

TECHNOLOGIES, EDUCATION ET CREATIVITÉ VII

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Foreword

As much as we have witnessed that higher education has undergone significant reforms, both globally and nationally, we also know that the pace of these reforms has not always been the same over time or across regions. Indeed, notwithstanding all the positive changes, it seems that higher education systems and universities are facing a number of challenges in all areas of their functioning and missions - teaching and learning, research, internationalisation and academic leadership. Global higher education has entered a new decade in a changing world. There are a number of geopolitical changes, uncertainties we face in political behaviour and the fact that democracy has been challenged. We cannot help but wonder what the implications will be for our universities.

We are aware, especially after the COVID experience, that internationalisation has new forms. Physical mobility is no longer the only way to be mobile, institutions are increasingly introducing and favouring so-called virtual mobility as well as hybrid formats, and accordingly networking and collaboration are beginning to take on different forms. Again, we can ask what the impact of these changes will be and how much they will affect the map of internationalisation.

Research and research evaluation are also in a new perspective and this is one of the issues that should be in the focus of European universities and policy makers. Are research and its evaluation entering a different life cycle? In Europe, institutions and stakeholders are establishing a new strategic framework for research and innovation. A strong shift from quantitative to qualitative evaluation, with peer review at its heart, is one of the prominent changes proposed. Recognising the diversity of contributions to research, according to the needs and nature of the research, is another important aspect. Interdisciplinarity, already identified as a relevant aspect of modern research, is still a challenge.

Last but not least, we live in a technological world in which digitalisation plays an important role in the entire educational process, and not only at the level of higher education. Digitalisation, and in particular artificial intelligence, will soon (or has it already?) have a significant impact and change the course of the educational process, spalling all those involved in the process. How existing teachers will adapt to this change, how quickly we can change teacher training to prepare them for the new teaching era are just some of the questions we can ask. While hybrid teaching is becoming the norm, and the digital generation will soon take over completely, new technologies may require radically different methodologies, tools and didactics.

Higher education policy-makers, educational experts, academic leaders and the teaching staff as a whole need to ask themselves whether they, and the system as a whole, are prepared and ready for all the changes that are to come. Universities are in a position to ask themselves what the leadership response will be, how to deal with all the changes and challenges, for example how digitalisation and even more artificial intelligence will affect the job market, how to preserve the critical and creative thinking of their students. Universities will rethink their role in society.

In such a global and national context, also facing the pedagogical reform of Moroccan higher education, the *International Conference on Changing Paradigms and Future Directions in Higher Education*, organised in October 2023, not only had the right timing, but also targeted the most relevant issues in higher education, both in international and national academia. The organisers managed to bring together a number of higher education experts, researchers and teachers from different fields to share their experiences, research findings and open academic discussions with the aim of providing a platform to enhance the teaching and learning process. By providing relevant information and knowledge about trends in education and innovation, searching for answers to a number of emerging questions in the higher education system, the conference participants gained and reshaped their knowledge and awareness of modern trends and needs. Better translation of all the information into educational reality and everyday work was enabled.

With the wide range of topics covered and the diversity of speakers, the conference achieved its main objective of bringing together different stakeholders to discuss a number of relevant aspects of educational and pedagogical reforms. The collection of papers will be valuable and informative texts for a wide audience of all those involved in the educational process, it reflects well the state of the art and adequately reflects the diverse challenges in higher education. It could be informative reading for policy and decision makers in national contexts as well as for academic leaders. However, by bringing together research evidence, theoretical perspectives and practitioners' views, it could also attract the attention of those involved in comparative education. It should not be forgotten that, despite all local and regional specificities, there is a high degree of convergence in all major aspects of global higher education and that no national education system is an isolated island.

Melita KOVACEVIC, PhD

University of Zagreb

Message from the Editor (s)

The present volume contains the selected papers presented at the international conference on "Changing Paradigms & Future Directions in Higher Education" which was held on October 06-07, 2023 at Mohammed I University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Oujda, Morocco. The 2023 CPFDHE conference provided a platform for in-depth discussions and reflections on ways to advance effective higher education instruction to meet the increasing demands of today's graduate students. The event was also an opportunity to encourage maximum exchanges between participants from diverse backgrounds around a multitude of educational and pedagogical issues.

The Realm of higher education is in a constant evolution to meet the increasing demands of today's fast-growing careers to which Morocco is no exception. Universities are currently experiencing a substantial change in aligning their research functions and curricula with current job requirements and trends. The higher education sector has been ostensibly slow to change and embrace innovation. The change in demand among prospective students and the seemingly lack of work readiness among university graduates have led educationalists and practitioners to question the validity of current pedagogical practices and envision future possibilities. Against this background, there is an urgent demand to equip university graduates with the essential skills and competencies necessary for the rapidly evolving global workforce.

The CPFDHE Conference is situated within the broader context of debates on the upcoming pedagogical reforms in Moroccan Higher Education Institutions. The new reform underscores the urgency of providing students with the know-how and linguistic skills needed to enter the job market. The pedagogical reform model seeks to empower students with the core transversal skills and competencies that will enable them to keep pace with the rapid socio-economic and technological changes along with improving the employability of graduates.

The CPAFDIHE conference aspired to bring together academicians, educators and researchers to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of educational and pedagogical reforms. It also provided a platform for researchers, practitioners and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations and trends in higher education instruction and career building.

Another aim of the colloquium was to prompt educational practitioners to reflect on their teaching practices in order to examine the overall effectiveness of their instructive approaches. Discussions were geared towards working out the best practices for reviewing existing instructional programs and identifying opportunities for further development. The event provided a forum that facilitates collaboration and networking among educational institutions to encourage the exchange of expertise and resources and provide guidance on future research directions.

The proceedings book is intended for academia, researchers, educators, and practitioners working in the fields of innovative pedagogies. The volume covers topics ranging from quality assurance in higher education, interdisciplinary research, postgraduate skill development, to digital transformation in higher education. The discussions have important implications for higher education curriculum development, particularly in what regards reviewing existing instructional programs and identifying opportunities for further development.

Isam MRAH

CPFDHE 2023 Conference Coordinator

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