrinseche del Corso di Laurea Magistrale che hanno portato all'attivazione di tale processo e gli obiettivi a medio e lungo termine che il Consiglio di Corso si è posto. È riportata anche la narrazione dell'esperienza di un docente che ha tenuto il suo corso in lingua inglese e la valutazione dell'esperienza da parte degli studenti coinvolti. Questa parte di articolo fornisce suggerimenti per i docenti che volessero tenere il loro corso in lingua veicolare Inglese, utilizzando anche il metodo didattico conosciuto come apprendimento cooperativo.

Sono state inoltre descritte altre iniziative sorte conseguentemente nel Corso di Laurea in Fisioterapia, relativamente all'esperienza di un tutor accademico e di un progetto per la formazione e dei Mentor Clinici. Nelle conclusioni sono considerate le future prospettive del processo d'internazionalizzazione del Corso e la responsabilità di Docenti e Tutor nel preparare gli studenti non solo come professionisti ma anche come cittadini del mondo.

Parole chiave: istruzione universitaria, processo di internazionalizzazione, insegnamento, inglese, lingua franca.

INTRODUCTION

The activation of an internationalization process in a graduate program creates opportunities for cultural growth and knowledge as well.

The authors involved in this article draft are lecturers and/or academic tutors working in different degree courses at University of Padova, sharing the desire to undertake an international route between cultures.

The reported experience namely refers to the didactic activity at the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale in Scienze Riabilitative delle Professioni Sanitarie* of Padova University.

We believe that what is reported in this article may be useful to those who want to begin a similar experience.

EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA'S INTERNATIONALIZATION

Knight (1993) described the internationalization of higher education as "the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into teaching,

research and any other service functions of an institution" [1]. However, this definition carries several key aspects that include:

- the idea of internalization as a dynamic process and not a set of isolated activities;
- the concept of integration or infusion which contributes to the sustainability of the international dimension;
- the primary and universal functions of an institution of higher education, namely teaching, research and service to society.

Jowi (2009) attempted to include in the definition any systematic sustained efforts aimed to make higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labor markets [2].

The internationalization of higher education is a dynamic process, continuously shaped and reshaped by the international context in which it occurs. As this context changes, so do the purpose, goals, meanings, and strategies of internationalization. The goals of internationalization are continuously evolving, ranging from educating global citizens,

building capacity for research, generating income from international student tuition fees and the quest to enhance institutional prestige. New forms of internationalization such as branch campuses abroad, distance learning programs with a global reach, international educational hubs and networks now complement traditional initiatives such as student and staff mobility, curriculum change and international institutional linkages for teaching and research.

Institutions, countries and regions in different parts of the world and at different times pursue a variety of goals and participate in diverse ways in the higher education internationalization process.

In the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) the concept of internationalization is a relatively new concept. In the last twenty years with the institution of *Bologna Process* [3] it has broadened its meaning beyond the student mobility to cover teacher mobility, joint ventures, cross-national campuses, joint curriculum development, joint courses in face-to-face meetings or in systems of distant learning and field courses abroad. The *Bologna Process* is named after the *Bologna Declaration*, which was signed in the Italian city of Bologna on the 19th June 1999 by ministers in charge of higher education from 29 European countries. Today, the *Process* unites 47 countries, all party to the European Cultural Convention and committed to the goals of the European Higher Education Area. An important characteristic of the *Bologna Process*, and key to its success, is that it also involves European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES, as well as representatives of higher education institutions, students, staff, employers and quality assurance agencies.

The overarching aim of the *Bologna Process* is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world.

The aims of the envisaged European Higher Education Area are to:

- facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and

for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;

- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS

Over the years, the *Senato Accademico* of Padova University has provided a lot of services [4] [5] aimed to promote the internationalization process as the following services to students:

- establishment of the International Relations Service;
- establishment of Foreign Service Door Greeter (SAOS);
- establishment of the Housing Service (SASSA for a total of 16 residences);
- establishment of Ateneo Language Centre (CLA);
- establishment of Tutors Buddy;
- twenty-three projects Erasmus Mundus, starting from 2004
- establishment of seven Master of Science Programmes / Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree with the participation of the University of Padova (second cycle programs);
- establishment of two PhDs Erasmus Mundus with the participation of the University of Padova.

We think that now it's time that every course put in act short term targets aimed to achieve an international status. To activate this process in higher education we have asked ourselves three main questions:

- What are the real reasons?
- How to get started?
- Which short-term goals?

We believe that the answers to these questions are fundamental to our daily-basis work life.

What are the real reasons that have driven us to begin an internationalization process?

There are many contributions to this research topic that we found available in literature. For instance,

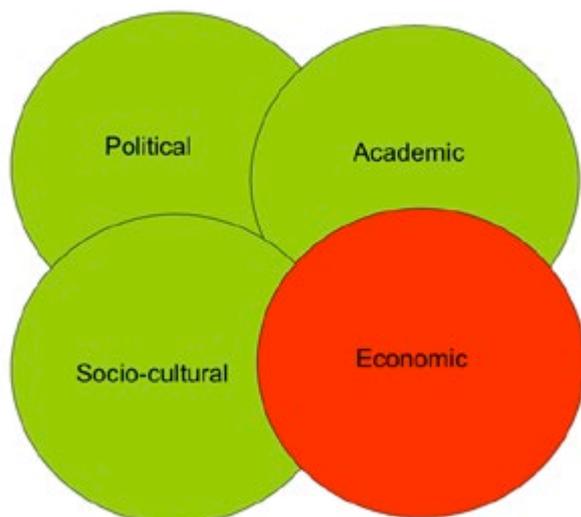


Figure 1. Motivations that normally lead to an internationalization process.

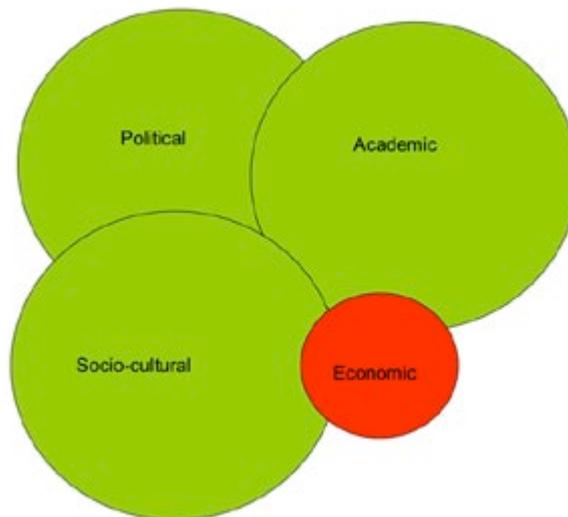


Figure 2. Course motivations that drive to an internationalization process

according to Kreber (2007) [6], Jeptoo (2012) [7] and De Wit (2013) [8], we can group motivations into four categories as represented in Figure 1.

Economic motivations lie in trying to increase the higher education marketing of Universities. **Political** motivations are instead directed to the pursuit of an ideal peace, based on international understanding and international cooperation, and aimed at solving problems related to the quality of people life. The **socio-cultural** rationale aims respecting cultural diversity. **Academic** reasons are related to the mobility of students, teachers and support staff, as well as to the dissemination of professional and cultural knowledge, such as literature, meetings, etc.

These four motivational dimensions are not distinct or exclusive, but can overlap in varying degrees. While the political, socio-cultural and academic motivations are based on ethical and cooperation principles, the economic rationale is based on competition between academies.

As far as we are concerned, the real motivations that drive us to undertake a path of internationalization can be redesigned as shown in Figure 2.

Indeed, our motivation is based on ethical reasons. We think that the aim of higher educational processes should be not only to prepare competent

professionals but also people capable of interacting and cooperating in an international scenario. This would improve the quality of life of each component of this great multicultural society that is growing fast.

How to activate the process of internationalization?

The first condition necessary to start a process of internationalization is the competence to communicate with people of different mother tongue languages and cultural backgrounds. To achieve this competence, a shared vehicular language is needed. Almost all universities in the world use currently English as a 'medium instruction', or in other words as a *lingua franca* (Klassen R., 2008) [9], being a basic level of English linguistic competence easy and quick to learn so that to allow survival in international environments.

The use of English language is currently the major obstacle to the process of internationalization in our context for several reasons. The first reason is related to the lecturer's reluctance to use English during lessons. Often, lecturers do not have (or believe not to have) adequate skills to perform fluently and with confidence their teaching (oral and writing).

Students have also complained difficulties in writing and speaking in English, despite recent generations are experiencing an education system more attentive than ever in learning English. This is in line with reports from Airey J. (2011) [10], as noted in our 'reality'. Despite students yield proficiency by the use of English in active teaching/learning activities, lecturers require tutorials to obtain a language certificate at least to a level B2-C1 (for description of language proficiency levels, see the Common European Framework of Reference (C.E.F.R.) [11].

Secondly, the promotion of the course of study needs the use of an interface understandable to the rest of the world. Certainly, a bilingual version of the official website of the degree courses is required.

The third condition regards the outcome of literature resulting by the didactic activity of the course. We namely refer to thesis and derivate articles or technical reports that will be written in English.

Furthermore, the transformation from a local to an international course will involve a change of culture across the whole Faculty. It is necessary to identify strategies aimed to achieve this target.

Last, but certainly not least, the training and awareness to the change of academic and clinic mentors will play a significant role within the activation of the internationalization process in higher education.

Currently, the initiatives pursued by the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale* to activate a process of internationalization are listed below:

- two disciplines are now taught entirely in English: *English* and *Professional Practice Methodology in Rehabilitation*. This entails not only the use of English as medium instruction, but also the opportunity for students to express themselves in English during workshops, plenary meetings, presentations and final exams.
- the institutional website of the course is partly bilingual, Italian and English.
- the course is ready to accept worldwide students who wish to attend the Course.

Short-term goals

The targets that can be achieved in the short term are:

- Activate a support course for lecturers available to keep their courses in English. Personal learning is a necessary condition for the use of language. You learn mainly by reading, listening to radio and television programs, by studying grammar and syntax with texts treated for self-learning. It's possible to provide an *open conversation English course* where the English teacher is the linguistic supervisor, who will indicate which areas of proficiency are lacking and how you can improve them;
- Provide the website of the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale* bilingual;
- Require an English translation of thesis titles and abstracts;
- Encourage the production of master's thesis in English and publish them to the website of the course;
- Identify strategies aimed to transform the Course in an international one;
- Promote the exchange of students and teachers as well, with other international Universities.

A COURSE HELD IN ENGLISH

The experience of a teacher (the feeling of Antonio Quinci)

The experience gained over the years along with teachers and Erasmus students brought me to believe in the processes of internationalization of universities for the reasons previously described. The process involves a cultural shift and the acquisition of new skills by lecturers. It will require several years to stand out from international competition with accredited and high quality degree courses. This transformation process is definitely experienced by students positively, as indicated by their following reviews. It is also appreciated by some lecturers, as well as by the President of *Corso di Laurea Magistrale*.

It was time to get involved personally in the internationalization process. Therefore, I decided to hold my teaching at the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale* in English. Overall one of the target of my course – *Professional practice methodology in rehabilitation* – is to achieve competence in the methodological pro-

cess and methods necessary to managing, researching and teaching in the rehabilitation field. This represents certainly one of the core competence that the course aims to deliver as an educational target. In addition, another important goal of the internationalization process of our degree course concerns students' acquisition of skills necessary to cope with any interactions with international professionals.

The contents of the course regard the history and methodology of working organizations, Science, and the history of Pedagogy and methodology of teaching.

The didactic method is based on the *socio-cultural constructivism*, according to the theory and School of L.S. Vygotskij [12].

The course was attended by sixteen students. Lectures were arranged in five seminars and each seminar were organized in three main phases which are described as following:

- an historical and cultural introduction, followed by the assignments for the next phase;
- a workshop in small groups (i.e. three groups of five students), where all students were involved directly. The workshop consisted in solving problems which were raised during the introductions;
- Final in-depth discussions on the works produced by each group.

Throughout the course, teacher and students had to respect two important rules:

1. enter in a cognitive international dimension, adopting a contextual point of view which would consider the University of Padova as an international center where knowledge is shared among students and teachers around the world;
2. During the seminars we had to communicate strictly in English. Students were provided of bibliographical material in English and the final oral exam consisted in an interview with the teacher in English, about an article written in English chosen by the student on a topic related to the course.

To prepare my lessons, I updated my knowledge on the teaching discipline through literature written in English and searched the English translations of any terms and sources that I used in previous lessons

thought in Italian. As a result, I enriched my vocabulary by researching expressions and terms in English that do not have an analogue in Italian.

Consequently, I re-prepared the slides of my lessons in English. I found more appropriate not to translate literally the old ones, but thinking and writing them directly in English.

I searched terms that I did not know and checked their pronunciation accurately by using free sources in the Internet, such as the online Cambridge Dictionary [13].

I practiced every slide on my own, in order to improve my confidence and overcame any potential language difficulties that I could have met during my presentations.

I tried to suppose questions that students might have asked and to formulate responses, being Q&A the heart of what teachers do (DeZure, 1996) [14].

As a result of persisting practice, I integrated my technical linguistic knowledge with an extended English-based vocabulary.

During the first lesson I organized three working groups of students.

In order to organize well balanced groups of study, I handed a self-evaluation test based on that students could check their English competence according to the Common European Framework of Reference (C.E.F.R.). Then, I had a little conversation with each student where they could introduce themselves and discuss about their professional and educational experiences. In addition, they explained the reasons that brought them to enroll in the *Corso di Laurea Magistrale*. Finally, I identified three students who have demonstrated good linguistic competences. These three students were responsible to co-ordinate and lead their group of study, as well as to act as clinic mentors with students in difficulty with English language. Together we determined the following operating rules:

- All members of each group should contribute actively to the works, expressing themselves verbally and produce written in English;
- Each group's component is bound to produce a report during the plenary meetings at the end of the lesson.

In the workshop, groups had to solve a problematic aspect related to the course contents. In this way,

students had the possibility to build their methodological and method competences which were related to professional activities that postgraduate students can meet in their future professional practices.

During the workshop, I jointed all groups one at a time, with the purpose of supervising the group dynamics and facilitating learning of knowledge and expertise.

Every workshop was concluded by a critical discussion of works produced in a plenary session.

My personal experience as a lecturer relates to various aspects. With regards to the preparation of teaching material, I cannot deny several challenges that I had to overcome in order to achieve appropriate and sufficient linguistic skills and to reset the teaching. Sometimes it was necessary versatility in the use of English to cope with unexpected educational situations. Obviously, to achieve such a language fluency, it was necessary to invest a considerable amount of time to study and practice. However, these efforts have been rewarded by excellent students' feedbacks throughout the courses. Note that the use of English during my presentations has led me to greater simplicity and clarity which was also detected by the students. This is due to the intrinsic often 'straightforward' and 'technical' nature of the language itself. As a result, sometimes I felt positively rewarded and more motivated to further improve my communication skills.

My evaluation on the achievement of the learning targets by students has been the same as for the teaching held in Italian. I decided to add a new learning target, concerning the improvement of communication skills by students.

About my learning experience, I personally have enhanced my English proficiency. The acquisition of this skill was later useful in another institutional activity promoted within the University; for example the international accreditation process of the Master in Manual Therapy and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation.

Student's experiences and evaluations

Students' experience of the Course was evaluated by sixteen students.

At the end of the course, the lecturer asked the students to complete a questionnaire consisting of four open-ended questions:

1. Evaluation of skills achieved during the course;
2. Evaluation of the teacher's clarity and ability in delivering teaching material;
3. Opinion on the conduction of the course in English;
4. Opinion about the internationalization aspects of the course.

The evaluation of the experience was carried out through the collection and analysis of the responses of the students involved. The opinions given by students were coded in order to collect, organize and manage data into categories and then to identify recurring thematic units. Later, the evaluation process continued with the analysis of the semantic content of the *corpus* of answers in its individual classification units (words, strings of words and verbs with the same semantic meaning). This allowed to highlight the presence of thematic units [15] [16]. Results as following.

Evaluation of skills achieved during the course

Most students believed to have achieved useful skills in two areas:

- Organization, planning and acquisition of a working method (62.5%);
- Improvement of English language (37.5%).

Students claimed to have learned a transverse mode of organization which is applicable not only to their work but also to their personal life. The topics covered during the course allowed the graduates to acquire an insight which would be useful in their future role as managers. Moreover, this new skills and expertise will allow them to better understand different aspects related to the organization of their work in a more international and open-minded approach. In addition the course has promoted reflections on group dynamics and leadership skills, considering leadership as a management and organizational ability. These were possible thanks to the work of the groups carried out during each lesson. Furthermore the group activities have enhanced the professionals experiences exchanges and teamwork skills. The experience is described as an opportunity for professional and personal

growth. Someone has expressed the desire to live other similar learning opportunities. Finally, We would highlight that the 19% of students expressed the need for a longer duration of the course for a greater deepening of topics.

Evaluation of the teacher's clarity and ability in delivering teaching material

Recurring topics resulting from the analysis of student's responses are:

- teacher's clarity and effectiveness during the presentation of issues;
- pertinence between the official program and course development;
- effectiveness and suitability of the material delivered and teaching strategies employed;
- students' involvement and participation on teaching activities.

According to the 44% of the students who attended the evaluation test, the teacher was able to deal with and carry out lessons in English; and the 31% claimed that he was able to express the contents with clarity, simplicity and accuracy. Nevertheless, the 12% of students expressed to have experienced difficulties in following the themes and this was due to their lack of language knowledge.

The didactic method was appreciated by the 56% of the students that felt to be active part of the lesson. The organization of the lesson in two parts, respectively a theoretical introduction and a group work, allowed a more interactive, interesting and pleasant activity. In order to this cooperative-learning teaching method, the students were divided in small groups and this facilitated the achievement of common goals. The group reports were then presented to the rest of students. In this way it was possible to create an interactive context. This method fostered great motivation and permitted a positive and effective learning. The teacher was a facilitator of learning providing support in case of impasse, and calls for help, rather than providing categorical or absolute judgments. From the analysis of the student's evaluation we could point out that the teacher has demonstrated both technical and soft skills, such as self-confidence, commitment, experience, and ability to plan.

Opinion on the conduction of the course in English

The importance of holding the didactic activity in English was recognized by all students who considered "this experience valuable for their current and future work."

Nowadays, communicating by a fluent English has become a competence which allow the student and lecturers to look at the present and future with a more open-minded approach. The course allowed the 56% of participants to "update the language, learn a new vocabulary, test the ability to communicate, read and hear". However, some students (12%) stressed out the need to have a basic level of English for both students and teachers. In addition, the 31% of the students think that this first step represents an opportunity to transform the course in an international one and to attend other abroad University courses. Furthermore it could enhance Faculty's international visibility and prestige.

Opinion about the internationalization aspects of the course

Students believe that an internationalization opening is a difficult goal to achieve. It may depend on the assumption that this kind of higher education policy isn't worth for Italian higher education.

"The internationalization process of our courses, lessons, workshops and internships is currently utopian and unattainable", even though, students believe that the internationalization process should be partly adopted in every Italian academic career to allow more visibility in international networks. Therefore it is very important to acquire a basic level of knowledge of the English language at least. It is a matter of fact that Italian students have less working opportunity due to their lack of knowledge of English, even compared with European colleagues. This international opening offers the possibility to extend employability of Italian graduates abroad.

Some students, to facilitate this process, suggest:

- "Enhancing attractiveness from abroad" (19%);
- "Improving the official websites of each course and translate them into international languages (e.g., English, French, German and Spanish)" (12.5%);

- “Getting the double title of graduation” (6%) through a joint educational program between Italian and foreign universities.

In a nutshell, the internationalization process needs a “culture of internationalization” shared by all participants to the Higher Educational System. “It is essential for being European citizens, and citizens of the world as well.”

EXPERIENCES CONSEQUENTLY BORN IN OTHER RELATED COURSES

The academic tutor experience

A professional training is scheduled in the Physiotherapy degree at the end of the first and third year. It is organized in two parts: a clinical experience and weekly meetings of tutorial activities provided in a theoretical-practical way.

The internship experience allows students to deal with unique and complex situations. The learner can reflect upon those experiences and find a reasonable meaning arose from uncertain or unique situations [17].

The training course permits the students not only to learn what to do but also to think about the reasoning of their acting. In this way the student get close to clinical problems and can question himself about the meanings of his experience [18].

The objectives of the training course and tutorial activities are defined in five key areas:

- therapeutic approach;
- reasoning;
- responsibility;
- report;
- research.

The achievements of the learning targets are assessed by many dimensions, in particular:

- evaluation of student behavior during training and tutorial activities;
- evaluation of clinical case reports drafted by the student;
- evaluation of research outcomes achieved by working groups.

The teacher most favorite methods during tutorials are active teaching and workshops. During the training courses the teacher addresses students

to reflect on the base of experiences. This activity aims to develop the core competences of the health professionals student: intellectual, behavioral and relational [19].

The tutorial meetings are made up of small groups of students (10-16) led by an academic tutor, according to a program, in a highly dialogical dimension. Students and tutors have themes, cases, exercises, tools to analyze and discuss after a deep reflection.

In the effort to develop the internationalization process, we offered the following services in the training experience and tutorials:

- student Erasmus sustained by an English speaking clinic mentor;
- translation of the tutorial program and teaching materials in English;
- foreign student assisted by an Italian student during the clinical placement;
- possibility to use English during the tutorial activity to interact with the group by arguing constructively or questioning;
- possibility to present clinical reports in English;
- set up educational material in English with the help of Master’s students.

Whereas the assumption that the language is not a barrier, as well as good findings of tutorial working groups, where the presence of a foreign student strove the exchange of knowledge, other proposals came up:

- reading in English reports drawn up by Italian students;
- discussion of clinical cases in English;
- scientific research in English.

Therefore it has been argued that foreign students encounters difficulties such as:

- during placement students meet Italian patients. If the foreign student does not know Italian language he could not enter into relationship with the patient. The dialog has an increasingly significant importance in rehabilitation. It is the primary medium between the patient and his body;
- using a vehicular language can be difficult for the peculiarity of educational tutorial process. The thematic dealt during the meetings are different and complex. The reflection on experiences with patients, with their disease and on rehabilitation

provides a deep debate that leaves no room for a superficial language. The partial knowledge of English language can make these dialogues much too simple and therefore superficial. Students and tutors can express nuances that make the difference only using the native language;

- the tutors often have a limited knowledge of the English language, despite a deep professional and didactic competence. University should provide courses for teachers and tutors aimed to put in practice their English.

The clinic mentors training and supporting

The clinic mentors training and supporting project aims to improve the organizational and relational system, as well as teaching and training skills.

The project stems from the need to meet the university educational system and the clinical experience of students during their placements. The 2013 project had an additional requirement: to deal with the challenges of internationalization process adopted by University of Padua. The Physiotherapy degree has welcomed foreign students, community and extra-community, for several years and for long-term projects, such as Erasmus and Erasmus Mundi, and foreign students who attend regularly the degree course.

The project was also born from the demand and at the same time the necessity of academic tutors and clinic mentors. The problem was not only to face formal aspects of welcome and internship placements (orthopedic, neurological, geriatric, visceral, developmental age), but also to understand the deep meaning of these migratory flows. This aspect enhances the understanding of different cultures and individualities. Another aspect regards the therapeutic relationship with the patient which must be based on an appropriate integration.

In order to succeed these aspects, it has been necessary to plan some meetings involving external experts of internationalization, like social psychologists and anthropologists.

Thanks to their aid, a variety of topics like stereotypes, prejudices, ability to acceptance, codes verbal and not verbal communication were discussed.

This allowed the participants to reflect and try to find innovative solutions aimed to create solid and well established bridges between clinic mentors and students. Classroom meetings were an opportunity for everyone to learn and to establish new ways of cooperation between the academic world and clinic mentors. Moreover it permitted to reprogram the tutorial didactic activities and the training for foreign students.

Furthermore, clinic mentors' reports about their experience with foreign students have been useful as they have highlighted not only critical points but also new opportunities for a process of cultural and professional exchanges, nowadays unstoppable.

The project was completed in November 2013, with further meetings arranged to highlight the efforts and changes occurred in the last months. Some teachers for example tried to modify their slides by writing them in English, others lecturers have carried out their lessons in English. Furthermore some clinic mentors were able to involve Italian students in a collaboration aimed to communicate with foreign students during lessons, placements and outwork time.

There is no doubt that the first step to begin a internationalization process is to share the same language. Some clinic mentors and academic tutors no longer young, requested to undertake an English course organized by the University to learn or improve English, even after work time. Another requirement was to create a web-site where information is written in English, for foreign incoming students. It could be also a place to get more information regarding training and course regulations.

In a nutshell, it is important to underline not only that there is a wide range of ideas and hypothesis of solutions but also the strong willingness of mentors, tutors and teachers to respond immediately and efficiently. The major difficult regards the lack of resources aimed to face to this increasingly urgent and unstoppable process.

CONCLUSIONS

Internationalization is an ongoing transformative process generated and sustained by the behaviors and beliefs of university members.

It is hoped that the variety of points of view presented in this publication will serve as a springboard to consider ways that internationalization perspectives might be introduced, or activities ‘scaled up’. It certainly suggests a range of possibilities to inspire change. Achieving change on a grand scale is bound to take time, but what seems critically important is that, rather than seeing this as an overwhelming agenda, individual academics and curriculum developers reflect on:

- How their particular subject area might be broadened to include global perspectives;
- What areas that they could influence, to ensure that more graduates develop as global citizens;
- How the curriculum and the tutor activity might be developed, such that students feel empowered to champion change;
- What networks they could join, or lever to influence change.

The potential to bring about change through the learning experience provide students seems obvious: graduates can change the world of work and have opportunities to influence decision making structures throughout their lives. Higher education in this country needs to ensure that students are equipped to face this challenge and to make a positive difference to the way the world functions.

However, the immediate challenge is to convince academics that their teaching should provide students with the knowledge, skills and values to participate in a global society; create opportunities to explore values, attitudes and the perspectives of others; and that students are empowered to challenge perspectives. If we do not promote change, then we are responsible for delivering an education that supports the maintenance of the status quo.

Two quotes seem particularly pertinent:

“As educators we have a unique opportunity and a clear responsibility to help prepare our students to be responsible citizens of the future” [20].

However, while “global perspectives are important and relevant to Higher Education ... integrating them across disciplines, departments and institutions is a huge challenge” [21].

Responsiveness lies not only in identifying appropriate instruments for change but in harnessing the energy to embark on a process of transformation.

That energy lies in the person’s own self-belief and sense of purpose.

Hopefully, this publication will stimulate further developments across the sector. The challenge may be ‘huge’ but with time, ensuring that the curriculum incorporates a global perspective will become commonplace.

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