A systemic approach to improving teaching and learning in higher education: The Quality Enhancement Project

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# Key statistics for 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SA population</td>
<td>51.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 15-19 year olds</td>
<td>5.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 20-24 year-olds</td>
<td>5.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. HE students</td>
<td>938 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 year old participation rate</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughput rates for 3-year degree 2007 student cohort in public HEIs (excluding UNISA)

(VitalStats Public Higher Education 2012, CHE)
Focus of the Quality Enhancement Project

The enhancement of student learning with a view to producing an increased number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable.

1. enhanced student learning, leading to an
2. increased number of graduates that have
3. improved graduate attributes

STUDENT SUCCESS
Both institutionally-based and nationally coordinated activities
Less of this....

http://www.wisconsinsilo.com/
More of this…

Staff from the Indian Space Research Organization celebrate at the ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network in Bangalore after their Mars Orbiter spacecraft successfully entered Mars orbit on September 24, 2014. Credit: Manjunath Kiran/AFP/Getty Images
Institutional submissions

Analysis

Feedback

Collaboration

Analysis

Feedback

Institutional reports

Symposia, working groups

Projects of other bodies

Research projects

Institutional capacity development

Select focus areas
Initial focus areas (2014-2015)

1. Enhancing academics as teachers

2. Enhancing student support and development

3. Enhancing the learning environment

4. Enhancing course and programme enrolment management
Enhancing academics as teachers

The days when universities catered for a small, academically well-prepared cadre of well-off young people are gone. Today’s students are diverse in every way—academic background, culture, language, socio-economic status and even age.

And there are many more students (from 2000 to 2007 there was a 53% increase in the number of tertiary students globally). This makes the quality of university teaching much more important.
Focus area 1

Creating an enabling institutional environment

UNIVERSITY TEACHING IS A PROFESSION
Characteristics of professions

- Initial training, identity formation
  prior to working and/or as (cognitive) apprenticeship
- Induction
- Continuous professional development
- Mentoring

CODE OF ETHICS
A professional university teacher

- Structured, compulsory initial training and induction are needed (could be in-house or collaborative across institutions, formal or non-formal)
- Initial training should include opportunities to reflect on and in practice
- Mentoring is needed, with feedback
- New teachers should not be given the most challenging teaching tasks, especially with no support or mentoring
- CPD is essential for all teachers
Centralised and discipline-based

- Need a mixture of generic PD and discipline-based
- Conceptualisation and location of academic development staff (centralised or faculty-based, academic or support staff) affects what role they play
- Discipline-based PD facilitates formation of communities of practice:
  Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger-Trayner, 2015)
Forms of CPD (Generic or Discipline Specific)

- Ad hoc workshops (G, DS)
- Regular seminars or brown bag lunches (DS)
- Non-formal courses (G)
- Training on specific topics (G, DS)
- Teaching and learning symposia and conferences (G, DS)
- Formal programmes (G, DS)
- Mentoring and peer support (G, DS)
Workload framework

In addition to research, Academics need time for

- Teaching and assessment
- Student consultations
- Tutor development and meetings
- Curriculum development
- Course administration
- Professional development
- Blended and online learning

New teaching staff take longer to do tasks that are new to them
Rewards and performance management

- University teaching must be rewarded, e.g. through promotions
- Forms of recognition for excellent teaching are needed
- Rigorous means of evaluating teaching are needed
- Teaching must count in performance management
- Performance appraisal needs to identify development needs in teaching
- Temporary staff also need PD
What drives academics

- Professional development
  - Teaching
  - Research
- ACADEMIC
  - Community engagement
  - Workload
  - Performance management
- EXPLICIT DRIVERS
  - Performance management
- IMPLICIT DRIVERS
  - Rewards
Expected outcomes of the QEP

- Benchmarks and codes of good practice for quality undergraduate provision
- Policy recommendations
- Tools and resources for improving student success
- Research
- Communities of practice

Raise the bar for what can be expected of institutions in promoting student success in future
Broad desired outcomes

1. Enhancement of the quality of undergraduate provision

2. Enhancement of the quality of graduates

3. A higher education system that is improving continuously as members of the higher education community collaborate to share good practice and solve shared problems.