



From Quality Assurance to Knowledge Management

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The five main drivers of quality, and their consequences

- Massification of higher education
 - and the need to adapt to "mass production"
- Academic drift/rankings
 - and the need to develop research capacity
- New national governance schemes/NPM
 - and the pressure for accountability
- Globalization/Internationalization/Bologna
 - and the need to adapt to new norms, rules and regulations
- HEIs and the knowledge society
 - challenging the institutional identity

Effects on the internal organisational set-up

- Power
- Professionalisation
- Public relations
- Permeability

- Quality processes support institutional leadership – and institutional centralisation (and responsibility...)
- Quality processes triggers debates about the institutional identity (who are we, what should we do?)
- Quality processes has implied, at least in principle, a more legitimate role for students, but also for external stakeholders in higher education (broadening the definitions of quality)

- Quality processes triggers formalisation (what some term bureaucracy (but also professionalisation/"organisational learning")
- Quality processes stimulates new forms of academic and administrative cooperation (leading sometimes to improved mutual understanding)
- Quality processes, through the establishment of systems and routines, eliminated much of the anxiety surrounding these processes (without altering much of the strategic behaviour related to such processes)

- Quality processes help higher education institutions to articulate what they do (improving the external understanding of higher education)
- Quality processes have contributed to promote the importance of teaching and learning (balancing the continuing interest in research)
- Quality processes help defend the sector against alternative ways of trying to define quality (performance indicator systems, rankings, etc)

- Quality processes have "demystified" higher education (producing more information about the sector than ever before)
- Quality processes, and the information produced by these processes, have led to more informed decision-making processes
- Quality processes contribute to integrate the various dimensions of higher education (coupling personnel data, resource allocation, etc.)

It is time for a new approach to QA?

- Most QA processes have been driven by the needs of national authorities, not the institutional needs
- Complex and diverse effects of QA a result of a process characterised more by "add ons", not "elimination" or "streamlining"
- Are we in a period searching for more integration, simplicity and meaning
 - Is it time for "Knowledge Management"?

Why "Knowledge Management" (Default)

- Many institutional QA-schemes are still decoupled from other key decision-making processes
 - personell issues, economic matters, etc
- There is much information in the QA-schemes not properly analysed or exploited
- There are still many institutions that sees QA-schemes as mostly dealing with "evaluation", and not "strategy"

- From a internal (summative) focus to integrating the outside perspectives in formative processes
 - in decision-making arenas, in curriculum development, in the search for innovative study programs,
- In feeding information about the institution TO outside constituenses (profiling, interaction, dialogue)
- In identifying key indicators for realising the institutional strategy – and focusing on those indicators
 - by aligning people and resources to support key issues