

Voted best teacher of Ireland: “I dedicate it to my parents and my teachers”

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Thursday, 27th October will be a great day for Luca Longo, thirty-five year old researcher from Varese, eight years ago he left with a **master’s degree in computer science in his pocket**.

Ireland has decided to crown him “National Teaching Hero 2016”. Along with 36 other colleagues, mainly Irish and English, he was chosen by his students “for the passion that he expresses in teaching, the wonder and inspiration for new ideas, because he has known how to be compelling and relevant, and accompany with patience the students along their path. ”

In 2006, Luca Longo fought to improve the IT facilities and laboratory in his university, the University of Insubria which he remained linked to: “**A tight circle of people of the University of Insubria** transmitted to me important concepts related to academic rigour, precision in research, suggesting I follow my intuition, thinking outside the box. ”

The choice of Luca was not easy: he had just concluded his academic journey and left in search of a future. With a **broken English he arrived in Dublin** thanks to a government grant. Here, after completing the training, he applied for a temporary place as **assistant lecturer at the Dublin Institute of Technology** winning the contest. After 18 months he won a permanent place in the same university, so stabilising his position. And today the official coronation among the “best teachers” of Ireland

How does he create such compelling lessons?

I tend to minimise the passive teaching methods that flood the student with sometimes sterile information and tend to prefer constructive methods and actively dialogue with the students, involving them with questions and answers that facilitate the construction of knowledge and the meaning

What should be the focus of a teacher: interest, fascinate, engage, to convey?

Absolutely all of these things: I was a student, I still am and I am also a teacher. But I believe that teaching should be restricted to a thin line to facilitate dialogue with the students. Besides the verbs cited regarding the focus, I might add inspiring, motivating, listening and above all learning

Comparison between his university path and the Irish one: similarities and differences.

The Italian university course is much more rigid than the Anglo-Saxon one. The Italian master of studies than those Irish tend to acquire as much knowledge as possible disregarding quality and the ability to think, reason and criticise. The Anglo-Saxon pedagogical model is much more practical. Each lecture with students is followed by workshops and tutorials. Another difference relates to the evaluation of the pass mark in the tests: In Italy it is reached with 60% in Ireland with 40%, but are all of them are written.

Who are you dedicating this award to?

To my previous teachers, but especially to my parents.

Who will you be in ten years time?

I hope to still be an eager to learn student, a beloved teacher and a noted researcher in the achievement of objectives.

di Alessandra Toni Translated by Prof. Robert Clarke