



Univerza v Ljubljani
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Posvet Učitelji učiteljem: Novi trendi, izkušnje in izzivi v visokošolskem poučevanju



Dr Anna Battaglia Bio

Dr Anna Battaglia is a neurobiologist with international research experience. She holds a degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Turin and a PhD in Neuroendocrinology from the University of Milan; in the United Kingdom she obtained a BSc in Psychology from the Open University. She has worked in Nobel Prize winner Rita Levi-Montalcini's lab in Rome for post-lauream training; then in Paris, both at the Institut des Neurosciences (Université Pierre et Marie Curie) and at the Collège de France; then at the Stazione Zoologica A. Dohrn in Naples; and she has been a visiting research fellow at Stanford University, where she worked on glutamatergic receptors. She came to London in 2001, where she started as a Wellcome Trust Research Fellow at King's College, working on research projects on the spinal cord modulation of nociceptive stimuli and on chronic pain conditions; her research led to important discoveries in the field. A Reader (Associate Professor) in the Centre of Education in the Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine (FoLSM), she has been involved in many educational projects and leads amongst others, two successful Pain and nervous system disorders and Behavioural science modules since 2012. Passionate about students' education, she has been awarded a Master (Arts) in Academic Practice in HE (Aug 2017) writing a dissertation on a pedagogical piece of research on critical thinking from the students' perspectives. Dr Battaglia is also an associate lecturer in the Faculty of Science at the Open University since 2007, where she teaches two courses – 'Biological Psychology: Exploring the Brain' and 'Science of the Mind: Investigating Mental Health' – to mature students, students with disabilities and students in prison. Dr Battaglia is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) ambassador in the UK since 2009, giving motivational and career-oriented talks in schools around the UK. In April 2016 she published a book with Wiley-Blackwell titled *An Introduction to Pain and its relation to Nervous System Disorders*.

*Plenary lecture title
and summary*

"Lessons learned from having to adapt to the covid pandemic in higher education".

Summary

The talk's main objective is to identify lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of educational and well-being perspectives; many aspects of what Higher Education used to be, have been forcefully changed under the pressure of the current pandemic. Institutions were diversely ready for changing the way their students were taught and assessed. The perception is that there is no going back. Background: I believe with Plato, Socrates, and more recently John Dewey, that teaching is a social activity and the new ways of teaching have often challenged this basic tenet of pedagogy. The idea of universities as places where sociality is as important as the subject knowledge, can vanish if we are not careful. I think that one of the risks of distance 'learning' is the belief that as subject material can be downloaded this is sufficient for learning,

a conception of knowledge as something which can be transferred through videos, recordings into the head of someone else anytime one wants. I will talk about how during the pandemic my instructor's role was to ensure that the learning environment was "people focused" or humanized. I will emphasize that peer learning can be particularly useful when it comes to using online tools. "Whereas "pedagogy" has to do with "the transmission of knowledge from teachers to students, peeragogy describes the way peers produce and utilize knowledge together". In my module I have thus adopted the social learning view, which sees the 'student as producer' educational model, which contrasts with the usual view of 'students as consumers of knowledge'. Feedback gained through discussions with students suggests that the main lessons learnt from having had to adapt to the Covid pandemic are: 1) Embed students' interactions in whatever session you are delivering to build a community of knowledge rather than multiple islands of loneliness; 2) Be there for your students, do not hide behind the screens, recorded lectures, 3) Ensure students are not left behind and gauge their learning via low stakes assessments.

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