WHAT ABOUT EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION?
Magalhães, António and Veiga, Amélia

Abstract
The future of higher education has been widely studied. Interestingly enough these studies focus mainly on the regulation, governance and management of higher education systems rather than on education itself. This chapter deals with the question raised by Ronald Barnett in the 1990s: what is higher in higher education? As higher education is assumed to play a vital role in the economic and social development of countries and regions, one can understand the focus on the political and financial management of mass higher education. However, the educational role of higher education should not be overlooked. The modern ideal of education assumes that the exposure of students to knowledge potentially provides emancipatory and transformational features for the individuals involved, providing to society better citizens and specialized workers. That was what higher education was about. Presently, the focus on competences development has been reconfiguring education in higher education, mainly in European higher education. Research, in its turn, has been removed from the ‘ivory tower’ to the terrain of ‘social relevance’, challenging the universities’ identities and institutional roles. The trend to separate teaching and research functions challenges the modern idea of higher education where the institutions are supposed to teach what they researched. Actually the ‘higher’ of higher education relies precisely on the linkage between research and teaching. This chapter addresses these trends by challenging simultaneously their possible and future developments and by re-centring the issue of ‘what is higher education about?’