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Editorial

Editorial: Clinical Psychology & MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses)

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1. Introduction

In the last ten years Italian universities, adapting to the changes deriving from globalization, have rethought their role classically linked to teaching and research. In a vision of meaning, these last missions are joined by a last one, a horizon that includes the relationship between universities and the outside world.

This new domain called "third mission" (Di Bernardino & Corsi, 2018; Frondizi et al., 2019; Loi & Di Guardo, 2015; Settineri, 2020, 2021; Settineri & Femminò, 2019) includes a series of different and non-homogeneous proposals aimed at the general public. We refer to an easier reading of scientific language, informative solutions for orientation in the great work choices of one's life and cultural growth. This appears clear by referring to the verification points proposed at the last VQR, a national project evaluating the work of Italian universities.

In the latter area, the evaluation of Massive Open Online Source was included (e.g., Al_Rahmi et al., 2019; Altalhi, 2021; And one & Mihaescu, 2018; Ebner et al., 2020; Li, 2019; Liu et al.,

2020). Sancassani and colleagues (2019) dedicated the last chapter of a text based on didactic innovation retracing the short history of a tool designed for a large population (**M**assive), accessible to all (**O**pen), usable online (**O**nline), which can be used to make intellectual resources for more didactic purposes (**C**ourses).

On the pedagogical level, Blairon (2020) conducted a relevant investigation on the possible success of MOOCs such as their ability to foster conceptual self-determination, create small remote groups, integrate other forms of knowledge development (projects, conferences, seminars). MOOC remains an elite medium in the face of a population excluded from information technology, institutions not yet involved and a high average age of academics.

To get a practical idea of a MOOC it may be useful to visit the historical Coursera portal (<https://www.coursera.org/browse/health>) which has reached an extraordinary number of users. Coursera provides for a series of courses close to the aims of MJCP, considering the offer of courses relating to health. For example, with reference to psychology (12 courses), eight are free and relating to resilience, schizophrenia, memory and other relevant themes. For a modest payment it is also possible to obtain a certificate that can be used to enrich curricula. While it is true that the proposals do not replace traditional or specialized teaching, the offer based on well-edited videos can relate to a wide range of users. This refers to both support and integration of contents.

2. The Italian contribution

The Italian experience is highlighted by three portals that combine the offer in various ways. Federica (<https://www.federica.eu/chi-siamo/>) consortium of nine Italian universities (Federica WEB Learning) whose mission is well defined in its presentation. The contribution is defined as the digital space of learning and continuous updating of knowledge. There are over 350 MOOCs, ranging from classical to human sciences. In this sense, the third mission is enriched with orientation, support for work activities and promotion of knowledge and health. Federica represents a point of reference for both users and teachers, allowing the implementation of everyone's knowledge.

Alongside the experience mentioned, the Politecnico di Milano has been providing the POK (Polimi Open Knowledge) portal since 2014 (<https://www.pok.polimi.it/>). Each course is well presented with clear definitions and objectives, provides for free registration and issues certificates of participation. Alongside the intuitive interest in the Pok technology world, the Politecnico offers some courses related to updating and educational development with very

short course characteristics, edited and supplemented by readings, slides, tests and evaluation quizzes.

Eduopen (<https://learn.eduopen.org/>) is a project funded by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Scientific Research whose philosophy is linked to the promotion of Open Access and Digital Education. The key words that support the project are: openness, interactivity, creativity, certification. The Course Catalog is rich, with captivating and innovative titles such as (e.g.) "The Right to Beauty". The portal offers particularly interesting offers both for the general public and for students (e.g. "BIBLIOPATENTE: the basics of document research"). Eduopen involves twenty universities and prestigious institutions. The platform is open to other universities also in terms of support. In particular, "Pathways" represents an interesting idea related to learning pathways. Eduopen project there goes beyond the third mission, for example including master's proposal should be part of classical higher education.

Referring to MOOCs, the CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors) approved a document in 2017 containing the *National guidelines for the preparation of quality MOOCs provided by Italian universities* (https://www.cru.it/images/1- LineeGuidaMOOCsItalia_aprile2017.pdf). The document is available on the internet. The document clearly defines what a MOOC is, the general lines of a structured path for its production, the concept of quality and a useful checklist for verifying the quality of MOOCs.

3. MOOCs application in Clinical Psychology

With reference to the international experience referred to MOOCs, the number of contributions is certainly significant. However, it could boil down to a small example compared to the general cultural commitment. If we look for a reference to Clinical Psychology, the contributions will certainly have to grow. Given the usefulness of MOOCs, good reasoning for academics should be based more on information and less on the power of insight that MOOCs can offer. That is, do not make the method an absolute but only a tool that can be more appreciated and equal to the brain plasticity of the new generations, as well as to maintain interest in others.

Some contributions represent a clear example of the needed implementation of MOOCs in Clinical Psychology and health sciences (Fairburn & Patel, 2017; Garcia et al., 2016; Hodge, 2016; Hwang, 2017; Lu et al., 2018; Malhage, 2021; Muñoz et al., 2016; Riehemann & jucks, 2018; Sharp et al., 2020).

Constructing a MOOC, reference can be made to the official Ministerial Declaration on Clinical Psychology (M PSI 08), to find examples of the experiences in the large portals, to propose new

ones and to verify the impact in the light of quality indices. It follows that, by declining the parts of the declaration in italics:

Constructing a MOOC, reference can be made to the official Ministerial Declaration of Clinical Psychology (M-PSI/08), to find examples of large portals, propose new ones and verify the impact in the light of quality indices.

By declining the parts of the declaration (translated) in italics:

1) "*Scientific disciplines related to study methods and intervention techniques in the various operational models*" which evoke themes such as gender identity. For example, the University of Standford (Health Across the Gender Spectrum, <https://www.coursera.org/learn/health-gender-spectrum>; The Challenges of Global Health, <https://www.coursera.org/learn/global-health>) proposes related themes at a high level of quality.

2) "*The interest shown by the sector in the field of psychological distress*" could be implemented with proposals such as the Federica topics:

Eating disorders; many problems that result in fields of interest of social hardship could be enriched by MOOCs on gambling addiction, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.

3) Disclosure in fields such as "*Neuropsychology*" which has improved our knowledge in the area of functions and behaviour. An example related to Federica: "*Mind and brain: from neuropsychology to cognitive neuroscience*". Topics of this type can represent a valid introduction which, subsequently, can lead to further learning in specific degrees or higher education.

4) The role of Clinical Psychology in the field of prevention and its domains. The combination of short-term solutions, the quality of expert support, as in the case of the "Pre-departure - Culture Shock" (https://learn.eduopen.org/eduopenv2/course_details.php?courseid=494) by Eduopen. These are therefore short, targeted, informative actions.

5) Finally, even if the terrain of psychotherapies is far from the possibilities of MOOCs, it must be remembered how different insights, discovered in psychotherapy settings, have contributed to a greater understanding of man. Courses designed for conflict management such as Federica's (Effective communication and conflict management) can be a start to understanding communication and relationships.

Clearly, everything proposed by the MOOCs must always take into account what is expressed by the norms of law that govern the exercise of the profession (as in the case of M-PSI / 08),

so that reference is made to the term dissemination, with the awareness of the established limits (e.g. Art. 21 of Italian Code of Ethics).

Romero and colleagues (2020) in their contribution conclude that motivation is fundamental to join the courses, together with the trend towards the use of technology. MOOCs, like all complex phenomena, must be evaluated in their versatility including the economic aspects, the interest in innovative teaching and the integration of face-to-face teaching. For the latter aspect, the experience of the recent pandemic has produced results in favour of new technologies.

Our wish is referred to the implementation of MOOCs in Italian Clinical Psychological domains, with the idea that many institutions will include MOOCs in their high education pathways.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any potential conflict of interest.

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