



## **Editorial for the IARTEM e-journal, January 2021**

### **Elements for an editorial in an unusual period**

Victor Hugo, the famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century French poet, said that ‘those who live are those who struggle’ and everybody may agree on the fact that the human life is perpetually thwarted. Of course, the converse of this proposal is not true – struggling does not prevent anyone from dying. During the terrible year 2020, a deadly and seemingly endless pandemic struck us. What seemed easy has become difficult; there has been no security for anybody and great difficulties for everybody. Still, Victor Hugo’s idea remains a powerful one.

For researchers in the humanities, and particularly those interested in education, the times have been both very interesting and very much more difficult.

Very interesting because distance learning has become a source of research problems and a challenge to innovators; more difficult because how can one keep doing research in the classroom when classrooms are mostly empty and people have to rely more and more on online resources?

What is worse, how can we maintain lively communication between people when face-to-face conferences and seminars have disappeared? These are crucial events, where experiences are shared, debates occur and reflections are fortified. Of course, they have been replaced by webinars and online seminars, but in these assemblies the presence of others is very tenuous, and non-verbal synchronous communication dwindles to almost nothing. This may not be such a problem for those with long experience, or those who already know one another or who can cope well with distance interactions. But it is more difficult for younger people, for whom conferences and seminars are typically occasions of acculturation to a community.

Yet, it is remarkable that academic life has not come to a stop. Researchers have continued to struggle along and a flow of activities has been maintained, and many have invented new forms of communication.

In this context, keeping academic journals going, notably those attached to emerging communities, has required special problem-solving and extra work and toil.

In particular, the IARTEM association has navigated rough conditions: its main conference, that was to take place in Firenze (Italy) has had to be postponed until better days, but the e-journal, relaunched in 2019, has remained active. Much of the organizational work has happened behind the scenes and many initiatives have been launched, most of which are not yet visible.

Several initiatives have been launched, aimed at improving the indexing of the journal in international databases and at building a more coherent ecosystem of publishing, taking advantage of both the academic journal and IARTEM's 'official' website (<https://iarthem.org/>).

Fortunately, due to the involvement of the whole editing team, we (almost) managed to publish a second issue before the end of 2020. What is interesting is that we have received proposals from different countries, which conforms to the *raison d'être* of the IARTEM association. We always heartily welcome scientific articles about textbooks and educational resources from all over the world.