

Preface

According to OECD (2008), tertiary education policy is increasingly important to the national agenda, as it is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. Countries must raise higher-level employment skills to sustain a globally competitive research base and to improve knowledge dissemination in societies.

Education contributes both to social and economic development through four major missions:

- The formation of human capital (primarily through teaching).
- The building of knowledge bases (primarily through research and knowledge development).
- The dissemination and use of knowledge (primarily through interactions with knowledge users).
- The maintenance of knowledge (inter-generational storage and transmission of knowledge).

Learning technologies play a strategic role in the achievement of a competitive advantage through knowledge-based resources.

Although not all countries are in the same position, a number of trends within tertiary education have emerged. This book analyzes these emerging trends in education and offers research findings and practical case studies. Among others, these trends include the following:

- Expansion of tertiary education systems.
- More heterogeneous student bodies.
- Diversification of provision (new institutions, new offerings, and new delivery modes).
- New sources of funding.
- More focus on performance and reporting of research outcomes.
- Global networking, mobility, and collaboration for knowledge sharing.

This book also focuses on expanding and improving entrepreneurship teaching and knowledge-transfer activities, and, for policy makers, appropriate support initiatives and frameworks.

To meet the emerging challenges, new information technologies play a key role. Our book explores the impact of e-learning and Web 2.0 on educational challenges.

Topics of the book include, but are not limited to:

- Academic spin-offs
- Digital literacy
- Education and economic competitiveness

- Education policies
- E-learning
- Higher education and entrepreneurship
- Information technologies
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and poverty reduction
- Knowledge sharing and/or transfer in universities
- Learning spaces
- Organizational learning and unlearning
- Personalized learning
- Tertiary education
- Trends in education

Patricia Ordoñez de Pablos
University of Oviedo, Spain

Robert D. Tennyson
University of Minnesota, USA