



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO  
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET  
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



education  
2010  
ECER  
Pre-Conference 23-24 August  
Main Conference 25-27 August  
culture  
change

**PROGRAMME**

**Network 20 Research in Innovative Intercultural Learning Environments****NW 20 SES 01 Interactive Workshop for Presenters and Others**

Research Workshop Chair: Willumsen, John  
U40 SALI 6

**2107 Interactive Workshop**

Willumsen, John  
Affiliations: UCC - Danish National Centre for Inclusive Practise, Denmark

**Network 22 Research in Higher Education****NW 22 SES 01 A The Professional Development and Pedagogical Awareness of University Teachers**

Round Table Chair: Löfström, Erika  
M.B. SALI 14

**1087 The Professional Development and Pedagogical Awareness of University Teachers**

Löfström, Erika (1); Nevgi, Anne (1); Haamer, Anu (2); Karm, Mari (2); Remmik, Marvi (2); Stes, Ann (3)  
Affiliations: 1: University of Helsinki; 2: University of Tartu; 3: University of Antwerp

**NW 22 SES 01 B Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Higher Education**

Paper Session Chair: Ursin, Jani Petri  
M.B. SALI 15

**803 Do We Need Argumentative Reasoning in Higher Education?**

Trindade, Rui (1); Leite, Carlinda (1); Martins Ferreira, Jose (2)  
Affiliations: 1: FPCEUP (University of Porto), Portugal; 2: FEUP (University of Porto), Portugal

**739 University students' conceptions of science and educational science in relation to each other and to the concept of 'education'**

Atjonen, Päivi  
Affiliations: University of Eastern Finland, Finland

**937 Development of Learning-Oriented Assessment from Students' Perceptions on Assessment**

Torres Gordillo, Juan Jesús; Rodríguez Santero, Javier; Gil Flores, Javier; Perera Rodríguez, Víctor Hugo  
Affiliations: University of Seville, Spain

**NW 22 SES 01 C Employability and Transition to Work of Higher Education Graduates.**

Paper Session Chair: Alves, Mariana Gaio  
M.B. SALI 16

**463 Prolonged and Successful Degree Earning in Higher Education**

Viirolainen, Maarit; Vuorinen, Päivi; Stenström, Marja-Leena; Valkonen, Sakari  
Affiliations: University of Jyväskylä, Finland

**1742 Is Employability the Most Important to Students in Higher Education?**

Gao, Huei Rong; Sheu, Tian Ming  
Affiliations: Department of Education, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan, Republic of China

**646 Finnish University Students' Expectations of Transition to Working Life**

Mäkinen-Streng, Mirka  
Affiliations: University of Turku, Finland

**1504 Consumption and the value of learning mathematics in negotiating the entrance to Higher Education marketplace**

Davis, Pauline; Farnsworth, Valerie; TransMaths, Team  
Affiliations: University of Manchester, United Kingdom

## Proposal Information of Contribution 803

### 22. Research in Higher Education

*Format of Presentation:* Paper

*Alternative EERA Network:* 9. Student Assessment

*Topics:* NW 22: Teaching, learning and assessment in higher education

*Keywords:* Argumentation; Higher Education; Students' assessment

### Do We Need Argumentative Reasoning in Higher Education?

**Rui Trindade<sup>1</sup>, Carlinda Leite<sup>1</sup>, Jose Martins Ferreira<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>FPCEUP (University of Porto), Portugal; <sup>2</sup>FEUP (University of Porto), Portugal

*Presenting Author:* Trindade, Rui

The Bologna Reform of the European Universities brings the development of student skills to the frontline of teachers' concerns. Acknowledging that the simple transfer of information must be replaced by teaching methods centred on student learning activities is now a reality, and has challenged traditional higher-education pedagogies focused on "right answers". In a broader perspective, the teaching paradigm and the learning outcomes are changing, namely those which are connected to communication and argumentative skills.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to questioning the role of argumentation in higher education, in order to understand how the work of students incorporates the development of argumentative skills, in line with quality improvement demands in higher education. Assessment instruments related to the development of argumentative skills are identified and analysed in two Portuguese Schools (Education Sciences and Engineering, both from the University of Porto).

The specific objectives of this research are: 1) To evaluate the real importance of argumentative skills as a criterion for assessing students; 2) to analyze argumentative reasoning structures that are present in reports and other deliverables resulting from students' assignments; and 3) to analyze argument pragmatics used by students.

Argumentation is structured upon contextualized and communicative reasoning, rather than text (and logic reasoning) based on assumptions that are not discussed. Argumentative reasoning fits well in the field of possible, preferred choice, for which the best arguments have to be produced (Grácio, 1992; 1998; Toulmin 2001).

All situations characterised by more proficient levels in the production and use of knowledge, as academic learning, assume the existence of choices that require reasoning and argumentative text. Furthermore, argumentation alternatives are essential for knowledge meaningful appropriation (Weston, 2005).

Argumentative reasoning is part of the soft skills that must be developed by higher-education students, since they are asked to support conclusions of experimental procedures, to arguably choose one theoretical option or technique among others, and to organize projects whose action lines must be sustained (Coffin, 2008).

The place for argumentation in higher education curricula differs from one country to another, and teaching traditions differ among Latin and Anglo-Saxon communities. Argumentation is usually seen as less important than the acquisition of knowledge and learning contents (Andrews, 2009), and rhetoric has long been misunderstood / mistreated (Perelman, 1997; Amossy, 2009). However, the changing relationship between higher education and society, both in the social implications of knowledge and in the structure of the knowledge society, enabled argumentation to emerge as a need to achieve equity, citizenship and social justice in contemporary higher education (Brennan, 2007). In addition, higher education policy literature has tended to follow the human capital development, and subsequently to promote civic values and behaviour, facilitating social mobility (id; ibidem). To achieve this purpose of ensuring equity it is important to develop argumentative skills among students.

#### *Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used*

To reach the objective referred above, the results of students' assignments from first cycle degrees (Post Bologna reform) were analysed with a content-analysis methodology. The Curricular Units that we selected to monitor were those that included argumentative reasoning as one of the target skills that should be developed by the students.

Further decisions related to assessment instruments were taken by analysing each course description. Data collection resulted from assignments, and included essays, participation in on-line forums, and term papers. Our analysis highlighted issues such as argumentative text elements, argumentative reasoning and pragmatic relevance, to characterize the importance of argumentation in higher education.

Research ethics were at the top line of our concerns, namely personal data protection, and all references to teachers and courses were removed from the public documents.

#### *Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings*

Since this research project examines works produced by students, in search of evidence of argumentative skills, we expect to improve our knowledge about:

- a) The current importance and practices of argumentation processes for assessing students in Higher Education.
- b) Forms of reasoning used by students in their learning process.
- c) Higher education assessment processes analysed in terms of communication pragmatics.

We also expect it to contribute to the debate on ways and means of assessment used in higher education.

#### *References*

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*Intent of Publication*

We intend to submit this paper to the European Educational Research Journal or to the Journal of Higher Education.

**NW 20 SES 07 B Innovative Pedagogies and HE**Paper Session  
U40 SALI 8

Chair: Willumsen, John

- 626 **Young Adults' Citizenship: Building Voice and Participation through Schooling**  
Macedo, Eunice; Costa Araújo, Helena  
Affiliations: Universidade do Porto, Portugal - Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação
- 1136 **The Relationship Between Multicultural Orientation and Individualism-Collectivism Dimensions Among University Students**  
Carmona, Carmen (1); Van Oudenhoven, Jan Pieter (2); Orellana, Natividad (1); Almerich, Gonzalo (1)  
Affiliations: 1: University Of Valencia, Spain; 2: University Of Groningen, The Netherlands
- 1619 **Testing the Impact of Innovative Pedagogies for Higher Education**  
Clough, Nick (1); Tarr, Jane (1); Macedo, Eunice (2); Cortesao, Luiza (2)  
Affiliations: 1: University of the West of England, United Kingdom; 2: Universidade do Porto

**Network 22 Research in Higher Education****NW 22 SES 07 A Inequality and Diversity in Higher Education Settings**Paper Session  
M.B. SALI 14

Chair: Kubiak, Chris

- 436 **Being in the Midst? Changing Landscapes, Shifting Identities in Higher Education**  
Trahar, Sheila  
Affiliations: University of Bristol, United Kingdom
- 1045 **Categorizing Students in Higher Education in Finland – Which Cultural Groups are Visible in Research in the 21st Century?**  
Nissilä, Pia; Jääskelä, Päivi  
Affiliations: University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- 974 **Cultural Capital in Transition? Methodological Reflections on an Analysis of Elite and Excellence Discourses in a French Grande École**  
Schippling, Anne  
Affiliations: Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany
- 458 **Five Groups of Adult Entrants in Finnish Universities**  
Haltia, Nina  
Affiliations: University of Turku, Finland

**NW 22 SES 07 B Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Higher Education**Paper Session  
M.B. SALI 15

Chair: Teelken, Christine

- 938 **Students' Participation in Learning Assessment in Higher Education**  
Rodríguez Santero, Javier; Torres Gordillo, Juan Jesús; Padilla Carmona, María Teresa; Álvarez Rojo, Víctor  
Affiliations: University of Seville, Spain
- 908 **ActEval: A Questionnaire for the Analysis and Evaluation of University Teachers' Assessment Activity**  
Quesada\_Serra, Victoria; Rodríguez\_Gomez, Gregorio; Ibarra\_Saiz, Maria Soledad; Gómez\_Ruiz, Miguel Ángel  
Affiliations: Universidad de Cádiz, Spain
- 1174 **Inter-institutional Peer Observation of Classes – a Powerful Tool to Improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning**  
Mouraz Lopes, Ana (1); Lopes, Amélia (1); Martins Ferreira, José Manuel (2); Trindade, Rui (1)  
Affiliations: 1: Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto, Portugal; 2: Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto
- 1406 **University Students' Experiences of Guidance in Finland: Multifaceted Challenges**  
Skaniakos, Terhi; Kallio, Eeva; Tynjälä, Päivi  
Affiliations: Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Individualized Guidance  
Useful → the 20% percentage.

