Trends in Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement

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’El aseguramiento de la calidad de la educación superior con acceso masivo’
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CHEPS is one of the world's leading centres of excellence and relevance in higher education and research policy since 1984.

FACTS & FIGURES (2015)

STUDENT ENROLMENT: 9,652
MASTER'S STUDENTS: 4,077
BACHELOR'S STUDENTS: 5,575
ACADEMIC STAFF: 1,521
DOCTORAL DEGREES AWARDED: 234

CHEPS is one of the world's leading centres of excellence and relevance in higher education and research policy since 1984.
IN THIS PRESENTATION:

1. Concepts around Quality Assurance
2. Quality Assessment: Trends and Critique
3. Dilemmas for Quality Assurance
4. Diversity and Transparency
5. Conclusion
Some Concepts around Quality Assurance
But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes *poof!*"  

- For the next hour, I am master 😊
- These definitions work for me

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master — that's all."
Major concepts

- Quality
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Accreditation
- Quality enhancement
- Quality culture

- Extent to which a good/service satisfies stated needs
- Who states the needs?
  - Qualities: Number of aspects x stakeholders
- Is education a good?
  - Public and private good
  - Credence good: you don’t know quality for you even afterwards
Major concepts

- Quality
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Accreditation
- Quality enhancement
- Quality culture

- To assess = to measure
  - Quality assessment = measurement of quality
    - … of (study) content
    - … of institutions’ quality management
      = Quality audit

- To assure = to give confidence
  - Quality assurance = making quality clear to stakeholders

- Often used as synonyms
Major concepts

- Quality
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Accreditation
- Quality enhancement
- Quality culture

- Quality assessment resulting in a summative statement,
- Connected with recognition of the university/study programme.
- Recognition may imply e.g. degree, funding, student status/support
- Some authors add: regularly, for limited time
Some developments in quality assessment and accreditation

- Quality assessment replaced state control in public higher education systems
  - Since 1980s/1990s
  - Part of ’New Public Management’

- Main functions
  - Diminish control burden
  - Focus higher education institutions on utility

- Accreditation arose in systems with less state control, more private higher education institutions
  - USA since early 1900s
  - Central/Eastern Europe after 1989
  - Chile since 2006

- Main function
  - Establish threshold
Accreditation is a threshold decision
Some developments in quality assessment and accreditation

- Accreditation spread worldwide with globalisation, around 2000
  - The USA does it
  - Adopted (more or less) in Bologna Process

- Accreditation status is efficient information: yes / no

- Accreditation arose in systems with less state control, more private higher education institutions
  - USA since early 1900s
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- Main function
  - Establish threshold
Major concepts

- Quality
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Accreditation
- Quality enhancement
- Quality culture

- All structures and activities intended to achieve higher quality
  - of teaching & learning, or
  - of research, or
  - of services to students / teachers / researchers

- Quality enhancement = Quality improvement = Quality management
Major concepts

- Quality
- Quality assessment
- Quality assurance
- Accreditation
- Quality enhancement
- Quality culture

- Cultural/Psychological: shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment
- Structural/Managerial: structures and processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts
Quality Assessment: Trends and Critique
Process and performance in higher education

Quality enhancement: elements under institutional control

Input → Process → Output

Activities → Performance

Feedback
Process and performance
And accreditation

Accreditation
1.0

Activities → Performance

Input → Process → Output → Outcome

Feedback

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.
Accreditation criticised internationally

- Focus on traditional forms of higher education provision
  - Largely input standards in ‘accreditation 1.0’, e.g.
    - Facilities
    - Numbers of professors
    - Intended learning outcomes (curriculum, and learning goals)
- Focus on teaching rather than on learning

- We need openness to innovations, such as:
  - Non-traditional providers
  - New (especially online) forms of education
  - Recognition of non-formal learning experiences
Process and performance
And accreditation

Accreditation 1.0

Accreditation 2.0

Activities

Performance

Input

Process

Output

Outcome

Feedback

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Accreditation criticised internationally

- Under New Public Management 'accreditation 2.0' arose
  - Stress on outcomes in terms of (gainful) employment or employability
  - In USA: linked with loan default problems
  - Less control of how teaching is done: gain in procedural autonomy

- More sophisticated: OECD piloted world-wide assessment of learning outcomes (AHELO)
  - e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands use achieved learning outcomes in accreditation
  - Results of AHELO
    - Possible but costly
    - Though cultural biases remain
    - Is world-wide same learning outcomes desirable?
    - Pilot not followed-up till now
Accreditation and learning outcomes

Learning outcomes
- Knowledge
- Skills
  - Including transversal skills (‘21st century skills’)
- Attitudes
  - Academic
  - Citizenship

Academic education needs connection to research
- Can that be achieved without a large proportion of teaching staff active in research themselves?
- To what extent does this apply to professional bachelors and associate?
- Scholarship of education differs from research excellence
Design Dilemmas for Quality Assurance
Accreditation criticised internationally

- Accreditation requires much effort (and money) from the higher education institutions
- Is ’accreditation 3.0’ the answer?
Process and performance
And quality audit
’Accreditation 3.0’

- Make the burden lighter
  - Less accreditation at programme level, focus on institutions

- Make accreditation cycle longer where possible

- Institutional audit: check institution’s quality management
  - What are you trying to do?
  - How do you do it?
  - How do you know it works?
  - How do you change to improve?
  - = P-D-C-A cycle

- Increases autonomy
- Shifts burden from outside to inside
’Accreditation 3.0’

- Make the burden lighter
  - Less accreditation at programme level, focus on institutions

- Make accreditation cycle longer where possible

- Risk-based approaches
  - Often: earned trust → longer validity of accreditation
  - Earned trust = past performance
  - Risk = future uncertainty
Accreditation criticised internationally

- Accreditation does not stimulate quality enhancement
- Is linking quality enhancement with quality assurance the answer?
Quality assurance and quality enhancement
Dilemmas – I – anticipation of consequences

- Without (the threat of) serious consequences, quality assurance is not taken seriously in academe and turns into an administrative burden (‘paper tiger’)

- With (the threat of) serious consequences, quality assurance turns into a game to gain positive outcomes, not to assure or enhance quality
Quality culture and quality enhancement
Dilemmas – 2 – Dangers of data/no data

Quality culture needs processes and structures for quality enhancement to be sustainable

Focus on data strengthens structure and drives out quality culture

Quality enhancement needs foundation in data (‘evidence-based’ policy, or P-D-C-A cycle)

Focus on quality assurance processes and structures needs quality culture to avoid ‘window dressing’
Establishing a quality culture
Major lessons from a recent literature review

- Establish a baseline of shared values that defines high quality teaching and learning in the university
- Frame teaching and learning activities as similar to research activities; this motivates academics for quality work
- Integrate teaching achievements in career schemes
- Offer resources (time!)
- Effective leaders: committed to implementing changes, with careful timing and convincing narratives.
- Blended leadership style: bottom-up collegial initiatives combined with managerial vision
Quality culture and quality enhancement in quality assurance?

- Give quality assurance some consequences but do not make it a 'high-stakes test'
  - Be careful with ties to recognition and funding

- Be careful with indicators
  - Make indicators SMART
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Achievable
    - Relevant
    - Time-related

- But also: be smart about indicators
  - Avoid perverse effects
Quality culture and quality enhancement in quality assurance?

- Jump a level up: make quality culture and quality enhancement requirements in external quality assurance
  - Can be done in quality audits
- Implemented first in e.g.
  - Institutional audits UK
  - EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme
  - ABET accreditation of engineering programmes
Diversity and Transparency
Accreditation criticised internationally

- Accreditation offers little transparency to external stakeholders
- Are rankings the answer?
Transparency about diversity

- Why is diversity more of a problem now?
  - Higher education systems have grown quantitatively
  - New frameworks (countries, world regions, global competition)

- Higher education has grown in diversity of functions
  - Education
    - Elite → citizens
    - Professionals
  - Research
    - Fundamental
    - Practice-oriented
  - Knowledge transfer
    - Industrial innovation
    - Community outreach
# Transparency about diversity

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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Diversity/Performance of higher education institutions and systems</td>
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<td>Employers</td>
<td>Identify partners for cooperation (e.g. research, lifelong learning, employ graduates)</td>
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Diversity: vertical
How to rank – and how not
An example of a widely accepted ranking: football
How to rank – and how not
Can we rank universities like that? – Some do ...

| Rank | Name                        | Country  | Peer Reputation | International Outlook | Teaching | Research | Citations | Overall
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Critique of existing rankings

- Unspecified target groups
- Very small part of higher education institutions
- Ignore diversity within institutions
- Narrow range of dimensions
- Field and regional bias in citation databases
- Composite overall indicator
- League table
- Unspecified and volatile methodology
Impacts of rankings

- **Positive**
  - Global outlook of higher education institutions increased
  - More information for prospective students
    - Used mostly by 'higher-class' students

- **Negative**
  - Encourage wasteful use of resources
    - 'Reputation race'
  - Promote narrow concept of quality
    - 'What gets measured, gets done'
  - Invite ‘gaming the rankings’
Diversity: horizontal

Different  But  Equal
A higher education landscape: Vertical and horizontal diversity
U-Multirank
A ranking for horizontal and vertical diversity
Conclusion
For discussion: some ideas on implications for quality assurance in Chile

- Licensing
  - Focus on educational capacity
    - Staff, facilities fit for didactical model and scale
    - Open to new providers?
  - Risk-based
  - Quality enhancement capacity (= quality management) in focus
    - Support for quality enhancement separate?

- Accreditation
  - To guarantee threshold quality
    - Institutions or programmes?
    - All or some?
  - Focus on learning outcomes
  - Risk-based?
  - Gives crude but efficient information
    - For international credibility
Questions?