



## EADTU-EU Summit 2015

# “Innovating higher education by new modes of teaching and learning”

Thursday 23 April 2015

### Conclusions

The Summit was dealing with a systemic approach to applying new modes of teaching and learning and with the question about how this will change the landscape of European higher education.

The implementation of new modes of teaching and learning requires new pedagogies, but also institutional strategies and frameworks. It can neither be successful without a strong motivation of a professional teaching staff, nor without a continuous commitment from the top management of a higher education institution.

### **The Changing Pedagogical Landscape**

New modes of teaching and learning create new opportunities for enhancing the quality of the learning experience in *on campus* programmes, for reaching out to new target groups *off campus* and for offering freely accessible *open education* nationally or worldwide through the internet (OERs, MOOCs). They support the quality, visibility and reputation of European universities. Finally, new modes of teaching and learning will scale up international education by supporting collaborative courses and curricula and virtual mobility.

Although much progress has been made in introducing new pedagogies into European higher education, and the use of technology is now widespread and essentially mainstreamed, much also remains to be done.

Universities and governments should work on short-term and long-term strategies and investments on changing the institutional strategies that fit an institutional wide use of new modes for teaching and learning. These strategies should support innovations in pedagogies. Funding regimes and quality assurance frameworks should promote innovation in the curriculum.

## **EMPOWERing universities**

With the EMPOWERing programme, EADTU expert pools will take leadership in collecting and representing state of the art developments in all fields of expertise linked to new modes of teaching. This expertise will be shared with interested universities and experts, supporting the acceleration of the modernisation agenda for universities in the European Area of Higher Education.

EADTU has conceived the action programme EMPOWER to support European higher education institutions in their transition to new modes of teaching and learning and in the development of new areas of flexible continuing education and open education.

## **Blended education**

European universities are faced with the problem of dealing with large student numbers and low student staff ratios. Delivering high quality education to these large groups in a close nexus with actual research and innovation and organising this with a lower funding per student can not be achieved with traditional teaching and learning only..

Solving these problems requires the re-thinking en re-designing of on campus education, using blended forms of teaching and learning, combining traditional formats with new modes of teaching and learning based on ICT. On campus universities always will keep an important face-to-face component in the blend, thoughtfully valuing traditional teaching and learning formats combined with online formats.

A new type of educational leadership is required for universities to create institution-wide strategies and innovation frameworks, which assure the continuous innovation of teaching and learning. This should focus on enablers of change: the use of learning technology tools, systems and services; the professional development of teachers; communities of good practice for the exchange of patterns of good practice; and shareable resources (OERs, learning tools). Policies and practice should be improved by evaluations and innovation research.

Governments should support systemic institutional innovation.

## Flexible continuing education

Furthermore, in a lifelong learning perspective, universities will take care of students off campus. Online education will create flexible opportunities for the area of continuing education.

Governments and universities in most European universities are aware that continuing education is not growing fast enough, knowing that careers after initial education at the university will last 50 years. More fundamentally, this also has implications for the concept and structure of higher education systems, especially education after 25 years, preparing for different roles and competences in successive stages of life. Higher education institutions have to create provisions for students, who come back to the university during the course of their career.

This sector is very diverse, responding to the needs in rapidly changing professional sectors; continuous professional development and knowledge networking for alumni; and education and training for innovation in the corporate and public sector.

As flexibility is important for these target groups, this increasingly will be organised in blended formats or online, enabling students to plan their study in combination with work and private activities. This is also the case for corporate training and workplace learning.

This flexibility should also be achieved by a new type of short degrees, which facilitate the combination between study and work.

Within the framework of EADTU, European open and distance teaching universities reflect on new types of certified short degrees starting with 15 ECTS, better complying with the time constraints of adult students. Also, they seek collaboration in the design of such new programmes, meeting needs for continuing education. Courses and modules from different universities can be shared and connected within such new degrees. Courses from different countries might be combined. Such small programmes facilitate also university-business collaboration.

## Open Education

Universities will deliver open education with OERs and MOOCs, which is already an ongoing process. Drivers for most universities organising MOOCs are visibility and reputation by valorising research and development through top class education worldwide; experimenting with large scale online education, which experience can be applied in enhancing the quality of mainstream curricula; recruiting new students, especially at the master and doctoral level; and opening up education to new target groups, including national and international students. For teaching staff, main drivers are experimenting with good teaching and international exposure.

EADTU's OpenupEd portal offers support to accredited institutions for publishing MOOCs that contribute to opening up education to the benefit of learners and the wider society while reflecting values such as equity, quality and diversity.

## Leadership

Institutions should develop leadership in blended education on campus, flexible continuing education and open education. They should enable teaching staff to design or re-design courses and organise support structures around the teachers, in order to keep institutions continuously innovative.

They should stimulate collaboration within the institution with teams, involving educational experts and media specialists, as well as collaboration between institutions in order to reach better quality levels and to be cost effective.

These new developments should be nurtured by research and evaluation.

## The Bologna Process

Major developments of higher education in the future, notably towards blended degree education, flexible continuing education and open education should be anchored in the Bologna process, as responses to the needs of the knowledge society. In this respect, the Bologna process should stimulate the dynamics of university development for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ministers of Education should investigate how to organise higher education for +25 students. They should coordinate decisions on strategies for continuing education, new award structures and funding schemes for these provisions.