

AT THE HEART OF HIGHER EDUCATION DEBATE

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The report to the European Commission on improving the teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions, published on 18 June 2013, presents 16 recommendations how to modernize higher education, among them: the requirement to take teacher training classes and get a mandatory teaching certificate for university lecturers, helping students to develop entrepreneurial and innovative skills, establishing counseling, guidance, mentoring and tracking systems to support students into higher education and beyond. Being more a reflective teacher than a scholar, I cannot help but react to this "new bible" of university education. How does it apply to us working in the field of foreign language teaching at the university? Are we going to render services to student customers, which imply a passive relationship of being given a product- a degree- in direct exchange for a cash payment without much effort? Will every willing student reach the pinnacle of academic achievement, knowing that different people have different capabilities and different levels of drive? How to help students succeed in their careers and lives? A real university education generally involves some transformation of the self; this is hard work of learning your own limits: ethical, cognitive, discipline –wise and personal. This is very hard work to teach and it is very hard work to do.