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PECULIARITIES OF THE TUTORING AND MENTORING REALIZATION AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF ITALY

The article is based on the theoretical and methodological potential of practical new and practical scientific research on the peculiarities of the tutoring and mentoring implementation at Higher Educational Institutions in Italy, where, depending on the university, there are different models of tutoring and mentoring. Italian higher education has great potential and contributes to the country's cultural and economic development. International credit mobility programs are implemented at the Italian universities. The National Research Quality Assessment (VQR) plays an important role in the strategic planning and evaluation of the Italian university and research system.

Attention is focused on the fact that there are many problems in the implementation of the tutoring and mentoring in the Italian education system. Italian universities attract fewer international students than foreign OECD countries and employment rates are lower. There are also problems related to mismatch of skills of graduates, which is true for the labor market.

It has been proven that there is a need for tutoring and mentoring to help students in various fields. Cases of successful implementation of tutoring and mentoring prove the importance of providing additional help to students. Different types of tutoring and mentoring include additional help in the preparation of educational material, work with first-year students, assistance to students with disabilities, work on individual projects as well as providing psychological support and consultations.

It is argued that the introduction of tutoring and mentoring at the Italian Higher Educational Institutions in recent years is also related to the provisions of the Bologna Declaration. Many universities have become interested not only in providing educational services, but also in helping young people to integrate and achieve their individual goals.

The features of inclusive education at the Italian universities are revealed. In Italy there have been many initiatives for inclusion, but in other areas, and now the priority is shifting to inclusion in higher education. Specialized services and support centers for students with disabilities appear at universities throughout the academic year.

Key words: *tutoring, mentoring, tutor, mentor, Italian HEIs, higher education.*

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ ТЬЮТОРСТВА ТА МЕНТОРСТВА У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ІТАЛІЇ

У статті на основі теоретико-методологічного потенціалу праць учених та новітніх практик здійснено дослідження особливості реалізації тьюторства та менторства у закладах вищої освіти Італії, де залежно від університету існують різні моделі тьюторства та менторства. Італійська вища освіта має великий потенціал і робить внесок у культурний та економічний розвиток країни. В італійських університетах реалізуються програми міжнародної кредитної мобільності. Національна оцінка якості досліджень (VQR) відіграє важливу роль у стратегічному плануванні та в оцінці італійської системи університетів та досліджень.

Акцентовано увагу на тому, що в італійській системі освіти є багато проблем в реалізації тьюторства та менторства. Італійські університети залучають менше іноземних студентів аніж більшість країн ОЕСР, а також рівень зайнятості нижчий. Існують також проблеми, пов'язані з невідповідністю навичок випускників, необхідних для ринку праці.

Доведено, що існує необхідність реалізації тьюторства та менторства для надання допомоги студентам у різних сферах. Випадки успішної реалізації тьюторства та менторства доводять важливість надання додаткової допомоги студентам. Різні види тьюторства та менторства включають додаткову допомогу в підготовці навчального матеріалу, роботу з першокурсниками, допомогу студентам з обмеженими можливостями, роботу над індивідуальними проектами, а також надання психологічної підтримки та консультацій.

Аргументовано, що запровадження тьюторства та менторства в італійських закладах вищої освіти протягом останніх років також пов'язане із положенням Болонської декларації. Багато університетів зацікавилися не лише наданням освітніх послуг, а й допомогою в інтеграції молоді та досягненні її індивідуальних цілей.

Розкрито особливості інклюзивної освіти в італійських університетах. В Італії було багато ініціатив щодо інклюзії, але в інших сферах, а тепер пріоритети зміщуються до інклюзії у вищій освіті. В університетах з'являються спеціалізовані служби та центри для підтримки студентів з обмеженими можливостями протягом усього навчального року.

Ключові слова: *тьюторство, менторство, тьютор, ментор, ЗВО Італії, вища освіта.*

Introduction. More and more universities nowadays realize different models of tutoring and mentoring in higher education in order to assist students in their needs. These needs are related to global changes in the world. While comparing European countries, models of tutoring and mentoring have been the most actively developing in such countries as England (since Oxford and Cambridge foundation times), Germany and France (since XX century). In the XXI century the tutoring and mentoring became a part of the universities system in Poland, Romania, Lithuania etc. This practice is becoming more widespread in south European countries, such as Portugal, Spain and Italy.

The **aim of the article** is to analyze the peculiarities of the tutoring and mentoring realization at the Italian universities.

Presentation of the main material. First of all we should analyze the peculiarities and changes in the Italian higher education in order to understand the prerequisites for the tutoring and mentoring implementation. The Italian higher education has a big potential and makes contribution to the cultural and economic development of the country. At the same time there are a lot of challenges, for example, Italian universities attract less foreign students than most OECD countries, also the employment rate is lower. Government policies recently have focused on promoting research quality and opening to students' demand. There are also challenges related to mismatch in graduates skills needed for the market. International credit mobility programmes are being realized at the Italian universities. The National Research Quality Assessment (VQR) plays an important role in strategic planning and in the evaluation of the Italian system of universities and research. It is carried out every five years and is aimed at evaluating the research outcomes of state and state-recognised universities as well as public research institutes. There are actions which are directed for the improvement of the entrepreneurship-related skills and competencies achieved by students. Starting in 2018, Italy has introduced professional degree programmes to reduce skills mismatches. Universities can create professional bachelor's programmes, provide teaching and learning activities for skills acquirement needed in labour markets (Overview of the higher education system in Italy, 2019). There is a strong family effect on the students performances in the higher education and on the transition of graduates in the labor market. Besides, the inequality of opportunity is more severe in the South than in the regions of the North-Center (Peragine, Serlenga, 2008).

Among the main concerns about the tutoring and mentoring process realization is the support provided

either by the educational establishment or by the projects or programs within which the additional assistance should be organized (Balduzzi, Lazzari, 2015). Sometimes, there is lack of such support at the university level, therefore it may influence the quality of the tutoring and mentoring realization.

Let us analyze the tutoring and mentoring practices at the University of Perugia (University of Perugia, 2023). Big attention is paid to the job placement which is organized by the job placement office. There is the career day and many other activities at the national and international level as well as the cooperation with enterprises. Also, there are different activities with the university alumni. Tutorship is provided during the job placement process. All the initiatives are implemented to establish relationship with the labour market. Guidance counselling service is very active at the University as it helps to make new students aware of the university structure, help the University freshmen, assist in CV preparation, organize job interviews simulation and provide career planning course. Service for labour market stakeholders include job posting, internship offers publication, employment policy projects, recruiting days, visit to the companies, career day. Service for graduates include job opportunities, internship opportunities, employment policy projects, initiatives and services, career counselling, recruiting days, visit to the companies, career day (University of Perugia, 2023).

Besides, a psychological counselling service is open to all students enrolled at the University of Perugia. Since 2015, there is the FOCUS-Psi service at the University of Perugia which is devoted to listening, support, and psychological prevention and intervention for all students enrolled at University of Perugia. It is created to help students manage personal and emotional problems, exam anxiety, difficulties and doubts about personal abilities that may arise during the academic course. The aim of the Service is to support students in their personal growth by offering psychological help aimed at understanding the problems and difficulties, providing the necessary psychological resources to manage them, and supporting change through appropriate psychological interventions. Interviews can be conducted in person or remotely. This Service is free of charge and confidential. The interviews are conducted by expert psychologists and psychotherapists (University of Perugia, 2023).

The Orientation office is responsible for providing information on study courses and university services, organizing different initiatives as well as seminars and open days. During the open day it is possible to collect the information on the University's degree

courses and services offered to students (University of Perugia, 2023).

Associate professor Moira Sannipoli indicates that there is also assistance which is provided to students at the department level. Big attention is paid to the diversity of each student, providing inclusiveness and creating networking with the whole community. To ensure inclusiveness, Italian Universities provide peer and specialized tutoring, the counseling services, the departmental contact person or referent etc. For example, in each department of the University of Perugia, a referent is appointed to support students with disabilities or learning disorders in study and social participation. Referent meets at the beginning of the Academic Year students with disabilities or Learning Disorders to inform them about the services provided by the University and to identify specific needs. Often students at first do not respond to the invitation and contact the referent only when the exam session is approaching. Supervising during the year is very important and allows to monitor the course of study and the paths to growth (Sannipoli, 2023, University of Perugia, 2023).

Big attention is paid to the preparation of pre-school teachers in Italy with a special focus on workplace-based training. The mentoring practices are being implemented within the university courses which support practical trainings, theoretical and experiential learning as well as academic research and educational practices (Balduzzi, Lazzari, 2015).

There are transformations in the Italian higher education, especially during last thirty year. At the same, there is separation between fields of study, high rates of university dropout etc. Recent reforms contributed to changes and promoted greater university autonomy (Colombo, M., Salmieri, L. (2022).

More and more mentoring practices are implemented at the Italian universities in order to correspond to the changes in higher education. Mentoring is implemented to support the improvement in teaching and learning and there are several models with specific organizational and relational approaches. The project “Mentors for teaching” carried out at Palermo University adopts a peer mentoring approach as mutual support between mentors and mentees (Felisatti, Scialdone, Cannarozzo, Pennisi, 2019). It is important to note that both mentors and mentees need support, coordination and clear understanding of the mentor-mentee cooperation goals.

Implementation of tutoring and mentoring at the Italian HEIs during recent years is also related to the Bologna Declaration statements. Many universities became interested not only in providing educational services but also in helping to integrate young people

and achieve their individual goals. There are some similarities in tutoring and mentoring realization at the universities of Italy and Spain. For example, tutoring and mentoring services at the Universities of Padua and Burgos are unconnected to a formal didactic function and supported by specialists. Peer tutoring and mentoring models at the Italian and Spanish universities aim to assist the newly enrolled student to achieve success in the academic and social dimensions. The mentor aims to assist the mentee by empowering and helping to promote self-confidence and esteem as well as trust in others, which also contributes to the student’s general wellbeing. The mentor focuses on the needs of the mentee. The University of Padua launched tutoring services for freshmen students in 2001–2002 to help with their individual needs. Tutoring services are developed to provide advice and information, to teach effective study techniques and to provide guidance. There could be informative tutoring where tutor acts as a mediator between the university system and the student and helps to integrate first-year students offering information on courses of study, exams etc. Within the study tutoring students are provided with study techniques for the preparation to exams and theses. There is also tutoring to guide activities realized for the students’ needs. During the university study there is informative counselling, organization of different events, consultation with other university services, for example, psychological service as well as monitoring of the students’ progress. Students may use different connections means as phones, emails or Skype in order to contact a tutor. (Lorenza, Casado-Muñoz, Collado-Fernández, 2013).

Nowadays, there are many tutoring and mentoring schemes developed to support students with disabilities at different universities in the world. The access opportunities for disabled persons to academic education in Italy have greatly increased during recent years as a result of legislative initiatives that supported the implementation of important measures. There were many initiatives towards inclusion in Italy but in some other areas and now priorities move to inclusion in higher education. Specialized services and centers appear at the Italian universities to support students with disabilities during the whole academic year. For example, there is the Centre for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and Dyslexia at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan which helps to educate young adults with disabilities and supports the whole academy in understanding the challenges, needs, and resources of students. As the number of students with disabilities increased, Universities have undergone changes to adapt to European standards

and to improve the educational and training quality. The tutoring services help students with disabilities to be engaged in university life by removing any psychological, didactic and technological barriers that prevent them from having equal opportunities to study and learn. The student may access the inclusion service, through the website or addressing other students. Based on the disability, the student will be in contact with the designed pedagogical tutor that will suggest the education and support path, using the official documentation on his or her disability. After the diagnosis overview tutor defines which kind of inclusive tools the student will need. The tutor can act as mediator between the student and the professor. Peer Tutors are students who are enrolled at the same university as students with disabilities, for their work they may receive small salaries or formative experiences. Peer tutoring may be realized as one-to-one interaction, work in small or large groups. Peer tutors assist with studying, learning in class, preparing exams and tests together, also they are helpful in supporting a student's autonomy and mobility on the university campus, for example, by helping the student to reach the dining room or a classroom. There is also technological, visual, and other forms of support for undertaking exams. For example, the use of large prints, Braille, audio presentations help students with visual impairment to better access the testing environment, they may be also allowed to have extended time during exams. The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan offers two types of services: a secretary who provides technical and administrative support and pedagogical tutors, who advise and support the students during the course of study (Maggiolini, Molteni, 2013). It is important

to note that realization of tutoring and mentoring for students with disabilities helps to provide equal opportunities for everyone and create a comfortable educational environment.

Among the types of tutoring the following models are popular: tutoring between peers, organizational actors and mentors; peer-tutoring practices; didactic tutorship; tutorship for specific services (disability, information); professional or vocational tutoring; information tutoring. (Romano, 2018).

Realization of tutoring is popular at the University of Macerata. International Master degree students may be selected for the following services: international tutors for international welcome desk; tutors for the English language courses at the Departments. There are demands concerning the amount of time for tutoring (at least two times per week) and the tutoring activities organization details. For example, there are criteria for the selection of tutors (University of Macerata, 2023).

Conclusions. The peculiarities of the tutoring and mentoring realization at the Italian universities are in the fact that there are different models of tutoring and mentoring depending on the university. The comparative analysis of different universities models in tutoring and mentoring realization is provided. There is the necessity of the tutoring and mentoring realization to assist students in different areas. The cases of the successful tutoring and mentoring realization prove the importance of the additional assistance providing for students. Different types of tutoring and mentoring include additional assistance with the study material preparation, work with the first-year students, assisting students with disabilities, working on individual projects as well as providing psychological support and consultations.

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