

THE PATH TO QUALITY TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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About the authors

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ABSTRACT

1. This review of literature on Quality Teaching aims to provide a theoretical background to the OECD-IMHE project on the quality of teaching in higher education. It highlights the main debates on the topic to date, hoping to present the different perspectives that exist on the topic of quality in teaching. The review of the literature is organized in three main parts as to address three major questions: 1) “What is Quality Teaching and why is it important in higher education?” 2) “How can teaching concretely be enhanced?” 3) “How can one make sure Quality Teaching initiatives are effective?”
2. Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes: increased international competition, increasing social and geographical diversity of the student body, increasing demands of value for money, introduction of information technologies, etc.
3. But quality teaching lacks a clear definition, because quality can be regarded as an outcome or a property, or even a process, and because conceptions of teaching quality happen to be stakeholder relative. The impact of research, of the “scholarship of teaching” and of learning communities on teaching quality is discussed here.
4. Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. The role of the professors, of the department, of the central university and of the state is analyzed, as well as the goals and the scope of these initiatives.
5. Choosing reliable and quantifiable indicators to assess the quality of one’s teaching and the efficiency of teaching initiatives remains challenging. Various methods and their efficiency are discussed here. The factors that determine whether appropriate use is made of the feedback provided are also brought into discussion.

RESUME

6. Cette revue de la littérature a pour but de fournir un cadre théorique au projet OCDE-IMHE sur la qualité de l’enseignement dans l’éducation supérieure. Elle met en relief les principaux débats sur le sujet, espérant présenter les différentes perspectives qui se confrontent et co-existent. La revue de la littérature répond à trois questions majeures: 1) Qu’est qu’un enseignement de qualité et pourquoi cette qualité est-elle importante? 2) Comment l’enseignement peut-il concrètement être amélioré ? 3) Comment être sûr que les initiatives ayant pour but d’améliorer la qualité de l’enseignement sont efficaces?
7. La qualité de l’enseignement est devenue un sujet d’importance lorsque l’éducation supérieure s’est vue confrontée à des changements continus: une compétition internationale accrue, une

diversité sociale et géographique plus forte parmi les élèves, des demandes plus exigeantes de qualité du fait de l'augmentation des frais de scolarité, l'introduction des nouvelles technologies, etc.

8. Néanmoins, la définition même de la qualité dans l'enseignement reste ambiguë, parce que la qualité peut être considérée comme un résultat, une propriété ou un processus, et parce que les différents agents en interaction ont une conception différente de l'enseignement. L'impact de la recherche, notamment de la recherche en enseignement, et des communautés de savoir sur la qualité de l'enseignement, est discuté ici.

9. Les initiatives qualité en faveur de l'enseignement sont très diverses à la fois par leur nature et par leur fonction. Le rôle des professeurs, des facultés, de l'administration centrale de l'université, et de l'État sont analysés ici, ainsi que les objectifs et l'étendue de ces initiatives.

10. Choisir des indicateurs valides et quantifiables afin d'évaluer la qualité d'un enseignement demeure un défi. Plusieurs méthodes et leur efficacité sont débattues ici. Les facteurs qui débouchent sur un usage approprié du feedback apporté sont aussi portés à la discussion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

11. This review of literature on quality teaching aims to provide a theoretical background to the OECD-IMHE project on the quality of teaching in higher education. This review highlights the main debates on the topic to date. It hopes to present the different perspectives that exist on the field of quality in teaching.

12. This review of the literature is organized in three main parts as to address three major questions: 1) "What is Quality Teaching? Why is it important in higher education?" 2) "How can teaching concretely be enhanced?" 3) "How can one make sure quality teaching is effective?"

What is Quality Teaching?

13. Quality teaching has become an issue of importance as the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes. The student body has considerably expanded and diversified, both socially and geographically. New students call for new teaching methods. Modern technologies have entered the classroom, thus modifying the nature of the interactions between students and professors. The governments, the students and their families, the employers, the funds providers increasingly demand value for their money and desire more efficiency through teaching.

14. *Quality Teaching* lacks of clear definitions and to some extent can't be disconnected from debates on *Quality* or *Quality culture* in higher education that remain controversial terms. Some scholars regard quality primarily as an outcome, others as a property. Some consider teaching as the never ending process of reduction of defects and so Quality Teaching can never be totally grasped and appraised. In fact, conceptions of quality teaching happen to be stakeholder relative: students, teachers or evaluation agencies do not share the definition of what "good" teaching or "good" teachers is.

15. The literature stresses that "good teachers" have empathy for students, they are generally experienced teachers and most of all they are organized and expressive. "Excellent teachers" are those who have passions: passions for learning, for their field, for teaching and for their students. But research also demonstrates that "good teaching" depends on what is being taught and on other situational factors.

16. Research points out that quality teaching is necessarily student-centred; its aim is most and for all student learning. Thus, attention should be given not simply to the teacher's pedagogical skills, but also to the learning environment that must address the students' personal needs: students should know why they are working, should be able to relate to other students and to receive help if needed. Adequate support to staff and students (financial support, social and academic support, support to minority students, counseling services, etc) also improves learning outcomes. Learning communities – groups of students and/or teachers who learn collaboratively and build knowledge through intellectual interaction – are judged to enhance student learning by increasing students' and teachers' satisfaction.

How can teaching concretely be enhanced?

17. Quality teaching initiatives are very diverse both in nature and in function. Some of these initiatives are undertaken at teachers' level, others at departmental, institutional or country level. Some quality initiatives aim to improve pedagogical methods while others address the global environment of student learning. Some are top-down process, other induce grass-root changes.

18. The most currently used quality initiatives seem to aim to enhance teamwork between teachers, goal-setting and course plans. However scholars have developed holistic theoretical models of how quality teaching initiatives should unfold. Gathering information and reading the literature – looking outside the classroom – are important tools to improve quality teaching, but they are still under-employed.

19. Another important point to keep in mind is that in order for student learning to be enhanced, the focus of quality teaching initiatives should not always be on the teacher. Rather it should encompass the whole institution and the learning environment.

20. One of the major drivers for enhancement of quality teaching concerns teachers' leadership – most quality teaching initiatives are actually launched by teachers. However the role of the department, of the educational support divisions and that of the central university – which can make quality culture part of its mission statement – are central. Scholars proved that bottom-top

initiatives are born-dead without institutional support. Quality teaching initiatives must seem legitimate to peers in order to succeed and expand.

How can we make sure quality teaching is effective?

21. It is essential to measure the impact of the quality teaching initiatives in order to be able to improve these initiatives. However assessing the quality of one's teaching remains challenging. This difficulty may in part explain why the two most famous international rankings rely heavily on research as a yardstick of the universities' value and leave aside the quality of teaching. This may however change in the future, as the concerns about quality teaching and student learning are increasing.

22. The choice of indicators to measure quality teaching is crucial, because it has been shown that assessment drives learning: how the teacher is judged will undoubtedly impact his or her teaching methods. Indicators to assess the quality of teaching (the value of graduates, satisfaction of teachers, retention rates, etc.) of an institution proved of use but carry various meanings and can even lead to misunderstandings. Researchers agree that reliable indicators should be chosen, and not just the most practical ones. Moreover, room should always be left for discussion of the figures obtained.

23. Other tools than indicators exist. Using student questionnaires can seem logical, because students are the individuals that are the most exposed to and the most affected by the teacher's teaching. However, many teachers give little credit to the answers of the students that they perceive as biased. The answering students tend to blame teachers for all problems, forgetting the role of the administration or the infrastructures. Measurement should clarify its own aims (improvement or punishment?) before implementation.

24. Peer-in class evaluations present the advantage of focusing on the process, not merely the outcomes. But these evaluations by peers may lead to self-congratulation and may hamper teaching innovations (the teacher being evaluated fearing to be poorly judged if too creative). Peers may also be influenced by a widespread conservatism of judgment.

25. Using teaching portfolios to evaluate quality teaching seems fairer as more sources of evidence are considered, but then a question remains: how much should each source of evidence be weighted?

26. Assessing the results of Quality Teaching initiatives has proven to be difficult, and this issue has received increasing attention in the literature. Many researchers now address the numerous paradoxes that the measurement of quality sometimes induces. For instance, a well-rated programme or a rewarded teacher feels less incentive for change and becomes therefore more likely to maintain the status quo. Teachers who follow-up on quality assurance schemes are also those who believe that it is in their power to improve student learning. Last, most teachers will try to improve the quality of their teaching only if they believe that the university cares about teaching. Hence, if an institution wants its teaching to be of good quality, it must give concrete, tangible signs that teaching matters.

Part 1: Defining Quality Teaching

- Why did Quality Teaching become an issue of importance?
- Is there a stable commonly accepted definition of Quality Teaching?
- What is a “good” teacher?
- Quality and research
- The scholarship of teaching
- Adopting a learning-centred approach: The example of learning communities
- The future of Higher Education and Quality Teaching

Part 2: Objectives and Content

- What are the recurrent experiences? What are the purposes and methods to support Quality Teaching?
- What are the major drivers that support Quality Teaching, and the factors that hinder Quality Teaching?

Part 3: Impact and Quality assurance of Quality Teaching

- Do the Higher Education Institutions follow up Quality Teaching initiatives and appraise their outcomes?
 - Traditional and innovative methods used to assess and improve Quality Teaching initiatives
 - Appraisal of impacts of Quality Teaching: some findings
 - The future of Higher Education and Quality Teaching
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INTRODUCTION

27. This review of the literature constitutes the starting point of the OECD-IMHE project on the Quality of Teaching in Higher Education. It aims to set forth the theoretical framework in which the issue of quality in teaching has been thought and debated. This review of the literature also helped to identify the key questions that the OECD-IMHE asked the higher education institutions that took part in the case study through the questionnaire, the site visits and phone calls. This review's goal was also indeed to lay out the issues of real concern for higher education institutions today.

28. Writing this review of the literature also helped us to become aware of:

- The difficulties many teachers in higher education are confronted with when assessing the impact of those initiatives that are meant to enhance the quality of teaching.
- The fact that a great proportion of studies on quality teaching were carried out on a very limited scale (specifically concerned with a small group of students or specific disciplines of study). Relatively little studies were conducted at institutional level or country level.
- The strong presence of Anglo-Saxon models in the studies on quality teaching carried out to date. This undoubtedly bears consequences on the ways and contexts in which quality teaching has been thought until now

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS PAPER

Timeline

The collection of data for this study started at the beginning of October 2007. The writing process for this review of the literature started in January 2008. The review was finally formatted in July 2008. Therefore the first limitation to this review was the time that was available, as we needed the review to be completed in order to be able to progress with the practical parts of the OECD project on Quality Teaching.

Sources

The research method used to write this review was fairly traditional:

- We used the wide amount of databases of both articles and books available through the OECD Network

- An alert was placed on several databases during the whole period that would automatically collect all recent articles comprising words such as “Quality Teaching”, “learning communities” or “scholarship of teaching, etc.
- Paragraphs and references were continuously added thanks to the advice of OECD personnel and to that of the Supervision Committee. This Committee, as well as some of the OECD staff, read our first draft of the review of the literature and significantly contributed to make it better in sync with the concerns of contemporaneous higher education institutions.

We chose to use only scholarly articles and books, instead of using the mass media press. We did however use a couple articles from newspapers or magazines, provided that they expressed the view point of researchers.

We also chose to focus relatively more on fairly recent articles. We did report the transforming ideas of Boyer (1990) or Gibbs (1995), but we also included details on how Information Technology changes students’ perceptions of quality, for instance.

Types of assessments considered

We chose early on to organize the review in three main parts as to address three major questions: 1) “What is Quality Teaching and why is it important in higher education?” 2) “How can teaching concretely be enhanced?” 3) “How can one make sure Quality Teaching initiatives are effective?” Therefore our review left aside topics that could not be fitted into these three categories.

Also, as we had chosen these three main questions, our focus was mainly on teaching input, rather than on learning outcomes. We did, of course, nevertheless read about learning outcomes, as student learning is in itself the measure and the goal of Quality Teaching.

Instead of focusing simply on the question of what a “good teacher” is, we chose to develop several specific focuses on sub-topics of Quality Teaching. A good or excellent teacher may indeed help his students, but his contribution to the field of teaching will be weak if he does not share his discoveries with his colleagues or analyze his own methods.

In particular, we highlighted the importance of the concept of a “scholarship of teaching”. This “scholarship” expresses well our belief that teaching should be both research-informed and research-driven. We also developed a focus on learning communities, because they demonstrate that teaching is an iterative process. Learning communities often also enhance the relationship between students and teachers, thus improving the quality of the learning environment.

Other limitations

One of the biggest limitations to this review of the literature is that it is difficult to generalize studies that were often conducted on a very small scale. Also, because the Anglo Saxon studies are dominant, we took here the risk of describing views that may seem too occidental or biased to some readers. In addition, because of the lacks mentioned above, we do not pretend to exhaustivity on the subject of Quality Teaching. But despite these lacks - that call for future research - we hope that this review will provide our reader with at least an impressionist perception of what quality in teaching might be about.

Part 1: Defining Quality Teaching

Why did Quality Teaching become an issue of importance?

More students to be taught than ever before

Recent trends in higher education have increased the attention given to the quality of the teaching offered to the students. First, the advent of mass higher education in the 1960s and even more so in the 1980s produced a shift in the conception of the role of universities. It questioned the nature of the relationship between teaching and research. In fact, according to Coaldrake and Stedman (1999), until the late nineteenth century, teaching was the major function of universities. But the export of the German model of research and teaching to the UK and the USA led research to become the *sine qua non* of the University during the 20th century, whereas teaching was often perceived as a second-class activity. But because of the expansion of the higher education sector, the importance of teaching is now being reexamined and reassessed.

The States and the students demand that the learning experience be worth their money

Second, changes in the funding structure of many universities also increased the focus on the quality of teaching. The modern State, the “evaluative state” (Neave, 1998) is a State that has concerns dominated by value for money and public accountability. Higher Education Institutions must learn to respond to these concerns about finances.

Moreover, higher education is increasingly seen as an investment that should contribute to national prosperity in the long term. Therefore the return on the investment must be good (Yorke, 2000). Quality assurance in higher education has also become a focus of attention for private universities (Jones, 2003). Students - who are increasingly paying tuition fees- might now be considered as “clients” of higher education institutions (Telford & Masson, 2005). Students are therefore also very concerned about the quality of the lectures they pay for. As the “culture of higher education” has become “increasingly market-oriented” (Green, 1993), external demands for quality of teaching have increased.

The Student body is changing, teaching methods are too.

Last, the student body itself has changed considerably since the 1960s, hence modifying expectations regarding teaching. To begin with, in most developed countries, increasing social diversity has transformed the student body at university level. Higher education is no longer reserved to the elite. Next, the Internet has globalised the market place, and institutions are increasingly competing for the best students, nationally and internationally. Many professors are now teaching international students, and consequently must develop new pedagogical strategies.

Teaching methods have also evolved. Professors who wish to incorporate aspects of on-line learning need to become familiar with new pedagogical methods. Distance education in print form is being supplemented by Internet – based delivery. Mixed modes of learning have become common: the majority of cross-border distance programmes now involve some form of face-to-face pedagogical or administrative

contact, sometimes visits to study centres. Generally people in remote locations and working adults are the first to experience these new forms of learning.

Vocational training institutions, which prepare learners for careers that are based on practical activities, are no longer shun. They are now fully considered as an important part of most higher education systems. Last, lifelong learning now offers a second chance to those who did not attain higher education or to those for whom the knowledge and skills acquired in school are no longer sufficient for a professional career spanning three or four decades (Marginson, Van der Wende, 2007). For instance, the European Union adopted in October 2006 a Communication entitled "It's never too late to learn", which claims that lifelong learning is at the heart of the ambitious Lisbon 2010-process (Marginson, Van der Wende, 2007).

Change fosters reflection and debate

Higher education has changed in the past twenty years: the number of students has dramatically increased, funding concerns have changed, and the student body has diversified. The current "knowledge era" has reintroduced transfer of knowledge as a major contributor to growth and business success.

As globalization continues, the national and international competition for the best students is likely to increase among higher education institutions, thus only reinforcing pressure for Quality Teaching and quality assurance. It is likely that international rankings based on the quality of teaching will be set forth, thus reinforcing the attractiveness of quality initiatives. Moreover, there are more and more students who study at various universities, benefitting from opportunities like Erasmus or international scholarships. These students are likely to compare the quality of the teaching received at these different institutions.

A generation of new teachers will soon come in to replace the baby boomers when they later retire. These new teachers will have grown up with the Internet and will have a renewed vision of what good teaching is. A possible change is that the faculty might come to adopt a more integrated professional identity, through for instance the reconceptualization of the relationship between teaching, learning and research (Bauer & Henkel, 1997).

Because of all these changes, several questions have received increased attention such as: "Can the possession of a PHD be taken as a proxy for teaching competence" (Ryan, Fraser & Dearn, 2004)? More fundamentally, what constitutes "good" and appropriate teaching? How can a "quality culture" in higher education that supports Quality Teaching be defined and achieved?

Is there a commonly accepted definition of Quality Teaching ?

The definition of Quality Teaching depends on the meaning one chooses to give to the concept of « quality ». "Quality" is indeed a multi-layered and complex word. As Biggs (2001) points out, "quality" can alternatively define an outcome, a property, or a process. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the phrase "Quality Teaching" has been given several definitions.

Competing definitions of quality

Harvey and Green (1993) distinguish four definitions of quality that can help us to understand what Quality Teaching might be. First, quality as "excellence"- the traditional conception of quality- is the dominant one in many old elite higher education institutions. Second, quality can be defined as "value for money"- a quality institution in this view is one that satisfies the demands of public accountability. Third,

quality may be seen as “fitness for purpose”- the purpose being that of the institution, for instance getting students to learn sciences efficiently. The last definition listed by Harvey & Green is that of quality as “transforming”. According to this definition, Quality Teaching is teaching that transforms students’ perceptions and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems.

Teachers might be reluctant to consider quality as “value for money”

There is no consensus on the fact that these four definitions of quality enounced by Harvey & Green have equal value. For instance, Franklin (1992) and Scott (1998) argue that the definition of quality as “fitness for purpose” derives from the consumerisation and standardisation of Higher Education, and that this definition can in fact undermine the “quality” of teaching. Next, a study conducted by Newton (2001) demonstrates that many British teachers complained of increased managerialism, bureaucracy, and intrusion, as a consequence of the introduction of the United Kingdom’s Quality Assurance Agency quality system which is rather based upon the definition of “quality as value for money”. Cartwright (2007) also reports that external evaluations which generally rely on the definition of quality as “value for money” often raise frustration on the part of professors. Many professors believe that these evaluations are too concerned with the financials and not enough with the teaching experience.

Quality Teaching is “stakeholder relative”

Another difficulty when it comes to defining “quality”,- and hence “Quality Teaching” is that, as noticed by Harvey et al. (1992), there are many ways to define quality in higher education because definitions of quality are “stakeholder relative” – “stakeholders” including students, employers, teaching and non-teaching staff, government and funding agencies, creditors, auditors, assessors, and the community at large. Tam (2001) also found that all stakeholders held their own view of what quality in education means to them.

The question of the students’ perception of quality in higher education has received considerable attention. The concept of the student as a customer was first mooted in the UK by Crawford (1991). Consumerism emphasizes five principles: access, choice, information, redress, representation (Potter 1988, Sanderson 1992), all five of which may be taken into account by the student as he/she is evaluating the quality of higher education institutions. But Dickson et al. (1995) point out that “education may be unique in the sense that it is difficult for the customer to assess the quality and relevance of the service” (p.63). It sometimes happens that only years after a university course, a student at last comes to understand why this particular course was useful. Telford & Masson’s research (2005) confirms a lack of congruence between the main stakeholders’ views. But this research also shows that the fact that stakeholders do not attach the same importance to the different elements of the educational framework is not in itself an explanation for student dissatisfaction.

Quality: A never-ending process of reduction of defects

Several scholars define quality in higher education as the process of quality enhancement. Hau (1996) argues that quality in higher education, and Quality Teaching in particular, springs from a never-ending process of reduction and elimination of defects. Argyris & Schön (1974) determine that quality enhancement in higher education institutions should be a double-looped process. The first loop of quality enhancement is driven by the inquest: “are we doing things right?”, but this question alone is insufficient. For the quality enhancement process to function, a second loop must be added, dealing with the question

“are we doing the right things?” For instance, making sure that the quality of lectures is good is not enough. An institution must also ask itself if it should offer other classes to its students besides lectures.

One may notice that definitions of quality in higher education as a process, an outcome or a property are not necessarily in conflict, but can potentially be used by higher education institutions as complementary.

About “quality culture”

“Quality culture” is also a fashionable word these days. But Harvey & Stensaker (2007) pinpoint that if we always attach a taken-for-granted meaning to it, we are not helping those who want to enhance by their work the essential processes of teaching and learning.

Culture, “is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (Williams, 1983). It is always difficult to name and characterize what constitutes a culture. For instance, the rhetoric of “quality culture” in European higher education is often referred to as elements of its search for excellence, but the changes Europe should make to achieve this quality culture remain unclear. For example the European Universities Association (EUA) “Quality culture” project (2002-2006) stated that every quality culture was based on two distinct elements:

- a set of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality
- a structural/managerial element with well-defined processes that enhance quality and coordinate efforts.

But Harvey & Stensaker (2007) notice that this chosen definition is marked by a relatively high degree of ambiguity.

Quality culture: An element of each university’s core identity

For Harvey & Stensaker (2007), quality culture must not be considered as a concept capable of answering challenges, but as a concept that helps to identify challenges. The institutions must ask themselves who they are. They cannot just decide, for instance, to become “reflective practitioners” without first answering the question of their current identity. “A quality culture is not something that can be constructed irrespective of the context in which it is located” (Harvey & Stensaker, 2007)

However, studies have revealed that designs for quality assurance processes are often chosen without taking into consideration the present social structures and the way the institutions presently handle quality assurance issues (Newton 2000).

Table 1: Harvey & Stensaker (2007) , Intersection of quality definitions and elite and democratic concepts of culture

	Culture	
<i>Quality</i>	Elitist	Democratic
Excellence	Creating an environment in which the best prosper irrespective of others	Developing a set of shared, lived understandings of how to project, support and aspire to excellence
Consistency	Making sure that areas of high reputation perform consistently	Everyone takes responsibility for ensuring their own work meets expectations and specifications.
Fitness for purpose	Specifying an elitist purpose and ensuring everything conforms to it.	A common understanding of purpose and how to achieve it.
Value for money	Using reputational leverage to attract money from high profile resources and ensuring that it is spent effectively, or at least to the satisfaction of donors.	Developing an internalised set of values that ensures resources are used efficiently and effectively.
Transformational	Ensuring that top-graded students are prepared (enhanced and empowered) for significant graduate jobs and that top researchers are fully supported and enabled to attract and deliver major research projects	A stakeholder-centred approach that endeavours to enhance and empower students and researchers: prioritising the development of participants in the learning and knowledge development process.

A variety of quality cultures, a panoply of teaching excellence

For Skelton (2005), because there is no unique understanding of what constitutes “teaching excellence”, there are various types of quality cultures. Skelton offers four meta understandings of teaching excellence in higher education : traditional, performative, psychologized, or critical. An institution might want to change its quality culture, as “in any given culture, understandings of teaching excellence may change over time” (Skelton, 2005). But before trying to foster change, a higher education institution should previously consider what it currently regards as teaching excellence and review how the institution works (Skelton, 2005).

What is a “good” teacher?

Ennobling teaching in Higher Education

The role and status accorded to teachers is being reassessed as external demands for quality increase. Indeed, it is easy to understand that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. In his landmark study, Boyer (1990) asserted that teaching should be accorded a higher status and should assume a specialized role as one of the four types of scholarships engaged in by the modern academic. He argued for the necessity of embedding the “*scholarship of teaching*” in the culture of academia (see hereafter).

What it takes to be a “good” teacher: Sensitivity to class level and progress, empathy with students...

But in order to enhance and reward teaching excellence, it is essential to know what constitutes good teaching. Several features of the “good teacher” have been repeatedly identified by scholars. Feldman (1976) lists teacher sensitivity to class level and progress, clarity of course requirements, understandable explanations, respect for students and encouragement of independent thought, as the main characteristics of a good teacher. Shulman (1987) also emphasizes pedagogical knowledge and full command of the curriculum. Marsh (1987) mentions appropriate workload, clear explanations, empathy with students, openness on the part of the lecturer and quality of the assessment procedures. Entwistle and Tait (1990) list clear goals, appropriate workload and level of difficulty, choice in assignments, quality of explanation, appropriate pace in lecturing, enthusiasm of lecturer and empathy with students as essential traits.

Leadership, Modern management, Global understanding of the university’s mission...

Webbstock (1999) underlines that good teaching is a type of teaching that correlates with the educational institution’s mission statement. Hativa et al. (2001) focus their attention on four components: lesson organization, lesson clarity, interest in learning, and positive classroom climate. Taylor (2003) lists thirteen abilities needed for Quality Teaching and learning : Engagement locally and globally, Engagement with peers and colleagues, Equity and pathways, Leadership, Engagement with learners, Entrepreneurship, Designing for learning, Teaching for learning, Assessing for learning, Evaluation of teaching and learning, Reflective practice and professional development, Personal management, and Management of teaching and learning. As Radloff (2004) observes, these capabilities do not only encompass traditional discipline and pedagogical knowledge and skills. They also entail an understanding of the global and connected nature of education and skills in leadership and management.

Experience matters

Chalmers (2007) points out that experience matters: More than 400 empirical studies show that years of experience in teaching and specific teaching qualifications are significantly correlated to better student achievement (Greenwald, Hedges & Laine, 1996).

The two pillars of good teaching: Organization and expressiveness

According to Feldman, (1989) and Murray, (1991) two qualities are highly correlated with student achievement: expressiveness and, even more significantly, organization.

Good organization of subject matter and planning of the course are important to student learning (Kallisson 1986). Well-structured presentations, lecture-outlines, headings, subheading, and syllabi enhance students’ learning experiences (Feldman 1989, Murray 1991). Indeed, outlines transfer knowledge

structure. They can serve as an advance organizer providing students with chunking strategies (Perry and Magnusson 1989, thus contributing to more efficient learning.

Expressiveness, sometimes referred to as “enthusiasm” – but also encompassing the use of eye contact, appropriate physical movement and change in tone when important material is presented – also has great impact on student learning. It enhances students’ scholastic behaviours such as attendance to following lectures, amount of homework completed and academic achievement (Perry and Penner 1990). Expressiveness also increases motivation and studying (Murray 1991).

“Good teaching” depends on whom and what is being taught

Schönwetter, Clifton & Perry (2002) have been critical in the understanding that “good teaching” might be somewhat different in function of whom and what is being taught. Schönwetter, Clifton & Perry studied the links between student entry characteristics and effective teaching behaviours. They show that students who are familiar with the content of the course have pedagogical needs that differ from those of the students who are unfamiliar with the material. Their studies reveal that content-unfamiliar students’ perception of learning is more positively influenced by the professor’s organization than by the professor’s expressiveness. However, students who are familiar with the course content are more sensitive to the professor’s expressiveness than to his or her organization skills. Additionally, content-unfamiliar students are more sensitive to both expressiveness and organization than content familiar students in absolute terms. Consequently, the three authors recommend assigning the most expressive and most importantly the most organized professors to introductory classes, because it will both increase their knowledge content and motivate them to take more advanced class. For advanced courses, an expressive instructor seems to be more effective.

Taking into account various and changing types of learning

Another issue of importance as regards to Quality Teaching is that there may be different types of learning and teaching. Marton and Säljö (1976) found that students learning approaches are of two sorts : the “*deep approach*” which focuses on understanding the course material and the “*surface approach*” which focuses on memorising the material itself. Furthermore, students’ approaches to study are influenced by the students’ conception of learning (Van Rossum & Schenk, 1984). Sheppard and Gilbert’s (1991) found that students’ beliefs about the structure of knowledge in a discipline were influenced by their lecturers’ theories of teaching and by the students’ perception of the learning environment.

Teachers’ teaching methods depend on how they conceive the essence of teaching

Teachers’ teaching methods are linked to their conception of what the essence of teaching is. Kember & Kwan (2000) assert that professors have one type of teaching approach, content-centred or learning-centred. Because of this approach, they implement different types of teaching strategies. Differences lay in instruction, focus, assessment, accommodation for student characteristics, source of experience and knowledge. Teachers who adopt a content-centred approach consider teaching primarily as the transmission of knowledge. Those who have the learning-centred approach are more likely to consider teaching as “learning facilitation”.

Professors who are content-centred rarely become learning-centred and vice versa. Kember & Kwan believe that a teacher’s methods are generally quite stable, just as his or her conception of good teaching is. Professors change their methods of teaching less easily than students change their way of learning.

However, teachers can potentially adopt the alternative approach if the learning environment appears to demand it. Factors such as large classes, big teaching rooms, and heavy teaching loads could play a part in giving incentives to teachers to switch to a “content-centred” approach, for instance (Kember & Kwan, 2000).

What makes some teachers “extraordinary”?

In parallel to research on “good” teaching, some researchers focus on “extraordinary teachers”. Extraordinary teachers are those teachers who produce unique and memorable educational experiences. According to Stephenson (2001), “extraordinary teachers know what to teach, how to teach, and how to improve”; “extraordinary teachers have passion for four things, learning, their fields, their students, and teaching” (Stephenson, 2001). Yair (2007) conducted a study of memories of educational experiences among adults, with a sample of over 1000 by questionnaire: Respondents emphasized the extraordinary professors’ personal traits in 54 % of all cases, his or her instructional strategies in 25% of cases.

Yair remarks that often extraordinary professors are those who have symmetric and personalized relations with their pupils, thus helping students to decrease their uncertainty, suspicion and disengagement, and providing them with the courage to raise innovative ideas. Key experiences in higher education “have affective bases” (Yair, 2007). The excellent teacher was also often considered as a symbol of the knowledgeable expert. The “memorable figures were passionate about their subject matter; toward their duties as teacher; and most significantly toward their students” (Yair, 2007). Yair also notices that extraordinary teachers were often those who were not restrained by rules. He therefore argues for a certain range of academic freedom allowing professors to innovate. “Growing standardization may hamper individuality, and readymade curricula may inhibit initiative and creativity” (Yair, 2007)

Skelton recalls in Times Higher Education Supplement (Nov 16th 2007) that teaching excellence is generally considered to be achieved primarily through individual effort. But this idea of individual excellence masks crucial questions relating to basic material conditions of teaching and learning (e.g., staff-to-student ratios, sufficient time to think seriously about teaching and learning processes). He warns against the bias induced by the teaching-excellence-centered approach which often dominates. Research studies rarely scrutinize the selection process that identifies some particular teachers as excellent. Policy texts continue to adopt simplistic understandings of educational change that underestimate the highly context-specific nature of teaching situations.

The recruitment of good teachers: A challenge

How teachers should be recruited is beyond the scope of this review of the literature. However, it is obvious that “the issue of teacher quality is inextricably linked to recruitment, for in recruiting teachers [institutions] wish to attract individuals who are well prepared, effective and who will remain in the teaching profession long enough to make a difference.” (Darling Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn and Fideler, 1999). Darling & al. point out that the issue of supply of teachers is not a question of numbers – most States could lower their standards to fill the classrooms- but one of quality. In particular, finding good professors to teach in poor and high minority zones is a dwelling task. Though Darling & al.’s studies concern secondary education, a parallel could be drawn to higher education.

Hirsch (2001) offers a panel of solutions to improve the quality of teachers recruited at higher educational level, one solution being salary increase. However there is no consensus to date among scholars that increasing the salary of teacher recruits improves teaching quality.

For instance, Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin (1999), who compared the quality of teachers from a panel of secondary schools in Texas, found that the relation between teachers’ salary and student performance was not obvious. “Important policy decisions rest on the relationship between teacher salaries and the quality of

teachers, but the evidence about the strength of such a relationship is thin” (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, 1999). They show that teachers’ salaries have only a “modest impact” both on teacher mobility and on student performance. Teacher mobility in Texas was in fact more affected by the characteristics of students (income, race, and achievement) than by salary. A significant relationship between salaries and student achievement existed for experienced teachers, but not for new hires (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, 1999).

Quality Teaching and research

Defining the distinctive nature of the university

“Teaching and research are central to the delivery of higher education. [...] For many observers, the relationship between teaching and research is fundamental in defining the distinctive nature of the university as an institution” (Taylor 2007). But what is the nature of the relationship between teaching and research, the so called *teaching: research nexus*?

Ever since Boyer (1990) defined the scholarship of teaching as distinct from the scholarship of research, the issue of the links tying teaching to research has been the most controversial one among scholars writing on Quality Teaching. Some scholars suggest that there is a strong, symbiotic link between teaching and research. For Benowski (1991), teaching should not be separated from research. Indeed, “professors teach best what they know best” (Benowski, 1991). Stephenson (2001) found that one of the characteristics of extraordinary teachers is that they have passion for their field. Yair (2007) also noticed that memories of extraordinary professors often described how these teachers were passionate about their subject matter. This passion may arise through research. Therefore research could help professors to be better teachers. Although the link between teaching and research is generally seen as stronger at the graduate level, many professors also insist on the value of bringing research to undergraduates.

Interestingly enough, it is also possible that teaching can help professors to become better researchers. Taylor (2007) when interviewing faculty, found that some members of the academic staff perceived undergraduates as a “greenhouse for new ideas”.

“Good researchers are good teachers”: one of the myths of Higher Education?

Gibbs (1995) wrote the most radical critique of the assumption, common in many universities, that quality in teaching flows from quality in research. For Gibbs, as for Terenzini and Pascarella (1994), the belief that good researchers are good teachers is one of the myths of higher education. “The notion that teaching excellence flows directly from research excellence is absurd: they are in direct conflict, compete for academics attention and only one of them is rewarded” (Gibbs, 1995).

Gibbs gives evidence that Quality Teaching is receiving very little attention as compared to research: According to a survey of the United Kingdom’s Higher Education institutions undertaken by the Oxford Centre for Staff Development in 1992, only 12 % of all promotion decisions were made on the basis of teaching excellence and in 38% of universities no promotions were made on the grounds of quality of teaching at all. The fact that teaching, in practice or even in theory, is not often a ground for promotion can be accounted for by four major reasons (Bauer & Henkel, 1997). First, it is harder to establish a definition which adequately describes what constitutes good teaching than to establish a definition for good research. Second, it is difficult to establish and collate evidence of good teaching that would enable good teachers to receive recognition for their efforts. Third, there existed until recently few incentives for staff to devote time and energy to the pursuit of excellence in teaching. Four, because of institutional rhetoric, teaching is often viewed “as a duty, a chore” (Elton , Pattington, 1991).

Gibbs asks that the same quality enhancement processes already used for research be applied to teaching, such as peer review, rewards for excellence, cooperative work, incentives to read and discuss the literature. He demands that teacher receive training, funding and access to better facilities. “ The real relationship between quality in research and quality in teaching lies in the intellectual rigour and scholarship involved in their enhancement processes”(Gibbs, 1995)

The same year, a study of the United States’ higher education institutions performed by Astin and Chang (1995) using faculty survey responses found that no institution (in a sample of 212) had both a very strong research orientation and a very strong student orientation. Gibbs’ conclusions were also echoed by Braxton (1996) who found no systematic relationship between teaching and research quality. Patrick & Stanley (1998) performed a cluster analysis in the field of business and management studies, whose results also showed that “clearly, there is no consistent connection between high quality research and high quality in teaching”, at least in the field studied.

Hence, one can see that the question of the links between research and teaching remains open and controversial.

The scholarship of teaching

This review of literature promotes the notion of scholarship of teaching as a way to move beyond the teaching versus research debate.

Ever since 1990, Boyer insisted that we “move beyond the tired old teaching versus research debate and give the familiar and honorable term “scholarship” a broader, more capacious meaning”. This revised conception of “scholarship” would include four interrelated dimensions, discovery, integration, application and teaching. Boyer thus demands that the same habits of mind that characterize other types of scholarly work be applied to teaching.

The literature on the topic of scholarly teaching has been considerably growing in the past fifteen years. Many forums and events have focused on the scholarship of teaching. Moreover, some universities are developing infrastructure which is deemed necessary to support the “scholarship of teaching”. For instance, George Mason University developed an online journal focused on the scholarship of teaching (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999). This notion of a “scholarship of teaching” has since 1990 fostered a plethora of debates. But what is this scholarship about?

“The aim of teaching is simple, it is to make student learning possible” argues Ramsden (1992). “The aim of scholarly teaching is also simple; it is to make transparent how we have made learning possible” (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser, 2000). To do so, teachers must keep themselves informed of the evolution of theoretical perspectives. They should also collect evidence of their effectiveness as teachers. Glassick, Huber & Maeroff (1997) defined six keys to attain and assess all four scholarships described by Boyer: Clear goals, Adequate preparation, Appropriate methods, Significant results, Effective presentation and Reflective critique.

Communication is one of the pillars of the scholarship of teaching. Shulman (1993) identifies communication as a key element of teaching. He asserts that to move towards a scholarship of teaching, it is necessary that teachers become active members of communities (communities of conversation, of evaluation etc.).

Building on these ideas, Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser (2000) offer a tool to measure to which extent teachers are engaging in the scholarship of teaching. To assess the level of this engagement should be considered:

- a) The extent to which they engage with the scholarly contributions of others, including the literature of teaching and learning of a general nature, and particularly that in their discipline;
- b) The focus of their reflection on their own teaching practice and the learning of students within the context of their own discipline: whether it is un-focused, or whether it is asking what do I need to know and how do I find out;
- c) The quality of the communication and dissemination of aspects of practice and theoretical ideas about teaching and learning in general and teaching and learning within their discipline
- d) Their conceptions of teaching and learning: whether the focus of their activities are on student learning and teaching or mainly on teaching. (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser, 2000)

The “Scholarship of teaching” is more than “excellent teaching”

The definition of the “scholarship of teaching” has evolved. Boyer (1990) does not clearly distinguish between “excellent teaching” and the “scholarship of teaching”. But Hutchings and Shulman (1999) pinpoint key differences between the two. For Hutchings and Shulman (1999), the scholarship of teaching

has essentially three features that distinguish it from simply “good teaching”. Scholarly teaching is public, open to critique and evaluation, and in a form others can build on. Thus, scholarship of teaching necessarily involves inquiry and investigation. It is particularly concerned by the “character and depth of [the] student learning” which result from teaching practices (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999).

The scholarship of teaching demands that teachers change their negative opinion of teaching “problems”. In research and scholarship, having a problem has always been at the heart of the investigation process. But teachers generally want to avoid problems. Instead, they should consider problems as an opportunity to advance our knowledge on teaching and learning. “Changing the status of the problem in teaching from terminal remediation to ongoing investigation is precisely what the movement for a scholarship of teaching is all about” (Bass, 1998).

The scholarship of teaching “ is the mechanism through which the profession of teaching itself advances, through which teaching can be something other than a seat-of- the pants operation, with each of us making it up as we go” (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999). The progress in teaching must therefore be sustainable; the scholarship of teaching must be supported by higher educational institutions’ infrastructure and culture.

Adopting a learning-centered approach: The example of learning communities

As universities are developing an increasing student-centred focus, learning communities have moved in the spotlight of many universities’ attention. Learning communities commonly refer to all types of “groups of people engaged in intellectual interaction for the purpose of learning” (Cross, 1998).

Cross (1998) believes that interest in learning communities is skyrocketing for three main reasons. First, a philosophical reason: Our conception of knowledge is changing. The idea of collaborative learning corresponds to a new belief that knowledge is built by learners: “The fundamental assumption of constructivism is that knowledge is actively built by learners as they shape and build mental frameworks to make sense of their environment” (Cross, 1998).

Second, a research-based reason: Research tells us that students who engage with professors are better, and more satisfied learners. Students who “have more frequent contacts with faculty members in and out of class during college years are more satisfied with their educational experiences, less likely to drop out, and perceive themselves to have learned more than students who have less faculty contact” (Cross, 1998).

Third, learning communities are increasingly used for a pragmatic reason : Because they work. By participating in learning communities, students learn about group dynamics. They learn how to behave constructively. Learning communities “train people effectively for the workplace and educate them for good citizenship” (Cross, 1998).

Lenning and Ebbers (1999) also believe that learning communities have overwhelmingly positive effects. For students, benefits “include higher academic achievement, better retention rates, greater satisfaction with college life, improved quality of thinking, and communicating, a better understanding of self and other, and a greater ability to bridge the gap between the academic and social worlds” (Lenning and Ebbers, 1999).

But benefits also exist for the faculty. Benefits for the faculty include diminished isolation, a shared purpose and cooperation among faculty colleagues, increased curricular integration, a fresh approach to one's discipline and increased satisfaction with their students' learning (Lenning and Ebbers, 1999). The institution can also take advantage of these learning communities, that are often interdisciplinary, to "test out new curricular approaches and strategies for strengthening teaching and learning" (Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, 2008).

Lenning and Ebbers (1999) notice that learning groups are a good response to Boyer's call for universities to become purposeful, open and celebrative communities. Lenning and Ebbers categorize learning communities according to two criteria. First, "primary membership" enables us to separate learning communities according to the characteristics of group members: some learning organizations are faculty learning communities, other student learning communities, etc. Second, "primary form of interaction" differentiates between groups based on the method of interaction: in person physical contact, non-direct interaction, correspondence, virtual interaction (Lenning and Ebbers, 1999). Using these two criteria, Lenning and Ebbers come up with four basic types of student learning communities: curricular learning communities, classroom learning communities, residential learning communities, and student learning communities.

Some learning communities work better than others. For learning communities to be effective, the faculty must make sure that they are student-centred and focused on a common goal (Lenning and Ebbers, 1999). Learning communities should involve scheduled activities outside the classroom. They are particularly important for first- year students. The institution should do its best to publicize the existence of these learning communities, for instance through attractive brochures, thanks to the word of mouth of satisfied students or through the Internet (Lenning and Ebbers, 1999).

The future of Higher Education and Quality Teaching

The future of higher education might bring about new and heightened considerations regarding the quality of teaching.

One of the most foreseeable evolutions in the future of higher education lies within globalization. This rapid process bears many consequences on higher education worldwide. "In many nations, international mobility; global comparison, benchmarking and ranking; and the internationalisation of institutions and system; are key policy themes (OECD, 2007)". "Not all universities are (particularly) international, but all are subject to the same processes of globalisation – partly as objects, victims even of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents of globalisation" (Scott, 1998). Therefore, all higher educational institutions should develop a coherent response to globalization. "To be effective in the global environment, means being prepared to changes: Global exchange is transformative and all policies and institutional habits are ripe for reconsideration in the light of global challenge" (OECD, 2007). This may, in particular mean that institutions may have to think over what should be taught, or how classes should be taught. Quality teaching's very nature may change because of globalisation.

The OECD (2006) has developed four possible scenarios for the future of higher education. These scenarios were constructed by taking into account two central variables, the extent of globalization (local-global) and the amount of influence of state government (administration-market). The scenarios address for instance the division between teaching and research universities or the increase of technology that might have an indirect but comprehensive impact on teaching.

Globalisation and other global changes make reforms necessary for universities worldwide. In 2006 in Athens, the Education Ministers of the OECD zone have identified six areas in which institutions and governments should engage in serious reforms - to make higher education not just “bigger” but also “better” (Giannakou, OECD, 2006). These reforms be coherent responses to change in the areas of Funding, More equitable education, Research and innovation, Migration and internationalization. The two other reforms which were deemed necessary concern teaching quality. Indeed, the first reform suggested was to develop a “clever focus on what students learn” in universities. The second was to promote reforms that would increase incentives to make institutions more accountable for quality and outcomes (OECD, 2006).

The scope of this review of the literature is much wider than Europe. The Bologna process, however, is increasingly studied by non-European specialists as a model of what collaboration could be between universities in other parts of the world. The Bologna process is currently taking place is quite considerable: “European higher education is engaged in the most comprehensive reforms since at least the immediate aftermath of 1968” (Unesco-Cepes, 2006). It has been designed as a response to dramatic changes in the higher educational landscape: “ the gradual individualisation (and recommodification) of our societies, the denationalisation (and desocialisation) of our economies, as well as the universalisation of higher education and the commoditisation of research (Kwiek, 2004). The Bologna process is meant to respond to European societies’ needs. This integrative process is likely to bring about major changes, one of which might be related to teaching. The Bologna Process, although it is not primarily concerned with teaching quality, does indeed have an impact on teaching. Student-centred learning is one of its objectives. “Institutions are slowly moving away from a system of teacher-driven provision and towards a student-centred concept of higher education” (Trend V, 2007). According to Trend V (2007), there is “ increasing awareness [among institutions] that the most significant legacy of the [Bologna] process will be a change of educational paradigm across the continent” (Trend V, 2007).

Moreover, the Bologna process is also meant to improve steadily quality assurance schemes in European universities. In 2007, the results of the fifth Trend study “demonstrate that much work has been done to develop internal quality processes of institutions”, that now generally encompass teaching aspects (Trend V, 2007).

Part 2: Objectives and Content

What are the recurrent experiences? What are the motivations and methods used to support Quality Teaching?

Diversity of quality enhancement processes

There is no a solid typology of Quality Teaching initiatives in the literature. Furthermore, many articles written on the subject of Quality Teaching are in fact scholarly work researching what constitutes good teaching (for instance organization vs. expressiveness of teachers, Schönwetter, Clifton & Perry, 2002) rather than articles narrating initiatives launched by universities to improve the quality of their teaching. However, Cottrell and Jones (2003) have drawn a typology of the causes that led teachers in higher education to engage in a quality enhancement process. They list eight possible influences and found that the professors' personal philosophy of teaching was the element that contributed most significantly to the decision of engaging in quality enhancement process (79% of all cases). (See hereafter.)

Quality Teaching initiatives are diverse both in nature and in function, to say the least. Some spring from a top-down initiative, others start at a grass-root level; some are centered on pedagogical methods, others on quality environments in Higher Education institutions; some concern only a couple teachers, others the whole university. Some promote team work, others improve the learning environment of the student.

The people and organizations involved in the support Quality Teaching are also very diverse and their role is mostly interrelated, ranging from individual willingness to institution's formalized strategy, in addition to external incentives coming from Governments or induced by external factors like worldwide competition. Some quality initiatives steam from State measures that believe that higher education enhancement can strengthen attractivity, invigorate innovation and hence boost the job market and the economy. More often, individuals define a vision for their students, clear goals for their classes, and eventually develop these techniques into a theoretical framework of quality enhancement.

Moreover, Quality Teaching initiatives are also shaped by the intrinsic profile of the institution which operates in a specific regional or national context (e.g.; a remote vocational-teaching intensive university might support Quality Teaching differently from a world renowned research-intensive one).

Some controversial attempts by governments to promote teaching excellence

One way States can enhance the quality of the learning experience is by improving the quality of the teachers' training. Richter (1994) believes that a few years of probation and training should be required before one can officially become a teacher in higher education settings. Another possibility would be to require that new teachers rehearse their lectures in front of their peers. Another solution set forth by Richter is the endowment of prizes for remarkably proactive teachers. This option is in fact currently promoted by the Carnegie Foundation for Learning and Teaching, based in San Francisco, which attributes "teacher of the year" prizes to exceptional American university or college professors every year.

Overall, few States have engaged in initiatives to support Quality Teaching at national level. The United Kingdom has. The British government had commissioned Sir Ron Dearing to outline a long-term national strategy for British higher education in the twenty-first century. The result of his work, the report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (known as the Dearing report) in 1997 brought about numerous changes in the English Funding Council's approach to teaching. For instance, the report resulted in the creation of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme, which awarded three-year fellowships worth £50 000 to twenty "excellent" higher education teachers per year between 1999 and 2003.

This British initiative, because it raised the importance of teaching at national level, was a turning point. But the British government's methods to improve the quality of teaching were widely criticized by some Quality Teaching specialists. These "initiatives [were] underpinned by tacit and poorly thought out and differing theories of change" (Trowler, Fanghanel, Wareham, 2005). First, individual rewards to excellent teachers may hurt collaboration and the sharing of best practices, which was yet another goal set by the British government (Trowler, Fanghanel, Wareham, 2005). Second, the government supported formation programmes open to only a minority of professors, assuming that these teachers would then become agents of change in their own department. But this is very unlikely to happen without a complementary set of policies addressing departmental practices. Where individual innovation operates in an hostile or indifferent environment, the chances of success of this innovation are scarce (Hannan and Silver, 2000). For individuals to efficiently lead change there has to be concordance between individual innovation and the priorities of the institution or faculty (Hannan and Silver, 2000).

In response to these critiques, the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme has changed some of the guidelines for its awards. It now takes into account the "Commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of practice" of the candidates. In other words, collaboration with other teachers or participation in seminars on teaching are now considered as essential. Teachers who share their pedagogical innovations and their results with peers or who work hard in faculty groups may be rewarded for such behaviors.

Although the British institutions remain fully autonomous in the design of programmes and teaching conditions, national orientations are likely to induce institutions to take the road of quality of teaching in various ways. As an illustration, the so called "Programme specification" in the UK belongs primarily to the institutions that are free "to consider how they present their programme specifications and determine their content according to the purpose(s) for which they are written". However, the "Programme specification" will normally include a selected number of items among which are featured "teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated", "in addition, institutions might wish to include information on what makes the programme distinctive, assessment regulation, student support, methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning (...)".

International dynamics boost interest in supporting Quality Teaching

Over the last ten years governmental and international organisations have been supporting quality assurance systems at national level and have been prompting higher education institutions to commit themselves to quality. This trend has resulted in the emergence of guidelines and frameworks aiming to prompt national authorities (Governments, accreditation agencies, etc) and institutions to set up reliable quality assurance systems. International guidance, such as the OECD-UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, the European Standards and Guidelines for the Bologna Process or the INQAAHE Guidelines for higher education institutions/providers are examples of non-prescriptive but incentivising tools which are meant to improve the quality and the accountability of all kinds of HEIs on the march to autonomy.

Those guidelines do not address the quality of teaching as such, since they all rely on the principle that quality lies first within the institutions and that there is no one-size-fits-all way of achieving quality. Furthermore, international guidelines “attach a high importance to national sovereignty over higher education” (OECD-UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education) and don’t interfere in the field of programmes design, programme delivery and teaching-related affairs. However they all advise institutions to take the heed of Quality Teaching by ensuring that “Quality Teaching and research is made possible by the quality of faculty and the quality of their working conditions that foster independent and critical inquiry”. They also advise that other relevant instruments be taken into account by all institutions and providers to support good working conditions and terms of service, collegial governance and academic freedom (UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel). The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality at the level of the Bologna Process state that “Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so”. These international incentives aim to affect the quality of teaching.

It is foreseeable that a more globalized higher education landscape will call for strengthened quality assurance considerations. Internationalisation of education, mobility of teachers and students, new ways of education delivery such as distance learning might lead institutions and governments to pay strict attention to the relevance of the programmes offered. This change may boost an increasing interest in the quality of teaching. For instance, the evaluation of quality in higher education is considered as one of the major objectives of of the Bologna Process ((Kahn, 2003 ; Froment, Bologna Handbook, 2006). Several trans-national projects have recently shown the importance of teaching staff involvement to achieve convergence and to allow for mutual recognition (TUNIG Project, Dublin Descriptors, EUA Quality Culture project...). These initiatives, rather focused on European-wise comparability and compatibility of programmes, are likely to entrench the quality of teaching.

A potential road to teaching success: Teamwork and goal-setting?

In practice, teamwork and goal-setting are perhaps the most recurrent methods used to attain teaching excellence in Quality Teaching initiatives. For instance, when new faculty at Kent State University attended the Ohio Teaching Enhancement Programme, they reported that increase of cross-disciplinary collegial relationships was one of its most beneficial outcomes (Koch, Holland, Price, Gonzalez, Lieske, Butler, Wilson, and Holly, 2002). During a yearlong Quality Teaching project, each participant in the programme also designed an individualized teaching project delineating project goals, learning activities, and evaluation techniques.

For instance, one professor designed a plan to increase student in-class participation. Another drew guidelines to incorporate web technology. Teaching methods were often innovative and wisely monitored: one professor asked that during the first day of class each of his students list three goals he or she wished to accomplish in the course. At the end of the semester he asked his students to write down if they had met their goals (Koch, Holland, Price, Gonzalez, Lieske, Butler, Wilson, and Holly, 2002).

A five step guide to carry out a successful Quality Teaching initiative

Koch, Holland, Price, Gonzalez, Lieske, Butler, Wilson, and Holly (2002) map a dynamic framework to carry out a successful Quality Teaching initiative:

- a) Problem identification: The professor must reflect on the weaknesses of his teaching
- b) Information Gathering: The professor must read literature, attend workshops, and work with mentors or student associates

- c) Establishment of assessable goals: The professor must choose a specific project to work on
- d) Development and Implementation of strategies to meet established goals
- e) Project evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative

Gathering Information to increase Teaching Quality

Gibbs (1995) insists on the importance of reading and developing teaching manuals as to enhance teaching. Although information gathering is rarely carried out by teaching staff, it is of the utmost importance. Thomas and Willcoxson (1998) highlight the importance of information sharing as they narrate “how a small group of Academics challenged the existing organisation culture (of the TTC Veterinary School) and achieved the creation of a more student-centred organisational culture”. Indeed at the TTC Veterinary School the organization of workshops enabled teaching staff to discuss course objectives and to discover the teaching strategies used by their colleagues, thus working towards articulation and integration of courses.

Shulman and the building of a scholarship of teaching

Shulman (1998) explores how change in course design can improve student learning and development. He explicates the process of building a scholarship of teaching and learning as consisting of five different elements: vision, design, interactions, outcomes and analysis, defined as follows:

- 1- An instructor’s vision is a conceptualization of what students should learn and do in a course
- 2- The course design is the plan of action. It is a purposeful creation of learning approaches and assessment methods aligned with an instructor’s vision
- 3- Interaction is an active and reflective process of adjustment to attain one’s goal
- 4- Learning outcomes should be measured thanks to multiple methods
- 5- Analysis : An investigation should finally be performed to improve the course

The SIAM circle: A never-ending process of elimination of defects

Another framework to describe what an effective quality enhancement process should be was designed by Hau (1996) and a group of six students from the University of Wisconsin Madison under the name of the SIAM circle:

- a) Study current situation
- b) Identify vital problems
- c) Act on problems
- d) Monitor progress

Small changes can make a big difference

The SIAM circle is based upon the idea of a never-ending reduction and elimination of defects in order to “defeat Sisyphus”, i.e. improve continually. The “quality team” formed by Hau (1996) and his six students identified the six areas of teaching and learning in which the students were having the most problems, one of which was “blackboard presentations”. Thanks to a student survey, the professor (Hau himself) realized that his blackboard writing, though big enough was difficult to read because the writing was too thin. Thus he simply asked the office for another chalk and the next survey indicated that the percentage of students who had problems with Blackboard presentation dropped

from 78% to 22%. Hau asserts that small changes like this one can have big impacts on teaching quality.

Enhancing the quality of learning by improving the learning environment

In addition to the quality of the lecture per se, Quality Teaching requires that attention be given to the “Personal learning Environment” (Ellet, Loup, Culross, McMullen and Rugutt, 1997) of students. Indeed, learning is enhanced for students in higher education settings that address students’ personal learning environment needs. Ellet, Loup, Culross, McMullen and Rugutt found that a good environment for learning is defined, among other characteristics, as follows:

- Students have knowledge of the goals of the class
- Students know what work must be done for the class
- Students perceive the teacher to be fair, the pace to be good
- Students participate in-class
- Students relate to other students
- Students can receive help from the teacher if needed

Diversity can enhance quality learning

Many services offered by the universities considerably affect the quality of the teaching. With adequate support to staff and students, teachers teach better and students learn better (Chalmers, 2007). These services include (Chalmers, 2007):

- Student financial support
- Financial scholarships for underrepresented / disadvantaged groups of students
- Student educational/academic support
- Student social support, transition programs
- Support specifically for minority students
- Guidance/ counseling services
- Staff development programs
- The provision of advice and support for the interpretation of feedback/evaluation data

How the institution deals with diversity has an indirect – but significant- impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Chalmers, 2007). Diversity can encourage teachers to self-question their practices. Interaction with students from different backgrounds, and the University’s positive approach to diversity have positive influence on the quality of student learning (Antonio 2001, among others). For instance, interacting with international students provides opportunities for all students to learn and question their beliefs.

Promoting student engagement and studying in groups

Promoting student engagement and learning communities is also likely to enhance the quality of student learning. Universities or teachers that give students incentives to study in groups will improve learning outcomes (Thomas 2002). Indeed this teaching strategy enables the students to see the topic from multiple perspectives, thus gaining more deep understanding of the subject (Chalmers, 2007). Institutions can also raise the quality of the learning of their students by underlining the importance students should give to their education. Last, they should benchmark other higher education institutions to spot best learning enhancement practices.

Hence, these authors highlight the necessity for Quality Teaching initiatives to include the improvement of learning environments, which significantly impact student learning. One must adopt a systematic view and not a teacher-centered standard as for the quality of teaching to be enhanced.

What are the major drivers

that support Quality Teaching and the factors that impede Quality Teaching?

Leadership, the key to foster change

Leadership is necessary to sustain improvement in any given organisation (Zairi 1994, Taffinder 1995). This is particularly true of improvement in higher education institutions (Kanji and Tambi, 2002). In this case, “effective leadership is about adopting a deliberate approach to decide the strategic direction of the institution” (Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy, 2005). For instance, university leaders must be actively involved in deciding of what the “teaching-research mix” should be. They must seek new ways to employ the full potential of academic and non-academic staff at all levels of the institution (Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Murphy, 2005).

Who are the leaders who decide to enhance teaching quality? Primarily teachers

However, the question remains as to who these leaders who actually successfully implement Quality Teaching initiatives were. Cottrell & Jones (2003) interviewed 47 instructors involved in quality enhancement processes. They identified a total of eight influences leading professors to quality enhancement.

Internal influence:

- a- Personal philosophy of teaching (79%)
- b- Frustration with student learning (15%)

Organizational Influences

- c- Support from administration (incentives, grants) (26%)

External Influences

- d- Castl (13%)
- e- Teaching conferences (9%)
- f- Accreditation organizations (4%)
- g- Professional organizations (4%)

Teachers reported having been driven by primarily internal influences, first and foremost by a personal philosophy of teaching (79%). However, organization influences were not insignificant in leading professors towards Quality Teaching: 26% of professors reported that support from administration had played its part.

Ryan, Fraser, Dearn (2004) argue that personal motivations of teachers regarding Quality Teaching enhancement vary in function of the professors’ experience. They found that in Australia, the notion that new staff should participate in teaching development was well-accepted. But current staff was reluctant to participate in teaching development, mainly because of their workload and time constraints.

How Departments should communicate about Quality Teaching

Though the decision to launch Quality Teaching initiatives often steams from the professors themselves, the role of the department is always central in enabling these initiatives to be successful.

Departments may also decide to implement quality enhancement processes on a top-bottom basis. This may be easier to do at the department level as the department's proximity to the teachers is greater than that of the central administration of the university. Indeed, academics identify first with their discipline, then with their department (Hannan, Silver, 2000). However, in order for these top-bottom teaching enhancement processes to be well-accepted by the professors, internal communication between the various levels of the organization must be of great quality. This can be achieved thanks to "quality management" principles that Van der Wiele (1995), using the instruments of the Total Quality Management framework – identifies as essential to an educational institute :

- 1) *Transparency* of the organization: the ongoing processes in the organization must be visible to all stakeholders
- 2) *Involvement*: Employees must be involved in the decision-taking process
- 3) *Quality function deployment*: the organization must listen to and cooperate with its customers (in this case, students)
- 4) *Quality policy deployment*: the quality policy must be integrated in the mission and business strategy of the organization and be communicated to and accepted by all participants
- 5) *Communication*: Attention must be paid to vertical communication (top down or bottom up), horizontal communication (between organizational units) and communication with the external environment

The quality of the communication between the department and its professors is of premier importance as, according to Van der Wiele (1995), 60% or more of management time is spent on communication. To achieve quality management and foster Quality Teaching, the messages sent by the department to its professors must be relevant, simple, organized, repeated, and focused, employing only carefully chosen words. Yair (2007) notes however that departments ought to leave a certain range of academic freedom to professors, allowing them to take initiatives and show creativity.

When quality culture becomes a strategic direction for an institution

Departments and professors must work in synergy with the University's administration to achieve a quality culture and enhance the quality of teaching. Gibbs (1995) notes that working at university-level is sometimes more efficient: "Ideally all quality enhancements would be organised from within departments. However a number of enhancement processes such as training for new academics work best if centrally run" (Gibbs, 1995).

Patrick & Lines (2004) insist that the quality system must be integrated in the university's core goal and mission : " For the quality system to be effective, it must be accepted by the diversity of constituencies within the institution while at the same time framing the strategic direction and nature of change for the whole university" (Patrick & Lines, 2004).

Education development units in particular have a role to play as to enhance the quality of the teaching in Higher Education Institutions. Education development units can help the university by supporting or launching initiatives and innovations in teaching. They may engage in comprehensive and systematic implementation of teaching and learning initiatives. Education units should create and facilitate communities of learning, support bottom-up engagement and management on educational initiatives. (Chalmers & O'Brien, 2004). By doing so, they may become key actors of the quality enhancement process.

Bottom-top initiatives are born- dead without the University's support

Bottom- top initiatives to implement Quality Teaching can only survive if they earn the University's support. Thomas & Willcoxson (1998) who report on a small team of professors' success in creating a more student-centred organisational culture, highlight the importance of minor signs of recognition of their work by the University. First, the University rewarded the innovative teachers through the creation of the position of Teaching Development Facilitator (TDF) which provided them with half a day release of normal workload. This allowed them to perform one-to-one follow up assistance for all staff, helping other teachers to define course purposes. Second, the school passed a motion requiring that all academics develop explicit statements of their teaching aims. These small signs of recognition helped the team to present its work as legitimate and important for the university as a whole.

Leadership Training Programs (LTPs) aim to create a dynamic and change oriented system. Aasen & Stensaker (2007) look at the effects of such programs, designed for head of departments or deans. But Aasen & Stensaker conclude that when returning from the programme most participants are embedded in the realities of HEIs. To be more efficient, LTPs should cut more frankly with organisational sleepiness. Leadership training programmes should be tied to structural and cultural renewal of Higher Education Institutions (Aasen & Stensaker, 2007).

The grass-root turnaround team must learn how to appear "legitimate" to succeed

Schein (1985) provided a framework of necessary elements for implementing change in a mature organisation: a turnaround team, a clear sense of organisational direction, a change strategy model, and the power to implement the model. In a university, this last element can only be provided by the central unit's approval.

Thomas & Willcoxson (1998) isolate four key factors in the grass-root change process that correspond to Schein's turnaround strategies: 1) a supportive critical mass whose members share a common language, 2) an obvious link with stated department and university objectives 3) the progressive enlistment of potential antagonists through individual support and peer group pressure and 4) visible support and rewards from the university and the department for teaching development. This framework stresses the fact that all constituents of the institution (professor, department, faculty, central university) have a key role in ensuring the success of Quality Teaching initiatives.

Fostering quality management at institutional level

The essential part played by the University and its administration in creating a quality culture is several-folded. Quality Teaching initiatives are more likely to be successful in an environment in which quality is highly valued. The University's organizational culture should be that of continuous improvement through teamwork; the University must define a mission statement and implement it (Madu & Kuei, 1993). Yorke (2000) inspired by Argyris (1990) Burnes (1992) and Kotter (1996) describes steps that universities should take to achieve quality culture:

- Develop a vision and a strategy
- Establish a sense of necessity, explain why a quality culture is needed
- Create a guiding coalition: form an empowered team to lead developments,
- Communicate widely and continually
- Be prepared to listen

- Develop a shared commitment - balance purposeful and cohesive advance with tolerance for dissent and new ideas (Beatty and Ulrich, 1991)
- Generate some early successes
- Consolidate and embed the gains
- Don't rest on laurels

Alignment between policy and management directives, faculty strategic initiatives and teaching and learning practices is the key to effective quality improvement (Barrie & Prosser, 2002). In particular, the funding of the university's teaching strategy must be embedded in the universities' overall funding model (Barrie, Ginns, Prosser, 2005).

Osseo-Asare, Longbottom, Chourides (1997) denounce the existence of an efficiency–effectiveness gap in Higher Education Institutions of the United Kingdom. Effectiveness means deciding to do the right thing, whereas efficiency refers to the appropriate use of resources to achieve the chosen objectives. Osseo-Asare, Longbottom and Chourides conclude that managerial leadership and Quality Teaching in higher education can only be achieved if the Universities respect these three steps:

- 1) Communicate a clear statement of mission
- 2) Successfully implement core processes with the help of empowered staff by timely data, resources, information, intelligence and knowledge of best practices
- 3) Take into account the educational environment and its transformations

But leadership in Higher Education is often by nature reluctant to change

Several reasons can explain why few top-bottom quality enhancement initiatives have been launched so far. Leadership in Higher Education differs from leadership in business, and might be more reluctant to foster change. Leadership in academia involves being seen and respected as a member of the community (Spendlove, 2007). For instance, most Pro Vice Chancellors studied by Spendlove (2007) perceived that academic credibility and experience of university life were the most crucial elements for leadership to appear legit and effective. Many of these Pro Vice Chancellors continued their academic activities because they felt it gave them more credibility as leaders. However, Spendlove asserts that the majority of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) she studied had no systematic approach for identifying and developing leadership skills. She urges for a more proactive approach to leadership in HEIs.

<p><u>Part 3:</u> <u>Impact and quality assurance of Quality teaching</u></p>
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[Do Higher Education Institutions follow up Quality Teaching initiatives and appraise their outcomes?](#)

“There are in fact, no widely accepted methods for measuring teaching quality, and assessing the impact of education on students is so far an unexplored area as well” (Altbach, 2006). Skelton (2007) moreover argues that the culture of measurement that has trivialized teaching excellence in recent years and the language of business that has turned it into a product need to be replaced by appropriate forms of judgment and expression.

DO INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING OF THE UNIVERSITIES THEY RATE?

National and international rankings of universities have until now disregarded the measure of teaching quality. The two most famous international rankings, the Times Higher Education and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings, have not really tried to evaluate the quality of the formation delivered by the Higher Education institutions they rate.

Indeed, the Shanghai ranking is based almost exclusively on research. The indicators it relies upon (number of articles in international reviews, number of Nobel Prizes among students and staff, size of the institution) are of no use when it comes to identifying good teaching practices. If an institution wishes to improve a Shanghai ranking, the logical response is to spend a bigger part of their expenditure on research and to neglect teaching activities.

As for the Times Higher Education index, it uses a holistic approach comprising the five following indicators: an international opinion survey of academics (40%), a survey of global employers (10%), percentage of international students (5%), percentage of international staff (5%), student staff ratio (20%).

These indicators do not correctly assess teaching quality. Reputational surveys favor universities that are already well-known regardless of merit (OECD). They can degenerate into “popularity contests” (Altbach, 2006) that fail to take into account the actual quality of the work of the institution. Raters have been found to be largely unfamiliar with as many as one thirds of the programs they are asked to rate (Brooks, 2005). A good example is that of an American survey of students which asked them to rank American Law Schools. Students ranked Princeton in the Top 10 American Law schools, but Princeton does not even have a Law School (Frank and Cook, 1995)!

Moreover, the student staff-ratio of the Times is meant to serve as a proxy for teaching quality (OECD). But this indicator fails to evaluate pedagogy or the learning environment. It can also bring about fake quality enhancement measures. Indeed an institution wishing to improve its Times ranking should simply reduce the number of students per teacher, and has no incentive whatsoever to seek any qualitative improvement of teaching.

ASSESSMENT DRIVES LEARNING

Quality assessment is an essential element of all quality enhancement initiatives. In order to evaluate which mechanisms really improve the quality of the teaching, one must assess the level of teaching before the launching of the enhancement initiative. Once the program is well started, the quality of teaching must again be measured. And for such an initiative to be truly effective, the level of teaching must continue to be assessed very regularly – indeed Quality Teaching’s goal is the continual improvement of the teaching level and the continual “removal of learning defects” (Hau, 1996).

However, there is much debate in the literature on the methods that should be used to assess the level of teaching and its hypothetical improvements. The choice of the testing method, for teachers and for students, influences the teaching and learning processes. What is tested determines what gets learnt, and how it is tested impacts how it is learnt. Assessment does not only inform students about their achievement, assessment in itself is a prerequisite for quality learning. Assessment drives learning (Chalmers, 2007).

Reliable and controversial indicators

Choosing appropriate indicators to assess Quality Teaching is problematic. Chalmers (2007) asserts that an indicator of great quality responds to various criteria including validity, reliability, relevance to mission and policy, potential for disaggregation, timeliness, coherence across different sources, clarity and transparency with respect to known limitations, accessibility and affordability, comparability through adherence to internationally agreed standards, consistency over time and location.

The performance indicators currently used by higher education institutions are generally chosen because they are readily quantifiable and available, and not because they accurately assess the quality of the teaching (Bormans, Brouwer, Veld & Mertens, 1987). Therefore overinterpreting performance indicators is ever more dangerous (Chalmers, 2007).

The case of drop-out ratio reflects the risks of misinterpreting the results. Using retention and drop-out statistics to draw conclusions on the quality of the teaching of a educational institution is inappropriate (Cooper, 2002). Indeed, students could drop-out because of personal circumstances and external events. Some institutions enroll a higher number of students from equity groups which are more likely to drop out. Students who have to fund themselves with little financial support drop out because they lack resources, not because the quality of the teaching is weak.

However, though it is unwise to compare retention rates between institutions, studying the evolution over time of retention rates for a given institution can be useful. Indeed, “the key to effective retention is a strong commitment to quality education and the building of a strong sense of inclusive educational and social community on campus” (Tinto, 1993). Hence, if more students drop out at a given university than previously, while no major change in the characteristics of the student body and the university has taken place, it is likely that the quality of the institution is decreasing. For Tinto (1993), the main cause of departure from college is the inability of students to make the transition to college and to become incorporated in the college’s academic life. Thus, universities should do their best to help first-year students to accomplish this transition.

Below are several examples of evaluation methods whose advantages and drawbacks are highlighted as they appear in the literature.

Traditional and innovative methods used to assess and improve Quality Teaching initiatives

Student questionnaires

The use of student questionnaires is one of the most controversial issues in relation to Quality Teaching. Those who advocate the use of such questionnaires point out that the method is relevant because it collects the opinion of the students, i.e. of those who have the most exposure to the teaching of the professor and hence the most accurate idea of its level. Students are also those individuals who are the most directly concerned and influenced by the teaching level of their professors. Their future careers are at stake.

Kwan's survey (1999) indicates that student questionnaires give a relatively accurate report of the teaching quality: Kwan found that some 70% of the variance observed in student questionnaires is directly related to teaching quality, the remaining roughly 30% being biased by factors such as class size, subject and course material. Mc Keachie and Kaplan (1996) set light upon another advantage of the use of student questionnaires : Students' ratings of teaching may encourage students to reflect on their educational experiences, to develop a clearer conception of teaching that will in turn contribute to their learning.

Teachers have little faith in student questionnaires...

However, Douglas & Douglas (2006) highlight the fact that the teaching staff has generally very little faith in student questionnaires. Madu & Kuei (1993) state several reasons for which student questionnaires should never be used as a basis for salary increase, tenure and promotion.

Student questionnaires could lead teachers to adopt harmful short-term strategies

For Madu & Kwei, using student evaluation as a measure of teachers performance promotes strategies on the part of the professor that in fact negatively influence the quality of his or her teaching. For instance, the professor, anxious about the outcomes of the student questionnaires, could decide to teach less or less difficult material, or to take the role of the "nice guy" as opposed to that of the demanding professor. The student evaluation system may not give incentives to the teacher to develop strategies that would help students in the long run, and may lead the teacher to adopt short-term strategies instead (Madu & Kuei, 1993).

Student questionnaires blame teachers for all problems

Last, Madu & Kuei assert that the use of such questionnaires drives students to blame the teacher for all problems, thus forgetting the role of the institutional infrastructures or that of the administration in enabling quality learning to happen. Deming (1982) claims that management is responsible for 85 % of all quality problems. Communication between the administration and teachers may be more responsible for quality defects than the teacher's pedagogical skills per se. Madu & Kwei therefore suggest that when teaching is evaluated, a systematic review of the class and academic environment be conducted to see how university policies and actions influence quality education. They plead for "Total Quality Management" which is quality-driven to replace "Quality Assurance" which is product-driven.

Using student questionnaires for improvement, not punishment

Madu & Kwei consequently promote the use of student evaluations as a means to give feedback to teachers, rather than as a instrument for punishment. This would better allow for revisions and improvements of the curriculum. Another possibility evoked by the two scholars lies in the use of exit polls, but only once the student is well out of school and has worked for about five years in a related area, in order for the former student to be fully able to assess the value of his former classes.

Peer in-class evaluation

A tool for change and identification of best practices?

One of the most used tools today to evaluate teaching quality and identify Quality Teaching is undoubtedly peer in-class evaluations. The literature on Quality Teaching recognizes several advantages to peer evaluations. Pagani (2002) describes peer review as a tool for change, allowing individuals to improve their performance, ensuring that standards are being met, and helping to identify best practices.

Focusing on the process and not merely the outcome

Erstad (1998) points out that student questionnaires measure the outcomes of teaching and not the process, whereas mystery customers and peer in-class evaluation measure the process rather than the outcome. The use of peer evaluation may be preferred to that of mystery students, because many professors view mystery students as threatening. A common conception is that their use is linked to disciplinary action (Telford & Masson, 2005).

Peer in-class evaluation may promote conformity, hamper teaching innovation

However, the use of peer in-class evaluation may also not be free of risks. Cox and Ingleby (1997) found that peer review through peer observation of teaching can produce conformity of teaching. Indeed the professor being evaluated may not dare to be innovative. Or the professor evaluating his colleague may be influenced by his or her conservative methods of teaching. Moreover, Bingham and Ottewill (2001) recognize that the assessment of peers might be too self-congratulatory. According to Green (1993) the “traditional peer review based assurance system” is currently breaking down, a breakdown which is “clearly” correlated with “the increasingly market orientated culture of higher education”.

Evaluation of teachers' portfolio

MULTIPLE SOURCES OF EVIDENCE – BUT HOW SHOULD THEY BE WEIGHTED?

Another possible method to assess teaching quality and identify best practices is the use of teachers' portfolio. The teacher's portfolio evaluation is a valuable technique because it is based on multiple sources of evidence and multiple levels of scrutiny (Webbstock, 1999). However, as it was noticed by Webbstock, who was working on the assessment of teaching quality at the University of Natal, the problem is that it is difficult to agree on which items should be included in the portfolio and on how much each of these items should be waited. The question remains whether quantitative weights should be attributed to each item of the portfolio to increase the transparency of the process or whether this would transform the portfolio evaluation process into a mechanical task, thus hampering teaching creativity.

The example of the three-legged stool

The Departmental Teaching and Learning Committee of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University used all three methods-student questionnaires, peer in-class evaluation and evaluation of teacher's portfolio)- to assess the quality of their teachers (Macalpine, 2001). The department decided to design a Teaching Evaluation Index which comprised a weighted sum of the three indicators. This methodology's goal was to balance the defects of each of three methods of evaluation when they are used separately by creating a "three-legged stool". The Teaching Evaluation Index weighted student questionnaires for 50% of the total result, in-class peer evaluation for 30% and the teaching portfolios for 20%. Interestingly, Macalpine notes that there was a reasonable degree of consistency between the three indices, particularly for extremes. As an outcome of the evaluation process, the weaker lecturers were linked with the higher scoring lecturers in a trial scheme.

New indicators for better assessment of Quality Teaching

Collecting qualitative and decentralized feedback: Student awards, joint research, workshops etc.

Another original evaluation method consists in the use of decentralised qualitative feedback (Jones, 2003). Jones notices that today quantitative feedback is often administered by the central administration through student questionnaires, but that at the same time there always exists an opportunity to collect rich qualitative feedback at the decentralised educational level that could complement the quantitative feedback. Jones mentions that student-centred teaching excellence awards provide an opportunity for rich qualitative student feedback. For instance, awards for professors at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) are granted after both students' and colleagues' endorsement.

The attribution of awards for teaching could require applicants to perform a public presentation to their peers, which would increase knowledge of best practices and encourage teaching innovation. Other possibilities enabling to collect rich decentralized feedback include seminars bringing together students and professors, and joint research between students and professors (Jones, 2003).

Measuring teachers' satisfaction: Satisfied teachers are better teachers

Teachers' satisfaction is a good predictor of the quality of their teaching. "The measurement of staff experience and satisfaction has received extensive support from the literature as a highly useful indicator but to date has not been widely employed in higher education institutions" (Chalmers, 2007). A teacher survey to collect information from the personal perspective of teachers, on their working conditions and their working hours and teaching did however take place in Sweden in 2002.

Measuring knowledge of the literature

Herz (2007) show that quality teachers understand how student develop knowledge and learn. Quality teachers are therefore teachers who integrate established theories of learning in their teaching practices. Therefore, indicators that assess to what extent institutional leaders and teaching staff are familiar with research findings on teaching and learning could be useful. These indicators should also assess the ways in which the teachers apply this knowledge to the curriculum and assessment methods.

Are value-added indicators fair?

Researchers and practitioners often debate the fairness of value added indicators. These indicators wish to pinpoint how much the teaching has helped the students to gain knowledge and skills, in comparison to their competencies before taking the class or entering the university. While the approach has a number of appealing features for governments, funding agencies and testing houses, there exists great concern about the reliability, and more particularly, the validity of these tests (Chalmers, 2007). For instance, students with low entering score generally gain more than students with high entry scores (Thorndike, 1966) for an equal quality of teaching.

On a institutional level, indicators that aim to spot Quality Teaching and learning should include four areas of research according to Chalmers (2007): Institutional climate and systems, Diversity and inclusivity, Assessment, Engagement and learning community.

The Value of Graduates: The best indicator of teaching quality?

"Perhaps the most important assessment indicator as an institutional level outcome measure is the value of graduates" (Chalmers, 2007). One of the main goals of a higher education institution is to prepare students for the workforce, so measuring the value of graduates is only logical in order to assess the quality of the teaching received. Graduates who are efficient on the working place are often those who benefited from teachers for which Quality Teaching was a priority.

However, Knight and Yorke (2004) warn us against the use of some employment statistics. They argue that agencies are wrong to believe that they can measure employability by looking at employment rates six months after graduation. Indeed, employment rates do not distinguish between the different types of jobs that the recent graduates hold. For instance, alumni would count as employed, whether he is working as a cashier at Mac Donalds or as an engineer. Other problems include difficulties for recent graduates to quickly and accurately report on what they are doing. Moreover discrimination against minority groups in addition to regional variations may lead to lower employment rates in certain areas, when in fact the graduates have reached the same level of "employability" thanks to higher education. Furthermore, economic cycles of hiring patterns account for variations in employment rates. For all these reasons, employment rates six months after graduation are not a fully accurate measure of the graduates' employability (Knight and Yorke, 2004).

A multi-leveled theoretical framework to assess the quality of teaching

On a more theoretical standpoint, some scholars have tried to offer a systematic view of quality assessment and enhancement. Goh (1996) offers a three-leveled framework for quality assurance. At the university level, the Quality of Teaching, Research and Services is to be evaluated. The teaching assessment itself should have three components: Personal attributes of the teachers (peopleware), Curriculum & management, i.e. the academic system that includes course development, student assessment techniques etc. (software), and third, Educational technology and facilities (hardware).

In turn, the quality of the personal attributes of the teaching staff can be factored into three components: the teacher's Knowledge, Skill and Attitude. Teachers possess "knowledge" by virtue of their formal education and professional work. But their "skill" is the way they transfer knowledge, i.e. their innate teaching ability, often expressed through the dynamics of lecture presentations and small groups discussions. The third attribute to be assessed, "attitude" is the way they relate to the teaching function which translates into thoroughness of preparation, enthusiasm in delivery and care about students (Goh, 1996).

Appraisal of impacts of Quality Teaching: some findings

Assessing the impact of Quality Teaching processes is a difficult task

In recent years, attention shifted from design and implementation of quality assurance systems to their use and usefulness. But because quality assurance mechanisms take place in complex organisations in which many changes happen at the same time, it is difficult to ascribe effects unambiguously to a single cause such as the quality assurance schemes (Stensaker, 2004).

Does Quality Teaching lead students to learn better?

Research increasingly addresses the impact of Quality teaching initiatives. Using the assumption that Quality Teaching leads students to learn better, Marton and Säljö (1976) found that students learning approaches are of two sorts, the deep approach which focuses on understanding the course material, and the surface approach which focuses on memorising the material itself. Barrie, Ginns & Prosser (2005) found that students that perceive that the quality of their teaching is good will tend to adopt a "deep" approach to learning, a coherent and integrated understanding of the course. Ellet, Loup, Culross, McMullen & Rugutt (2002), who conducted a study at Louisiana State University on "learning environments", found that student's self-reports of their learning and of their learning efficiency were significantly related to their personal perceptions of the learning environment. Student learning is enhanced in higher education settings that address students' personal learning environment needs and in which Quality Teaching thrives.

How frequently are quality recommendations used? An uneasy question

Most national quality assurance systems are built upon four principles : A coordinating agency which designs and implements the quality assurance process, the submission of a self-evaluation report by the unit to be evaluated, a site visit by peers, a (partly) public report on the evaluation results (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994).

But if there has been some consistency in the functioning of these quality assurance schemes, there certainly is little consistency if one compares the studies on their use and usefulness. Weusthof (1994) found that 87% of faculties used the recommendations that were given to them in external evaluation reports. However Hulpiau & Waeytens (2003) found that there was no follow-up for 49% of the problems that had been detected. Difference in the methodologies of these studies can partly explain these discrepancies. Weusthof included passive use – such as having read the results, without carrying out any actions toward changes. In stark contrast Hulpiau & Waeytens were conducting a document analysis so they could only keep track of the follow –up that had been reported on paper.

WHEN QUALITY ASSURANCE LEAD TO STATUS QUO: THE “GOOD GRADE EFFECT”

Quality assurance schemes lead to clear improvement of the programmes judged negatively, according to the Dutch Audit Chamber (Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2000).. But initially well- rated programmes feel no impulse for change or further improvement because of the good quality assurance results, and thus are more likely to maintain the status quo and slower teacher innovation (Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2000).

For what other reasons is the advice given at the end of the quality assurance schemes sometimes built upon and sometimes not? Hulpiau & Waeytens (2003) give four types of reasons that can explain why quality assurance recommendations are followed or not : structural reasons, cultural reasons, lack of human resources and political dimensions.

The “Peter Pan effect”: Teachers must believe in quality assurance for quality assurance to work

Another view is that the use of student feedback mainly depends on the lecturers’ perception of their reliability and validity. If lecturers believe the questionnaires are biased, i.e. that the students cannot be fair judges of the quality of their teaching, then they are less likely to follow up and change their practices. Lecturers will only follow the advice they receive if the evaluation is connected to the lecturers’ opinion on what good teaching is and to their teaching practices (Kember, Leung, Kwan, 2002). Last, teachers who follow-up on quality assurance schemes are those who believe that they have control over the quality of education received (Kember, Leung, Kwan, 2002).

Teachers will follow-up on quality assurance scheme if they believe the university cares

Westerheijden, Hulpiau, Waeytens (2006) claim that external factors can explain why quality assurance recommendations sometimes lead to effective change and sometimes do not. For instance, support received by lecturers for interpreting the feedback is an external factor that will increase the

probability that these lecturers will act upon the results (Hendry & Dean, 2002, Kember, Leung, Kwan, 2002, among others). Another external factor is of utmost impact: “The extent to which lecturers have the impression that education is valued and rewarded determines follow –up” (Westerheijden, Hulpiau , Waeytens, 2006).

This may be problematic because many professors have the impression that the university does not care about teaching. Westerheijden, Hulpiau, Waeytens (2006) believe that they are right to have this impression: “Our observation [is] that the attention for quality of education differed systematically across the levels of the higher education system. Briefly, the more one goes down from the system level to the chalk face level of actual teaching, the more the balance seems to go from accountability as the main aim of quality assurance to improvement of educational quality” (Westerheijden, Hulpiau , Waeytens). In short, the teacher himself is more preoccupied by the quality of his teaching than the university, which mainly worries about its money. If a university wants its teaching to be of good quality, it must give concrete, visible, tangible signs that it cares about teaching.

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