Learning Our Lessons: Review of Quality Teaching in Higher Education

What Works Conference on Quality Teaching in Higher Education
Overview

- Rationale for QT project
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Findings
- Implications
- Lessons learned
Why focus on quality teaching? Why now?

- Expansion of quality assurance practices
- State regulations and policies
- Low completion rates
- Under-employment of graduates
- Stakeholder demands
- Greater valuing of scholarship of teaching
Objectives of QT Project

- Identify QT initiatives
- Understand how and why institutions support QT
- Highlight drivers and challenges
- Promote reflection and adoption of QT initiatives
Methodology

Data sources

- On-line questionnaire
- Interviews with sample sub-set

Sample (29 institutions)

Yield (46 QT initiatives)
Participating Institutions

AMERICAS (8)
(19)
Canada (3)
USA (3)
Mexico (1)
Argentina (1)

AUSTRALIA (1)

ASIA (2)

Japan (1)

EUROPE

Belgium (1)
Demark (1)
Finland (2)
France (2)
Germany (2)
Ireland (1)
Italy (1)

France (2)

Jpn (1)*

Universitas 21

Indonesia (1)

Italy (1)

Lithuania (1)

Netherlands (1)

Russia (1)

Spain (2)

Switzerland (1)

Turkey (1)

UK (1)
Distribution of Institutions by Type

- Institutional policies
- Policy pertaining to programs
- Support for organizing and managing programs
- Initiatives at the institution level
- Support for student learning
- Wide range of initiatives at all levels
- Policies affecting academics and programs related to teaching and learning

- Multidisciplinary mostly undergraduate 32%
- Graduate and Postgraduate 25%
- Small undergraduate and Technological and vocational 21%
- Business and Economics 22%
Full Time Enrollment

Median = 14,578 students
Scope of QT Initiatives

- Institutional policies and structures for quality assurance
- Academic program monitoring
- Teaching and learning support
How do institutions define QT?

- Success in attaining specific student outcomes
- Ability to promote life-long learning skills
- Ability to reflect on teaching
QT Targeted Beneficiaries

- Academics
- Academic leaders
- Students
- Administrative staff
- Employers
QT Initiatives
(Most frequently cited as #1- %)

- Assessment of student learning
- Program design & monitoring
- Student support services
- Teaching resources
QT Initiatives
(Least frequently cited as # 1 - %)

Teaching development funds

Teaching awards

Support for student learning

Support for individual teaching development
Ways institutions promote QT initiatives

- Adopt a particular philosophy/project
- Create supportive policies
- Review academic programs cyclically
- Leverage QT and quality assurance activities
- Accommodate creativity
Alverno College
Ability Based Education

- Communication
- Analysis
- Problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Social interaction
- Global perspective
- Effective citizenship
- Aesthetic engagement
Promote Greater Acceptance of QT Initiatives

By...

- Allowing time for development
- Engaging stakeholders as partners
- Protecting academic freedom
- Providing credible facilitators
- Developing policies that reward QT
- Targeting new recruits
Some Common QT Supportive Structures

- Dedicated units with mission to enhance QT
- Dedicated resources targeted for QT initiatives
- Culture of valuing the scholarship of teaching
- Policy frameworks
Starting Points

- The office of senior administration
- Department level
  - Quality contracts
  - Collaborative multi-disciplinary projects
- Individual academics
Monitoring and Evaluation

- An absolute must
- A challenge
- Easier to evaluate input indicators
- Easier to include quantifiable indicators
- Harder to correlate satisfaction with quality
- Harder to link a single QT initiative with impact on quality
From Inputs to Outcomes & Impact

- Inputs
- Outputs
- Immediate outcomes
- Intermediate outcomes
- Ultimate outcomes

- Hours of training
- Knowledge gain
- Transfer to practice

- Teaching improvement
- Learning improvement
Impact

- Teaching effectiveness
- Research on teaching and learning
- Institutional quality culture
Implications

For academic leaders

- A sustained commitment
- Developing consensus in defining quality
- Making a case for relevance
Implications

For academics

- Believing that pedagogical tools help
- Aligning teaching with institutional policies
- Helping develop criteria for evaluation
Implications

For students

› Collaborating with other stakeholders to identify most relevant QT initiatives
› Introducing new ideas
› Demanding creation of new policies
Implications

For teaching development units

- Providing credible assistance for pedagogical development
- Promoting a culture of quality
- Basing practices and programs on research
Summary and Lessons Learned

Quality teaching initiatives ...

- Have diverse and changing scope & definitions
- Are dynamic and evolve with needs and time
- Require commitment of all stakeholders
- Require know-how to implement
- Address perceived local needs
- Are implemented in response to external demands
- Require evaluation for impact despite challenges
Thank you

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