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Editorial

Italian Academic Third Mission and Clinical Psychology

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The topic is not new with reference to previous Editorials of MJCP (Settineri, 2022; Settineri & Femminò, 2019; Settineri & Merlo, 2022) and this time it takes its cue from a reflection, resulting from the recent annual assembly of the College of Professors and Researchers of Clinical Psychology. In fact, in the last assembly, the Council dealt with the work of the three commissions that are engaged in teaching, research and the third mission precisely.

With reference to the third mission, once again the certainly commendable role played by colleagues in the field of student counselling was underlined: an activity that has become essential for many universities and whose impact of statistical representations is interesting to observe. It is possible to observe how the activities are arranged in continuity with the other missions, for example with teaching. The role of these services concerns for example one of the risks that have to do with what is called university dropout (Alban & Mauricio, 2019; Bardach et al., 2020; Behr et al., 2020; Bernardo et al., 2022; Bertola, 2023; Kehm et al., 2019; Oppedisano, 2009).

The strategies and reforms produced by the states have produced effects concerning both the implementation of the number of graduates and other phenomena, as in the case of unemployment. An example of the study of these phenomena and of what is typical of the school and university system, as well as the theme of orientation, can be referred to the studies of Catia Civettini (2017). The reference domains we can think of would concern, for example,

the effectiveness of reforms, of systems in general and the personal adaptation of subjects, for example the belief system and the comparison of these with the realities offered by the institutions (Bertazzoli, 2022; Esposito et al., 2020; Flowerday & Schraw, 200; Genaut-Arratibel et al., 2022; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015; Jauhari et al., 2022; Joseph et al., 2012; Karlsdottir et al., 2023; Merlo et al., 2022; Perez-Felkner et al., 2017; Somma et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2015; Zafar & Ansari, 2020).

It is necessary to ask whether the questions mentioned above are the domain of the first, second or third mission. This distribution makes it clear that the commitment of teachers must be declined in the dissemination, care of students, communication and the extension of university knowledge to the general public. The risk to be avoided is twofold and the current configuration can do a lot to consider student performance, to prepare them for future contexts and thus avoid underachievement (which generates lower returns) (Almukhambetova & Hernández-Torrano, 2020; Ghadirzadeh et al., 2013; Reis & McCoach, 2000, 2002; Steenbergen et al., 2020). In the case of clinical psychology, there is a further commitment that has to do with health care, as in the case of students who request it or where it is obviously necessary in order to identify pathological incoming issues (Myles & Merlo, 2022). In this sense, further training is necessary which constitutes a useful mission for solving problems related to the clinical psychology discipline. Very valuable sectors of the third mission that have had consistent success at the university level, are often compared to other private non-university systems, as in the case of the attribution of training credits (ECM).

Communication levels and university missions

It seems right to us that each mission finds its own language suitable for making the task effective. In the academic field, while it is certain, through a distinction between bibliometric and non-bibliometric sectors, this objective has been achieved by the second mission, that is, that of research. In support of this thought, see the style of the editorial rules. In the teaching sector, the level can be implemented with new styles of knowledge transmission. A clear example can be found in the last college mentioned above, with examples of discussion of clinical cases, role playing and use of virtual reality. This is in line with what has been highlighted by previous editorials (Settineri & Femminò, 2019; Settineri & Merlo, 2022), and the discussion extends to the third mission.

In these terms, the regulations are necessary in order to facilitate this mission and implement local and general policies that favour it in line with the fields identified and evaluated by Anvur. The scientific sector dealt with here (M-PSI/08) therefore needs to be valorised and represented

through data useful for verifying hypotheses. It is necessary to deepen, import and put into practice what has been positively observed in other disciplines in line with an important editorial by Monika Taddicken and Anna Reif (2020). In fact, the authors underline some points that have to do with the diffusion of scientific knowledge as in the case of the dichotomy between emotion and rationality. They also propose three practical levels with reference to the scientific contents, the emotionality of the communicators and the emotional responses of the public. This has also generated interesting reflections following the recent pandemic (Cerutti et al., 2022, 2023; Dalvit et al., 2020; Settineri & Merlo, 2020). An experiential book by Piero Angela (Angela, 2022) underlines for those who want to pass important messages across relevant aspects in line with the clinical psychology point of view, therefore of the order of complex mental functioning in relation to the general public.

Conclusions

About a decade after the introduction of the third mission organized point of view in the Italian academic experience, it is necessary to continue with work. In terms of the third mission, its effectiveness depends on the value of "psychic object" that it will be assumed over time. Enthusiasm in research, teaching and dissemination activities turns out to be a fundamental factor producing the necessary changes in the world. This I mean is entrusted to the third mission, since the effective communication of the results of the academic effort constitutes a fundamental point in the processes of change. The integration of knowledge and its assumption as a personal form of existence are fundamental factors which, in the case of Clinical Psychology, find space in the health field and in the new integrated courses.

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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