

DROPOUT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THEORICAL MODELS, EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES AND INTERVENTION MEASURES

Abstract

Considering that the students profiles are constantly changing over time and depending on the institutions, the dropout concept must necessarily be updated to reflect its reality. The raise of students in Higher Education, the increase of mobility possibilities within and between institutions, as well as the possibilities of re-entry, make the meaning of dropout more complex. Referring to the description of the phenomenon, it is important to distinguish the dropout from stopout, when students do a halt time in the formation, and optout, when students decide to change their course or institution to complete their formation. This article clarifies the meaning of dropout in its various forms of occurrence and implications, differentiating the dropout in the current state-situation, the dropout as an event, and the dropout as a process. The theoretical models underlying the phenomenon are described in their differentiation and complementarity, highlighting the valued factors and their empirical evidences. The article finishes by pointing out some lines of action by Higher Education Institutions to reduce the dropping out frequency and impact of their students.

Keywords: Higher Education. Dropout. Disengagement. Academic Adaptation.