

**Quality promotion  
views and practices:  
An international  
search for...**



**INDICATORS OF  
A QUALITY  
ETHOS IN  
UNIVERSITIES**

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**OUTLINE**



- 1. Aims** of this workshop
- 2. Work in pairs:** Conceptualising *Quality & Ethos*
- 3. Background context 1:** Quality system of SA HE
- 4. Background context 2:** The longitudinal research project at UJ
- 5. Small groups:** Possible **indicators** of a quality ethos in HE (*Appreciative Inquiry* methodology)
- 6. Small groups contd:** Possible **frameworks** for the indicators of a quality ethos in HE - presentations
- 7. Plenary:** **Strategies** to enhance a quality ethos
- 8. Valuation** and possible future prospects/projects

# AIMS OF SESSION



- Shared **conceptualisation**: **Quality** & **ethos** in HE
- **Contextual insight**: Quality prom and assurance system of SA and longitudinal research project at UJ
- Identification/Prioritisation of possible **indicators** of a **quality ethos** in universities
- Possible structuring of indicators in a **framework**
- **Putting indicators into action**: **Guidelines** and **strategies** for implementation

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# CONCEPTS



## QUALITY & ETHOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**WORK IN PAIRS**

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## QUALITY ??

### RSA PERSPECTIVES



- **EXCELLENCE**: Maintain & improve **high** standards
- **"CLIENT"** satisfaction= multiple stakeholders
- **CONSISTENCY & COHERENCE** in practices
- Contractual **PARTNERSHIP**: Univ ←→ Student
- **Fitness FOR purpose**: University's mission & goals
- **TRANSFORMATIVE**: Personal empowerment, societal and economic contribution
- **VALUE FOR MONEY**: Range of HE purposes offered
- **Fitness OF purpose**: National goals and priorities
- **IN CONCLUSION**: **Dynamic** & **Relative**

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## QUALITY ??

### USA PERSPECTIVES



- **WHO** are they?
- **EXCELLENCE**: "*Striving for standards par excellence*"
- **SATISFIED CLIENTS**: Identifying and meeting their needs
- **CONSISTENCY**: "*Reduce variation in practices*"
- **STUDENT SUCCESS & EMPOWERMENT**: "*...qualifying optimally*" and "*... achieving their study & personal goals*"
- **ACCOMPLISHING GOALS**: Institutional mission & goals
- **A CONTINUOUS, TESTED SYSTEM**: "*Proven & validated practices*"
- **DYNAMIC & EVER-CHANGING**: "*Context-specific and multidimensional*"

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## RSA & USA QUALITY?



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ EXCELLENCE</li><li>■ "CLIENT" satisfaction</li><li>■ CONSISTENCY/COHERENCE</li><li>■ Contractual PARTNERSHIP</li><li>■ TRANSFORMATIVE</li><li>■ Fitness FOR purpose</li><li>■ VALUE FOR MONEY</li><li>■ Fitness OF purpose</li><li>■ Dynamic &amp; RELATIVE</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ EXCELLENCE</li><li>■ Meeting needs of CLIENTS</li><li>■ Reduce VARIATION in practices</li><li>■ Student SUCCESS</li><li>■ STUDENTS achieving their goals</li><li>■ Accomplishing INSTIT GOALS</li><li>■ Continuous validated system</li><li>■ DYNAMIC and ever-changing</li></ul> |
|---|---|

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## ETHOS ??

### USA PRACTITIONERS



- A **complex** concept to define...??
- **PRACTICES & PROCESSES:** "The way things are done..."
- Common **IDENTITY:** "Glue that ties all institutional things together..."
- **HONOURING THE LARGER "PICTURE:** "Recognition of the institutional context and that everybody contributes..."
- **MINIMUM STANDARDS:** "Accepted guidelines regarding behavior..."
- **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:** "That which distinguishes an entity from others in the same environment..."

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# ETHOS? LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES



- **ORIGIN**: Custom, Habit, Character (Greek, 1855)
- Fundamental **character**, underlying **sentiment** or distinctive **spirit** of a **CULTURE**
- Dominant **assumptions, beliefs** and **practices**... of an era, institution, community or group of people
- "**Invisible tapestry**...weaves together all parts and members" (Freed & Klugman, 1997)
- **PERCEIVED** → guides behaviour unconsciously
- Establishes **cultural identity** & **boundaries** (Bennett, 2001)
- **Complex** → cannot be changed at will (Schein, 1999)

# CULTURE??



## PATTERNS OF SHARED

- **NORMS** : Accepted **standards**, e.g. dress code, styles of communication, nature of annual reporting, etc. ;
- **VALUES**: **Relative worth** of entities, e.g. ethics, diligence, meetings, accuracy, deadlines, professionalism, image, etc. ;
- **PRACTICES**: "...the **way things are done** around here" ;
- **BELIEFS**: Accepted "**truths**" about entities, e.g. "Students are inherently lazy" or "QA&P is government's extended arm"
- **ASSUMPTIONS**: Taken for granted **premises**, e.g. "This place would be wonderful without students" or "Faculty has to be tightly controlled"

# CLIMATE?



- Manifestation of institutional culture at the **observable** level, i.e. more **tangible**
- **Leaders/ Managers** project an **ethos**, via the **climate** that they create and maintain
- Starting point in **changing** the **climate** and thus the **ethos** is...the **leaders/managers**

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# CONTEXT 1



**QUALITY APPROACH**  
**OF SOUTH AFRICAN**  
**HIGHER EDUC SECTOR**

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# THE HEQC



- QA responsibility in SA HE: **COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION** (CHE)
- Discharged → standing **sub-com** = **HEQC**
- Four elements of its **mandate**:
  - Quality **promotion** in HE sector in general
  - Quality **assurance** of HEIs (via audits)
  - **Programme** accreditation and national reviews
  - **Capacity** development and training

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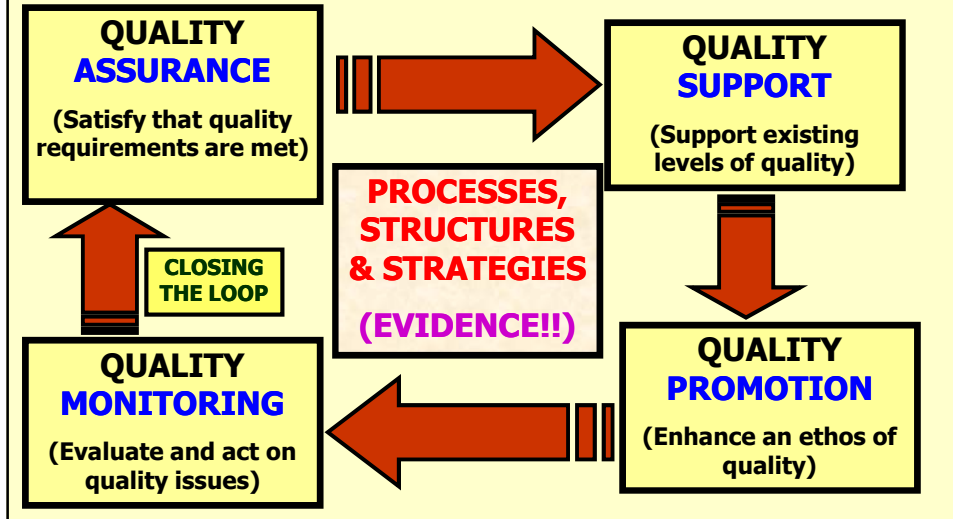
# HEQC'S APPROACH



- Operational since 2001/2002...?
- Audit & progr accreditation frameworks & criteria (6 year cycle)
- **Focus: Improvement** (not punitive: "*light touch*")
- **HEIs**: Primary responsibility for QA&P
- **HEIs**: Self-evaluations & peer reviews
- **Finland-SA project**: Capacity building of QA&P systems of selected HEIs → **HEQC's capacity...??**

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# HEQC's QUALITY CYCLE



# DEMING CYCLE "THINKING"



# QUESTION



**Does the HEQC's quality approach **BROADLY CORRESPOND** to quality approaches of South African Higher Education Institutions???**

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# CONTEXT 2



**LONGITUDINAL  
RESEARCH PROJECT  
RAU & UJ: 1998-2008**

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# 1998 AND 2003 PROJECT GOALS



## ■ Extent of change in quality views of FQC's wrt:

- Quality concept
- Student development & support
- Programme development
- Teaching development
- Recognising excellent teaching by faculty
- "Client" or stakeholder satisfaction

2008 project

## ■ To what extent do FQCs perceive:




























- QA&P as **indicator** of faculty effectiveness
- themselves as true "**owners**" of QA&P?

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# FINDINGS: THE QUALITY CONCEPT



1998:	2003:	Fitness FOR purpose	Excellent or high standards	Student transformation	Value for money	Fitness OF purpose	Multi client focus
Arts							
Econ & Mgmt							
Engineer							
Educ & Nursing							
Law							
Science							

<b>FINDINGS: RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENT TEACHING</b>			
1998 : 	Promotion based on good teaching	Financial and other incentives	"Public" and guest awards
2003 : 			
Arts	 		
Econ & Mgmt	 	 	 
Engineering		 	
Educ & Nursing	 		
Law		 	 
Science			

## 2004 CONCLUSIONS



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- QA&P **climate** changed...no QA&P **ethos** yet
- **FQCs realised**: Quality **must be shown** to exist
- QA&P=indicator of faculty effectiveness? - ✓
- FQCs= true "owners" of QA&P? **???** or **X**
- **Reasons** for 2<sup>nd</sup> outcome? – Tom Angelo [Angelo](#)
- Institutionalise quality **promotion formally**
- **Expect** QA&P efforts from faculties: Difference between a **"lady"** and a **"flower girl"** (Eliza Doolittle, *My Fair Lady*) [2008](#)

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## ANGELO'S RESEARCH ON QUALITY PROMOTION (1999)



Vast majority of well-intentioned quality promotion efforts seem to result in **LITTLE OR NO LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**:

- **JARGON**: Changes have been implemented without an understanding of what **quality**, as well as strategies that are likely to promote it, really means;
- **NON-COHERENCE**: QP is attempted **piecemeal** and not as a systems-level, institutional challenge; and
- **FACULTY "FEARS"**: Deep-seated concerns that QP practices will **undermine scholarship** and academic freedom.

[2004 Conclusions](#)

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## 2008 PROJECT



- QA&P views → **9 FQCs in UJ**: 6 aspects [2003](#)
- Open-ended structured **SURVEY** → Quality offices of **21** SA public HEIs (**10** responded):
  - institutional QA&P strategies → **same 6** matters
  - characteristics & **indicators** of a quality ethos
  - **strategies** to enhance quality ethos
  - most pertinent institutional QA&P **challenges**

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# GROUPWORK



## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) METHODOLOGY

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## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (1)



- Action research and **organisational change** research methodology (Cooperrider & Srivastva, mid 80s)
- **Focus:** What **GIVES LIFE TO** human systems when they function **AT THEIR BEST ?** (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003)
- **4-D's AI process**
  - **DISCOVERY** = Appreciating "success stories " positively
  - **DREAM** = Envisioning what contributed to "the best"
  - **DESIGN** = Co-constructing an effective future (picture)
  - **DESTINY** = What's needed to sustain the dream?

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# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (2)



**SMALL GROUPS: Discovery → Dreaming → Design**

- 1. Share personal experience** where you enhanced the well-being/ethos of a dept/group (someone at work) and got recognised for it → **success stories**
- 2. Rest of group identifies contributors** to "success stories" → list on flip charts → **positive themes** or **indicators**
- 3. Construct visual illustration** of contributors to form your own **framework** → 2 & 3 to be presented

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# FEEDBACK



## Group presentations:

- 1. Contributors to or indicators of "success"**
- 2. Possible framework for these indicators??**

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## RSA FINDINGS: QUALITY ETHOS INDICATORS



- **Responsiveness** → towards job + customers/stakeholders
- NOT compliance, but **continuous improvement** ("*...in search of quality in ever changing contexts*") → systems approach
- **Everybody's** commitment, and they should be **accountable!**
- **Desire** to be **fit for purpose**: "*...using teaching & learning, research & community engagement to drive mission and vision (to be re-examined regularly)...*"
- **Trust** – that **integrity** & **standards** will prevail
- **Credibility**: Leaders & support staff ("*It's not the What...*")
- Give **recognition** and **celebrate** small successes (*as the cock said to the hens...*)

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## USA: QUALITY ETHOS INDICATORS/STRATEGIES



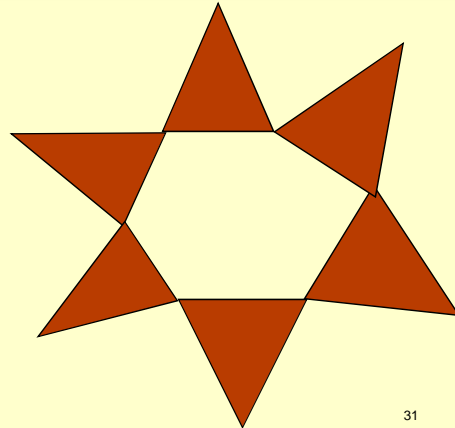
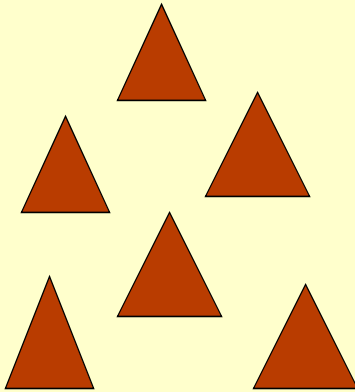
- **A COLLECTIVE SPIRIT**: "*Feeling something **mutual** in the institution...*"; "*Awareness of own **'boxes'** and how they separate us...*"; "*Communicate **common interest** to align...*"
- **REGULAR ARTICULATION**: "*Deep, honest, regular, honoring conversations...*"; "*Listen for lack of understanding*"; "*It's OK to say what you think!*"
- **TRUST IN LEADERSHIP**: "*They should act trustworthy*"; "*Trust is built over time...*"; "*Don't use humour sparingly...*"
- **CREATE & LIVE OWN REALITY**: "*Act as if this is reality...*"; "*Communicate/Determine expectations*"; "*Don't project fear!!*"
- **REGULAR STOCK-TAKING**: "*Step back frequently & reflect*"
- **STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN**: "*This place belongs to us all...*"
- **BENCHMARKING**: "*Provision of supportive comparisons...*"<sup>30</sup>

# USA FRAMEWORK FOR INDICATORS (1)



**"Bits and pieces"**

**"UNIFIED- a shining star!!"**



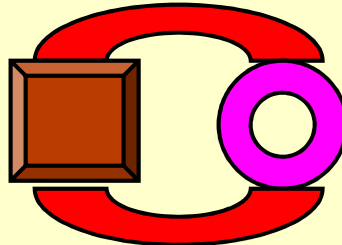
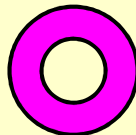
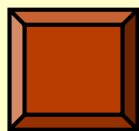
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# USA FRAMEWORK FOR INDICATORS (2)

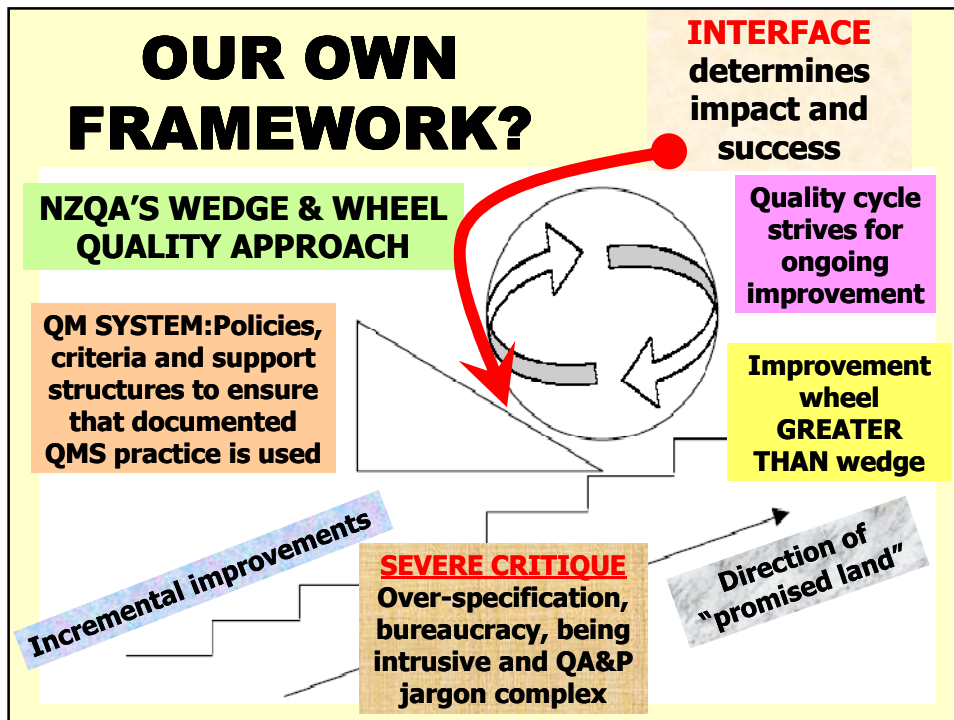


**Varied perspectives**


**Alignment & bridging**



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# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (3)




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**WHOLE GROUP: Destiny phase**

What's needed [**in an institution**] to **sustain** the indicators or contributors?

**Guidelines** or **strategies** for implementation?

Let's compare with **2008 project** findings

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# SUGGESTED STRATEGIES



- + Quality "*champions*" in/on every faculty/school
- + Faculty and Institutional **Quality committees**
- + **Snr Mgmt** for **Quality & Planning** (linked)
- + **Discourses** on quality jargon = regular practice
- + **Reporting & review**=more than a "*rain dance*": you can improve the "*dancing*", but still doesn't influence the "*climate*" (read: **ETHOS...**)
- + **REWARD AN ETHOS** of airing, sharing & caring!!

# IN CONCLUSION



**Project to continue in the UK in Sept.**

**Learnt anything???**