

Preface

The book entitled “Evaluation of Online Higher Education—Learning, Interaction and Technology” is, from my point of view, an important contribution to the challenges faced today by Pedagogy in Higher Education (HE), both at national and international level, namely because it submits a proposal supported by the literature, that has already been validated in real contexts, and that is highly innovative to the process of improving e-teaching. This proposal is substantiated in the development of an evaluation model of e-teaching activities and in how it can be put into practice, using a tool called SCAI—an acronym that combines the initials of the poles defined for the three dimensions (Learning, Interaction and Technology) considered in the model: **S**ocial, **C**onceptual, **A**uthentic, **I**ndividual, **I**nstrumental and **I**ntegrated.

Although there are several studies in the literature that include models for the evaluation of e-teaching, I do not know any that focuses on the central dimension of any teaching and learning process—the e-teaching activities. In addition to the robustness of the theoretical framework underlying the proposed model, I further highlight the functional design of its application, as well as the fact that the SCAI tool has been tested and validated in two contexts—two Ph.D. courses offered by two prestigious Portuguese public universities, the University of Aveiro (UA) and the University of Coimbra (UC), the courses “Multimedia in Education” and “Ancient World”, respectively. The prestige of these universities was recently recognized at the international level, and the UA was considered, by the ranking of the British magazine *Times Higher Education* (2013), as the 66th best university in the world with less than 50 years and one of the best among the Portuguese, and UC was granted the UNESCO’s World Heritage status.

Beyond the specific contribution that was mentioned above, I consider that the present work provides a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the literature on the topic of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as a means of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the models that have been developed for their evaluation. In this sense, I would strongly recommend its reading to researchers who are interested in the subject of ICT, and in particular in HE, as well as to HE teachers. They may find, along its four sections, up-to-date teachings that are likely to subsidize further research and underpin good practices in

e-teaching, specially as to the type of activities to offer students. In more specific terms, the work includes:

- In Chap. 1, a literature review that focuses on the role of e-learning in HE and on the most valued levels and facets within the different models for teaching evaluation that were identified.
- In Chap. 2, the proposal of an evaluation model for e-teaching in HE, in particular as to the considered dimensions (learning, interaction and technology) and how to put the model (as a whole) into practice, taking into account the reading matrix for the evaluation results, underpinned by the established theoretical framework.
- In Chap. 3, the methodology used to test and validate the model in the two contexts mentioned above.

In the conclusion of this work, some final remarks on the contribution of the model for the improvement of e-learning in HE are put forward. Finally, a word regarding the context of the study reported in the book. This book was developed based on an innovative doctoral project conducted by the first author and supervised by the second author. Although the authors belong to different generations, the research work of both has had national and international projection recognized through the publication of scientific papers, the participation in research projects and scientific supervision of post-graduate students.

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Evaluation of Online Higher Education
Learning, Interaction and Technology

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2014, XV, 93 p. 45 illus., 16 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-05424-7