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M. V. Kaya and S. Bayrakdar (eds.)

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Evolution Drivers for the Higher Education Teacher

1. Introduction

More than a core human right, education represents the main driver of progress, cutting across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and providing a structural basis for just, egalitarian, and inclusive societies (United Nations, 2020). Therefore, education and training converge a fundamental vector of social prosperity, being able to underpin the quality of life, productivity, and sustainable development. Higher education is strategically contributing to the development of scientific and technological systems. Accordingly, the higher education teacher (HET) has a great responsibility for society's development (M. Ferreira, 2009).

For many years, universities' meaning of existence was research (Barbato et al., 2019). Given the pressure generated by the social, cultural, and economic changes, the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) has been rethought to privilege the teaching dimension, both in the contents of the courses and the learning methods (Barbato et al., 2019). One of the expectations placed on HEIs is their contribution to economic and social transformation, through the corresponding empowerment of the population to perform in a global labor market (Behari-Leak, 2017). Higher education changed its political, economic, and social settings, which has implications for the universities' organization and management (Santos et al., 2016).

The exponential increase in demand for higher education took place in the 1960s since a much broader set of citizens has begun to seek the training that would equip them with skills for a professional career. The higher education student is an adult who deliberately chooses the desired profession, as well as the program and HEI. Therefore, HEI students expect their teachers to be quite experienced and knowledgeable about the various issues of the work-related context (V. Ferreira, 2010).

2. Role Reorientation

In this new reality of greater massification of education, the teacher-student relationship began to take on the shape of a professional-client relationship. Accordingly, HET's role has transformed, moving from the focus on training to

providing professional skills to customers, thus, given employability concerns, selling an educational product and attracting students "consumers" (Barbato et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2016).

As a condition for success, the pedagogical project of each higher education program and the assessment methods should be aligned with each profession's profile, if the teacher has in-depth knowledge of the work area for which students are qualifying. Being embedded in these contexts, whether through work or research, is a specificity and a condition for practicing teaching (V. Ferreira, 2010).

In developed societies, what is most valuable is not what is known, but what that knowledge enables one to perform. The future is envisioned as complex and, more than acquiring a set of knowledge accumulated over time, people need to be prepared to deal with unknown, unforeseen, and uncertain contexts. That is, basic knowledge is important, but motivation and the so-called "soft skills" are even more precious. Among these skills are proactivity and innovation (curiosity, persistence, ability to take risks), teamwork, communication, leadership, decision-making, and problem-solving. The very employability of citizens dictates this: what is valued at the entrance into the labor market are, more than information and technical expertise, the mastery of intellectual tools (e.g., reasoning and analysis) and interdisciplinary integration, critical thinking, and the ability to continue learning. Hence, the role of education systems and HEIs become fundamental.

Another changing factor is the need to articulate the educational offer with the student's uniqueness. Since comprehension and the ability to apply knowledge are strongly individual, so is the teaching-learning process, thus the student became an active subject of learning (M. Ferreira, 2009; Nóvoa, 2009). Moreover, several higher education students are professionals who enter or re-enter higher education at different stages of their life and thus vary in the background they bring to the learning process (Cendon, 2018). This fact has led, on the one hand, to experimentation with different curricula and electives and the combination of classes with distance learning components, leading to greater flexibility in the student's training pathway and favoring their employability. On the other hand, it highlighted the individualization of teaching and that students should be directly involved in the learning processes.

Concepts such as interactive and cooperative education emerged (Barbato et al., 2019; M. Ferreira, 2009), moving from a teacher-centered process to a student's learning process. Direct student collaborative engagement in higher education curriculum design has been advocated as fostering shared responsibility, gaining skills that help them adapt to an ever-changing, complex

world (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018), and has evidenced improved feedback, attendance, and marks (Brooman et al., 2015; Stoller, 2015).

As part of the plan to create a European higher education area that allows comparability, compatibility, and mobility of citizens in the European Community and, therefore, ensures Europe's competitiveness in the world, the Bologna Declaration had a great influence on the reorientation of teaching toward an integral training student-centered model, as a user and transformer of the acquired learning according to the challenges faced.

The recognition that academic performance is higher when associated with participatory learning has led to the development of active learning methodologies, which aim at overcoming goals both in the cognitive sphere (knowledge), practical application (know-how), and socio-affective dimension (how to be, that is, behaviors and attitudes). Thus, the development of the critical, participative, and creative student is achieved with active, non-inert methodologies (Lázaro et al., 2018). A more interactive classroom model, in which students are questioned, forces teachers to be prepared to redirect the lesson plans to the student's attitudes and interests, which asks a constant need for adaptation (M. Ferreira, 2009; Nóvoa, 2009).

The preparation of citizens committed to values such as justice and social inclusion is starting to draw attention as an integral part of the role of HEIs, requiring additional preparation to enable HETs, not only in teaching these issues but also in the relationship established with very diverse groups of students (Behari-Leak, 2017; Nóvoa, 2009).

This citizens' holistic education beyond the knowledge of a profession is associated with Humboldt's model of the university, for whom HEIs also had a "moral education of the nation" mission (M. Ferreira, 2009). HETs are mediators between generations, acting as guardians and communicators of national heritage, then being a moral ideal that students should look at and follow (Ilaltdinova et al., 2018).

The higher education students' revealed, as the criteria for a good teacher, knowledge mastery, pedagogical skills, and diversified methodologies that encourage critical thinking, easy and clear language accompanied by practical and relevant examples, dynamism, and the establishment of good interpersonal relationships and respect for students (Figueiredo, 2018; Morrison & Evans, 2018; Soriano & Aquino, 2017).

HEI's reform process depends on how HETs perceive and accept those new ideas. Some findings indicate that most teachers are indifferent to the changes (e.g., Gutsu et al., 2020). Thus, the future of higher education entails innovation and the transformation of mindsets and HETs' practice. In the new approach,

where students are required to behave more actively, HET becomes a mentor who encourages reflection, and self-study and provides high-value interactions with students (Cendon, 2018), by sharing expertise in a designer of knowledge role (Trinidad, 2020).

3. Role Preparedness and Challenges

For the desired transformation, part of the solution could be effective teacher training programs focused on the new role, how to perform it successfully, and considering the educational context specificities of each subject area. Academic degrees legitimate HETs' knowledge in the respective scientific field, but often there is no initial psycho-pedagogical preparation training. HETs have high levels of cognitive thinking skills, but pedagogical and transformative thinking are not at the same level (Karjalainen & Nissilä, 2022). If specific structuring training for teaching and learning processes lacks, HETs do not scientifically know the elements that constitute the teaching action itself, such as planning, class organization, methodologies, didactic strategies, assessment, and the teacher-student interaction peculiarities (Lourenço et al., 2016). Some compulsory higher education training has been implemented worldwide with gains in HET's perceptions of pedagogy and practices and student learning (Nguyen & Laws, 2019).

Global-wide comparative analysis showed the need for pre-service and in-service training programs that balance methodological preparation with the development of personal qualities (Ilaltdinova et al., 2018), being advocated a "pedagogy of kindness" to increase feelings of connection and inclusion and improve both student learning and well-being (Rawle, 2021).

Nonetheless, learning to be a teacher does not end with formal programs. Lourenço et al. (2016) add that this training can be integrated into the doctoral program and evaluation, but as a foundation for a lifelong and autonomous learning process, since, as with the scientific *habitus*, the development of the pedagogical *habitus* is also continuous for and in the teaching practice.

HET's new challenges lie beyond the acquisition and evidence of pedagogical skills that allow conducting learning situations in a relevant and innovative way and, thus, enabling their mission of developing and preparing the next generations.

Higher education has been characterized by a marked level of institutionalized individualism, in the sense that the HET, sponsored by the respective academic community, has become accustomed to great freedom of originality and intellectual quality, in a safe space and largely independent from the respective

HEI (Barbato et al., 2019). This autonomy and status were enhanced by international and transdisciplinary networks, which allowed HETs to build their unique path in research. It is as if HETs had the monopoly to determine the goals and guidelines of academic work (Santos et al., 2016), illustrating the HEIs' "professional bureaucracy" (Mintzberg, 1979).

Globalization's pressure and socioeconomic trends have imposed changes associated with neoliberal policies, which constrain HEIs to competitiveness and, therefore, are regulated by the economy and controlled by market mechanisms. Integrating a European higher education area implies decentralization of the educational process, not only for students but also for institutions and governments (M. Ferreira, 2009). If, on the one hand, cost containment measures and possible funds reduction lead HEIs to adopt management models of organizations operating in the global market (Behari-Leak, 2017), on the other hand, the expectations placed on them, to "produce" professionally competent graduates for the competitive market, are reflected in a growing system of norms and procedures that academics have to obey and, consequently, cause erosion in their autonomy degree within their institutions (Barbato et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2016).

V. Ferreira (2010) warns about the "trivialization" of the HET's practice, due to the precarious nature of some contractual conditions, which induce to work in several HEIs or accumulate teaching with another paid activity and, thus, viewing teaching not as a career, but as a job in "educational corporations" that follow international policies. This author argues that HET should not be considered a mere employee, nor be submitted to economic criteria and corporate management practices, labeled as having a utilitarian logic, which not only is contrary to the conception of the Human as a knowledge generator and its history builder but also enhancing a decline in teaching programs quality.

From our perspective, the key lies in a compromise. On the one hand, financial issues should not condition knowledge growth and the quality of its transference to the community, because it evolves the economy and the world. On the other hand, the quest for knowledge and total freedom/independence regarding teaching should not happen at any cost, because it may preclude other economic critical aspects and, thus, hinder allocating the necessary resources to HEIs. We believe that only a mutually accepted virtuous circle can lead HEIs and HETs to fulfill their purposes of contributing to social and human progress. In the current knowledge society, as the economy is based on knowledge and knowledge is based on the economy, the aim will be to develop both in parallel to obtain synergies and mutual gains (Santos et al., 2016).

We previously envisioned the historical evolution of the university's role, migrating from a research orientation to a focus on knowledge transfer. However, teaching has not become the sole function of HETs, which accumulate with scientific investigation. This means that, to the challenges brought about by changes in teaching purposes and methods, efforts on research activities, from which HETs cannot resign, must be added. This binomial is actually inseparable (M. Ferreira, 2009), since not only is needed for a society in transformation, but also contributes to instilling in students a critical analysis attitude, continuous questioning, and enthusiasm for knowledge that equip them with the desired intellectual autonomy, that is, the ability to learn how to learn. In other words, research can integrate the educational strategy. Yet, HET's work was intensified by great pressure to publish, not contemporizing with adequate time for reflection and scientific output, and leading to a context marked by publication duty, in an immediatism and urgency culture (Santos et al., 2016).

Contemporary job descriptions have begun to place greater emphasis on the teaching component, while still requiring active scientific research responsibilities, participation in community liaison, as well as management and administrative skills (Behari-Leak, 2017). These are the institutional dimensions that have reoriented academic identity, but even though bureaucratic tasks expanded, leaving less time to dedicate to the quality of teaching, the academic identity's essence is still based on the relationship with knowledge, its generation, and dissemination (Santos et al., 2016).

4. Role and Technology

The digital era's importance and impact on HET activity should be highlighted. In fact, the new demands that socioeconomic transformations have brought to HET's role and work were accompanied by the imperatives inherent to the 4.0 revolution. The advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have affected the way human beings think, act, and learn, so their integration into the teaching process is an added challenge for the teacher (Lázaro et al., 2018).

If at a certain time, teachers felt little support regarding the classrooms' physical and technological structure in higher education courses, nowadays they are faced with a technological arsenal that emerges and changes at great speed and that requires differentiated knowledge. Simultaneously, HETs must be competent in illustrating content with appropriate and meaningful multimedia resources, preparing dynamic classes, addressing academic plagiarism issues,

and knowing how to deal with learning platforms and discussion forums (V. Ferreira, 2010).

With ICTs, distance learning has become an alternative in higher education settings. In this case, the lack of face-to-face contact limits the extent to which the teacher can establish a relationship with students, hampering knowing who the students are, their pace, and degree of involvement, and frustrating the desire for full individualized monitoring. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic-imposed transformations, that triggered the greatest disruption of educational systems in history (United Nations, 2020), full remote teaching was a reality that teachers have dealt with over a period. An international study during pandemic constraints confirmed HETs' struggles with online teaching (unpreparedness, ICT access, and reliability, reduced relationality), quality of teaching, and workload (Philips et al., 2021), highlighting the challenges of connecting emotionally with students at a distance (Cain et al., 2022). Some aspects of the teaching digital evolution and certain contingencies of contemporary times seem to contradict some paradigm shift prerogatives and recommendations of the Bologna Declaration.

In face-to-face teaching, however, the traditional approach evolution and suitability to the current learning needs can reap great help from ICT, using blended/hybrid teaching resources as the basis of active methodologies, such as flipped classroom, peer work, gamification, and project-based and problem-solving learning. These are some proposals that grant the student an active role in the learning process (Lázaro et al., 2018). This implies that HETs must act on multiple fronts, with technology-based activities in both face-to-face and virtual environments that help students to seek and build knowledge, select, and interpret different information, as well as share knowledge with their peers.

Efforts have been made to identify trends and innovations in higher education regarding online, blended, and lifelong learning contexts, with a particular focus on pedagogical aspects (Witthaus et al., 2016). The project offered a framework for a next-generation pedagogy and corresponding practices was proposed, consisting of five orientations under the acronym IDEAS: (1) Intelligent pedagogy—using technology to optimize the learning experience; (2) Distributed pedagogy—sharing ownership by different stakeholders of the learning pathways; (3) Engaging pedagogy—curriculum design and delivery aiming encouraging students' active participation in the learning process; (4) Agile pedagogy—making curricular pathways flexible and customizable, attending to student experience and needs; and (5) Situated pedagogy—emphasizing the relevance of contextualizing learning in the real world. This proposal addresses most of the concerns previously mentioned.

Despite all the possible benefits that ICTs can bring to higher education, additional digital literacy efforts are required from HETs, regarding knowledge, handling, experimentation, and monitoring of new technological tools to be integrated into an instructional strategy. Some universities have made investments in teaching platforms that enable ICT use as the basis of active methodologies. However, as Lázaro et al. (2018) recognize, many teachers are not prepared to adopt a new posture and make use of these resources with pedagogical intentionality. We resume here the formerly raised mindset and specific training concerns, placing them in a future scenario, progressive or disruptive, where a pivot to remote teaching will likely occur.

5. Conclusion

HET's role has expanded, comprises a variety of tasks to accomplish under time pressure, and work seems to be constantly lagging and unsatisfactory. Dealing with all these challenges has increased HET's vulnerability to frustration and dissatisfaction, physical and mental fatigue, and anxiety and stress reactions, raising concerns about their mental health (V. Ferreira, 2010; Philips et al., 2021; Santos et al., 2016), which is not alien to the unpreparedness for new ways of work, increasingly based on the digital.

The future of HETs is challenging, to say the least. The changes in HEI's role and dynamics determine transformations in teachers' work and imply rethinking their identity. Their responsibilities will remain that of creating and transferring knowledge, albeit no longer as mere "transmission." Instead, a pedagogical shift focused on active methods is associated with the development of agile competencies in the search for and application of knowledge specific to each situation, which students will face in the workplace. Only in this way can teaching practice create value, for students, society, and the economy. Nevertheless, to achieve this, HETs must take the initiative to get a set of theoretical, practical, and socio-affective psycho-pedagogical knowledge, which the pathway to the academic degree that officially qualifies for teaching at higher education did not require. And they are urged to do so in a rapidly changing world, adapting to the innovations, demands, and vicissitudes brought about by the digitalization of education, while at the same time, in line with their career progress, ensuring additional management and administrative tasks, which include, in regulated contexts of budget restraint, concerns for competitiveness and the reputation of their HEIs and subject area.

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