CHE

Higher Education Quality Committee

Towards a Framework for Quality Promotion and Capacity Development in South African Higher Education

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Overview

- Purpose of the Research

- Concepts and Terminologies: QPCD in the Literature

- Policy and Practice: QPCD Approaches in National QA Systems

- Review of QPCD Activities and Conclusions

- Conclusion

Purpose of the Research

- **Generate a range of conceptual perspectives and options for modelling the QPCD approach for the HEQC**
- **To assist in the preparation of the QPCD Framework document (a policy framework)**
  - **That would define and encapsulate an approach and principles compatible with the mandate and mission of the CHE/HEQC**
  - **Provide a robust conceptual underpinning to a specified programme of interventions**
  - **Provide a platform for developing and sustaining a culture of quality in SA HEIs, where that culture has critical sub-elements: internal evaluation and self-evaluation, continuous improvement, intellectual vibrancy, innovation and diversity**

Broad framework of questions to guide the research

- How can QA and CD be defined in the QA context?

- To what extent are QA and CD separate or related concepts and activities?

- What kind of QPCD models and activities are found in the literature? Which are applicable to the QA context of SA HE?

Broad framework of questions to guide the research (Cont'd)

- What range of QPCD models have emerged from the HEQC's own experience to date?

- What patterns of future need can be anticipated given the state of development of SA HE and its QA environment?

- How might the QPCD's Directorate's thinking match up against the findings and what suggestions might be made for enriching the framework?

Concepts and Terminologies: QPCD in the Literature

Two key themes explored:

- Capacity Development

- Quality Promotion

Capacity Development

- Is a term that is used in many contexts

- Terminology where distinctions are not clear: capacity building, capacity development, capacity enhancement

- There is no satisfactory definition that exists for QA or any other context as it is in constant flux.

- Has been part of the development literature since the 1950s 'with various twists and turns', spawning a range of associated terminologies:

Capacity Development (Cont'd)

- ❑ Institution building (1950s & 1960s)
- ❑ Institutional strengthening (late 60s & 70s)
- ❑ Development management (70s)
- ❑ Institutional development (80s)
- ❑ Capacity building (late 80s & early 90s) – linked to sustainable development
- ❑ Knowledge-based aid (mid 1990s – present) – linked to knowledge society and knowledge economy

Capacity Development (Cont'd)

- 10 key elements were identified, based on UNDP principles (p.21)

- UNESCO's Second Global Forum (January 2005) made an attempt (as a "work in progress") to give conceptual content to the notion of CD in QA in HE. This contribution was made by the HEQC's own executive leadership. It is the only example of its kind located by the research.

Capacity Development (Cont'd)

- "Capacity development in quality assurance in higher education encompasses **a philosophical approach, a set of objectives, strategies, techniques and procedures, and a programme of activities** which must lead to the **enhanced ability of a range of role-players and stakeholders to act in order to facilitate, support, develop, increase and monitor quality in their respective spheres of operation** in higher education. …

Capacity Development (Cont'd)

- "The **enhanced ability to act is based on the acquisition of relevant information, knowledge and understandings, and the development of capacities and skills to respond creatively and strategically to particular contextual challenges in ways that make a demonstrable difference to the quality of provision**. …

Capacity Development (Cont'd)

- "Becoming well versed in quality assurance techniques would be an important capacity development gain. **Becoming able to develop and implement locally relevant quality assurance knowledge and strategies is the decisive maximalist objective in capacity development**."

Quality Promotion

- Similar to CD, documentation is slender and very little is related to the HE field
- The World Declaration on HE (1998) could provide a framework for what QP in HE should involve:
  - Change for improvement against some baseline for quality – quality enhancement
  - Independent national QA agencies. Multidimensional approaches needed: T/L; research; staff & student development
  - Requires multiple role players

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Quality Promotion (Cont'd)

- **Other approaches explored outside HE:**
  - TQM
  - QP in health services
- **In summary QP:**
  - Promotes a quality culture
  - Is always contextualised
  - Some agency is needed for QP to be effective
  - Is a managed process
  - Is accompanied by an enquiry into the actual quality of delivery and the intention to act on feedback (improvement)

Capacity Development and Quality Promotion: Interrelationship in a QA context

- **There are strong shared conceptual links**
- **Both require a conceptual underpinning that is value based and contextualised (the way they are defined)**
- **There is the possibility of developing the synergies present in both systems for a national QPCD initiative**
- **Both stress independence/ interdependence (Cf. the HEQC's goal of a self-regulating QA system)**
- **There is the possibility of new knowledge production in QPCD**

Policy and Practice: QPCD Approaches in National QA Systems

National Systems Reviewed:

- **Australia**
- **Colombia**
- **Finland**
- **India**
- **Philippines**
- **United Kingdom**
- **United States**

- **International and Regional Models**

Policy and Practice: QPCD Approaches in National QA Systems

Some suggested general findings:

- **QP is commonplace, and has been since 1990s**

- **Countries tailor QP to their own context and needs**

- **QP is linked in some countries to QE or a development component of QA, depending on their state of development. The focus is QE rather than CD**

- **It would appear that the HEQC might well, in its context, develop an innovative QPCD system**

Review of QPCD Activities and Conclusions

HEQC founding document defined QP and CD separately:

- QP means advocacy, research and dissemination activities, to institutionalise a quality culture and continuous improvement

- CD means a programme of activities to build and strengthen the capacity for high-quality provision at multiple levels

Review of QPCD Activities and Conclusions

After interviewing the HEQC staff based on their reflection on the directorate's activities

- **The two concepts are integrally linked**
- **They are a set of practices underpinned by a critical and reflective engagement with the notions of quality and QA, as understood by the HEQC in a context of transformation and restructuring**
- **The whole of HE is in its purview**
- **It must be forward looking vis-à-vis the HE sector**

Conclusion

''QP, CD/QE approaches in national QA systems illustrate diversity and distinctiveness in context, rather than 'best practice'. Thus, the HEQC has every reason to tailor its own QPCD conceptual approach and programme design in line with the goals of South Africa's transforming and restructuring higher education system, and its customised definition of quality. These points of reference would then serve to inform innovation adapted to context and resources, or selection of approaches that may have been modelled elsewhere.'' (p.86)

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