

Abstracts

Equity and the Role of Assessment in Italian Educational Policy

Luigi Berlinguer

Political decision making in the field of education is always difficult, because the results of a reform bill necessarily can't be evident for a long time. A democracy is weak without a wide knowledge base, without a well-founded ability to make informed choices. Knowledge is also a contributory factor in shaping the citizen: the spread of knowledge is the most effective antibody against authoritarianism, which thrives on the failure of the citizen to take an active part in political and social life. The convergence of these factors that are so typical of the development of the knowledge society, in a society of the masses, has led to different educational scenarios, all founded on a common factor, albeit of different dimensions: the numerical expansion of schooling. The phenomenon is now irreversible, and involves common patterns of behaviour, precisely because it responds to a structural need of society and a subjective need for freedom and self-assertion. The failure to understand the nature of these phenomena is one of the causes of the reluctance to recognise the importance of equity in education. Therefore equity can only be tackled thanks to a deep reflection on assessing data collected through strict national and international procedures. This article introduces the problem of equity at national level from the Italian standpoint, in connection with the civil and economic needs of a developed country in the course of a real expansion of education and training for all citizens.

Key words

Equity, assessment, education, policy, school reform.

The evaluation of university teaching: three national cases

Antonella Poce

The essay looks at the evaluation of university teaching in three European countries (Britain, France and Italy) and describes evaluation activities and how they are implemented in contexts that are very different in culture and tradition. While evaluation in France and Italy is relatively recent and their evaluation systems are still at a developmental stage, the culture of evaluation in Britain has a longer tradition and the picture is rich and varied, requiring deeper study of some practices which are thus described in detail. Evaluation is a useful tool for improving quality, but it must be adapted to the system in which it is applied. This concept, unfortunately, is not as straightforward as it may seem if we analyse the practices underway and their results. In this regard, the examples taken into consideration demonstrate how the different ways of dealing with the “issue” of evaluation of teaching create very divergent effects and, above all, show how it is not enough to just copy winning models in certain contexts in order to increase the quality of higher education.

Keywords

Evaluation, teaching system, higher education, quality in education, audit.

Processes and competencies of the evaluation of learning in distance education

Eugenia Lodini & Ira Vannini

The essay outlines a process of analysis and reflection aimed at establishing the useful skills for designing and implementing proper effective evaluation processes for learning in distance education. The reflections (part of a European research project aimed at promoting distance education workers' skills) started from an analysis of the recent literature on assessment processes implemented in open distance learning, and have led to outlining a map of competencies of the “evaluator in distance education” that can be configured in terms of hypotheses verifiable through future experimental research processes. The working methodology envisaged an examination of evaluation *processes* in distance education, the identification of the activities within each

process and the *job profiles* involved. Some paths for improvement have been identified for an evaluation of learning that is meant as a coherent set of procedures integrated within the education process and aimed at promoting students' skills. The activities linked to education processes have also enabled establishing a *repertoire of skills*, meant as *working hypotheses* within the pedagogical and political-institutional debate on the competencies of training and *e-learning* professionals.

Keywords

Distance education, e-learning, evaluation of learning, assessment, skills repertoire.

Visitors of the municipal museums of Rome

Antonio Avorio

The awareness reached by many involved in museum management as regards the changed environmental context in which they work, as well as the close correlation between heritage conservation, interpretation and communication, has led to a new interest in the public or, rather, the various "publics" of museums. If one of the functions of a museum is to promote the public's knowledge of its collection for study, education and pleasure purposes, it is fundamental to know the visitors' profile in order to modulate the museum offering according to each segment of the public. Hence the study carried out by the Superintendence of Heritage of Rome in order to outline the social, cultural and occupational characteristics of municipal museum visitors.

Keywords

Museum, visitors, Municipality of Rome, museum management, museum education.