

**Refine Project  
On tutorship  
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While interviewing students at the university, I met people who were rich in work and voluntary experiences, in personal interests (for instance theater, music, sport, journalism) and in future goals. Unfortunately their cv's showed no trace of these personal experiences. Why such a big difference between the spoken word and the written page? Much to my surprise, I realised this was due to personal choices or little self-evaluational skills.

An interviewee said the cv is a useful tool to find a job but the employer doesn't have to know about her private life, her spare time and beliefs. Consequently, she selects and chooses the most suitable information in order to offer an interesting professional profile, avoiding those information she judges useless for this specific job offer. That's why she adapts her cv to every specific job offer.

Other cv's weren't filled in properly and clearly especially in the "work experience" and "education and training" sections while others sections were filled in poorly or not at all.

Other useful and valuable information emerged during the interviews but the students hadn't considered them interesting. When I suggested to add those information in order to offer a richer and wider profile, they were uncertain and raised objections saying they were not relevant and unrelated to previous information or too old.

I kept wondering why they were so determined in reducing the amount of information and keeping it "relevant". Two candidates suffered from this lack of information: one student did not report her theatrical training thus losing credits as she did not know about the university theatre lab while another did not write about her horse riding experience: that would have been useful in a horse-therapy job offer.

Moreover, when invited to analyse their experiences qualitywise in order to underline skills and competence acquired in not working and working experiences I realised their difficulties in describing and evaluating themselves, showing a very poor ability in self analysis.

During the interviews and thanks to my continuous questions, they reported remarkable and original experiences but were not able to draw what they had learned from these experiences. They did not realise that the "personal skills and competences" sections in their cv's should have been filled in exactly with that kind of information we were talking about.

I tried to stress information they undervalued, explaining the difference between formal informal and not formal knowledge, to convince them and to help them valuing their extra-university and not working experiences, which are usually harder to classify.

They all admitted their difficulties in judging themselves and their experiences; they reported they had helped friends giving good advice about filling in their cv's but they were not able to use that advice for their personal cv's.

It's easy to observe and judge other people, it is often considered a demonstration of one's love and affection for a friend but judging and observing oneself is a completely different, much harder, task.

Candidates found filling in the European cv particularly difficult: certain sections (especially the "social and organisational skills and competences" section) caused real troubles and some of them even skipped them.

While discussing the project with other Italian partners I realised we shared the same experiences regarding the candidates' difficulties.

Instead with European partners a different cultural aspect came to the surface: some English partners found unusual that Italian candidates (but not only Italian ones) preferred not to talk about their private lives because they wanted to keep professional and private lives separate.

The European cv actually moves in the opposite direction trying to make the most of the candidates' talents helping them to offer the richest and widest personal profile.

I reported the students' comments at the end of the interviews: three out of four found the interview very useful and rewrote their cv while the fourth did not change his point of view; in my opinion, you cannot force a candidate to be more personal if he does not want to.

Some French and German partners agreed about this and added that the distinction between personal and non personal information is very subjective.

Moreover, we all agreed about the essential role of the interviewer. A written guide, although clear and detailed, cannot replace the "tutor". Candidates need to talk with another person and cannot write it properly if they are left to their own devices. The written cv is the result of the interaction, in a series of meetings, between the student and the tutor who plays the role of the "facilitator" so that the student can recognize his skills and competences and lay them down in a satisfactory professional profile.

Lumsa has counselling offices, tutors within the university and tutors for apprenticeships who follow the students from the beginning to the end of their university careers.

In the words of Paolo Raciti<sup>1</sup>, “tutors are asked to: help the students to get information about the university organization and the teaching programs easily and clearly, to help them attending their lessons and their relations with teachers and secretaries, to help them to find and to use properly teaching materials and so on”.

I met some of the people working in Lumsa’s counselling and apprenticeship offices to understand which are the most frequent needs of their students.

They said students usually ask for help with the curricula, they need information about the exams, they have bureaucratic problems or difficulties getting in touch with the teachers and need help for all that concerns apprenticeships with organisations outside the university.

The counselling office has organized “counselling days” for the freshers every year while only next year they will hold also “counselling days” for their final year students to help them with cv’s, job offers selection and on how to have interviews.

Counselling office employees said they have many contacts with students in their first years but they rarely meet students asking for help in writing their cv’s.

The European cv is well known and used and is often requested by those organisations where students are doing their apprenticeship but employees usually just hand them out the form and the instructions on how to fill it in: in their opinion students have no problems with the cv’s and, above all, they do not ask them for help.

In my opinion, based on my experience, students think they are filling in the cv in the right way but they do not realise the efforts it needs in self-analysis and self-evaluation to be used at its best.

Tutor should be a reference point for students also in their final year, he should help them understand which skills and competences to underline, what interests and expectations they have in order to help them writing their first cv’s.

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<sup>1</sup> Paolo Raciti, *Il ruolo del tutor nei percorsi di formazione universitaria per adulti lavoratori*, in *Il sapere visibile*, Roma, La Nuova Phoenix, 2003