Converging Pedagogies – Converging Quality Assurance?

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Introduction

• Career
  – Distance Education Academic
    • Science and Engineering
    • E-learning
    • Academic Administration
  – International Developments
    • Open University Worldwide
    • British Council
  – Quality and diversification
    • EADTU e-xcellence project
    • CPD and work based learning development
    • Scholarship of teaching STEM in online and distance education
Conference Objectives

- Creating a culture of quality and valuing people
- Instruction to improve outcomes - student learning and affective teaching
- Standards and guidelines for accreditation
- Leadership and management
- Professional development
- Quality assurance
Quality in Higher Education: Interpretations

• **Simply the best**
  – Exclusivity
  – Highly selective entry

• **Compliance + Consumer Protection**
  – Accreditation
  – Guarantee of uniform standards

• **Process improvement**
  – Internal focus, institutional mission
  – Stakeholder engagement
  – Added value measures
F2F: Distance Ed

• F2F does not scale efficiently to large populations
• DE can:
  – Invest heavily in
    • Content Development
    • Administrative Systems
    • Distribution and Logistics
  – Scaleability delivers high quality at low cost per individual
  – Industrial scale teaching
  – Industrial Quality Systems?
Scaleability of distance teaching

Central Faculty

Design and develop course, set assessments exam and marking schemes

x20

Reg Acad

Recruit, develop and performance monitor tutors

x75

Tutor Team

Teach, support and assess students to standard procedures

x20

Admin + logistics

Distributed students study to same pattern and standards

Student

Total 30,000 per faculty
A distance education culture

- Model for distance education systems:
  - Academic institution
  - Media production house
  - Large scale customer service organisation
- Allama Iqbal OU Pakistan, Sri Lanka OU, IGNOU, Univ Terbuka, Anadolu etc
- Mass systems described as Mega University in late 90’s
- Technological changes challenge operational models
Distance Education QA Performance

• Structured teaching, clear student outcomes
• Well defined Assessment and examination processes
• Standardised performance by tutors and script markers
• Tangible teaching materials of high quality
• Data and evidence rich environment
• Consistently high performance in UK TQA subject assessments.
• Demonstration of a structured quality oriented system.
The Future is Blended?

- Distinctions between "conventional" and Distance Education disappear
- All universities offer a "blended" experience
- Variations in the "blend" according to institutional mission.
- Use of e-learning increases capacity of conventional campus base
- Challenges scaleability of "traditional "distance education?"
Convergence: Methods and Tools

F2F

• Teachers emphasise role as learning managers and facilitators
  – Plan programmes, support and manage learners
• Teaching increasingly resource based
  – Web resources for information and learning materials
  – Changing role of text book publishers, resource service packages
• Lectures have increased focus on student activity
  – Lecture as means of information transfer superceded
• Participation in group activities
  – Employers increasingly demand group work skills of graduates
• VLE for distributing information
• VLE as focus for class activity
• Extensive informal student-student comms
  – Always happened but now increased scope for real time online communication with wider participation
Convergence in themes

• From *teacher centred* to *student centred learning*.

• From *what students know* to *what students can do*

• From *bounded campus* to *boundary free campus*
Convergence Enablers?

- VLE use
- Social Networking
- Online library provision
- Open Educational Resources
- MOOCs

All underpinned by global network access
Convergence in mode of operation

Cost

Student Number

Increased service demand
Costs for entry reduce
Convergence in mode of operation
How to Quality Assure Blended Learning?

- Many QA systems shaped for face to face provision
  - Norms for staffing, facilities, libraries etc
- UK Quality Assurance flexible in approach
  - Equivalence of student experience wherever and however delivered
- EADTU interest in quality assurance of online learning
  - Consortium proposal for EU funding
E-xcellence project 2005–present

Funded by EU Lifelong Learning programme
Managed by EADTU

- **E-xcellence** 2005-06
  - Development and trialling of criteria, handbooks and methodology

- **E-xcellence plus** 2008-09
  - Dissemination to institutions and to QA agencies in 9 European countries

- **E-xcellence NEXT** 2011-12
  - Continuing dissemination and updating of criteria and resources
  - 2015 online 3rd edition of Manual
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN E-LEARNING

HOME  E-XCELLENCE  TOOLS  COMMUNITY  NEWS & EVENTS

Improving Accessibility Flexibility Interactiveness Personalisation in higher education institutions
E-xcellence

Quality Assessment for E-learning: a Benchmarking Approach

Second edition
E-XCELLENCE

Quality Assessment for E-learning: a Benchmarking Approach

Second Edition

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2012, European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)
Quality Assurance in e-Learning

Manual

The instrument is based on the E-xcellence manual containing the benchmark statements, with the criteria and indicators. In the guide you can find the criteria and indicators. The structure of the instrument is identical to the sections in the guide and are organised into six sections.

2013

- Preface
- Chapter 1: Strategic Management
- Chapter 2: Curriculum Design
- Chapter 3: Course Design
- Chapter 4: Course Delivery
- Chapter 5: Staff Support
- Chapter 6: Student Support

Annexes:
- Glossary

Read, share and apply the newest version of the E-xcellence Manual with the latest benchmarks in quality e-learning performance. Next to an overall update of the full manual you can find new benchmarks on:
Manual

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E-xcellence NEXT benchmarks

- Generic in form
- Reflect current experience and practice
- Informed by identifiable trends
- Resilient to developments in technology and pedagogy
- Evolving with changing practice
- Complementary with Open Up Ed benchmarks for OER
- Published under Creative Commons licensing
Mindmap based QUALITY manual as backbone of web-tool
Structure of Resources

**Strategic Management**
- 5 benchmark statements

**Curriculum Design**
- 4 benchmark statements

**Course Design**
- 9 benchmark statements

**Course Delivery**
- 6 benchmark statements

**Staff Support**
- 6 benchmark statements

**Student Support**
- 5 benchmark statements
Quickscan

• Simplified version of the full e-xcellence assessment tool
• Quick self-assessment of your institution’s e-learning performance
• Identifies areas in your e-learning programme/course that need more attention
• Score yourself on the most relevant aspects

Results will show after completing quick-scan. These help you:
• To identify elements to be improved
• To guide the internal discussion
• To learn if a full quality assessment procedure is useful

http://e-xcellence.label.eadtu.eu/tools/quickscan
2. Curriculum Design

An important aspect of the quality of e-learning concerns the design of the curriculum. It is assumed that curriculum design is broadly constrained by expectations or requirements on the knowledge, skills and professional outcomes-based curriculum elements; these may be set at national, European and international levels.

Curriculum design should address the needs of the target audience for e-learning programmes that, in the context of growing emphasis on lifelong learning, may differ significantly in prior experience, interest and motivation from the traditional young adult entrant to conventional universities.

6. Curricula using e-learning components offer personalisation and a flexible path for the learner, while ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

- Excellent in all aspects
- Adequate with some examples of excellent performance
- Adequate
- Not adequate in some aspects
- Not adequate in majority of aspects
2. Curriculum Design

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The major challenge that institutions face is that of designing curricula that combine the flexibility in time and place of study offered by e-learning without compromising skills development or the sense of academic community that has traditionally been associated with campus based provision. Key challenges and opportunities include: programme modularity, online assessment methods, building online academic communities, and integration of knowledge and skills development.

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6 Curricula using e-learning components offer personalisation and a flexible path for the learner, while ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

Please add your comments or refer to evidence:

7 Learning outcomes are assessed using a balance of formative and summative assessment appropriate to the curriculum design.
Modes of use

• **Informal Self Assessment via Quickscan**
  - Identify hot spots (and cold spots)

• **Internal Quality Assurance/Improvement**
  - embed selected benchmarks in internal process
  - adopt and formalise indicators

• **External Quality Assurance – informal**
  - embed use of benchmarks in Self Assessment
  - Adapt to meet QA agency requirements

• **EADTU e-xcellence Associates recognition**
  - Review and recognition by EADTU

• **External Quality Assurance - formal**
  - external QA agencies embed benchmarks within their processes
Modes of use

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Full assessment

REVIEW TOOL AGAINST INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE + PROCESS

PREPARE SELF ASSESSMENT USING THE TOOL

SITE VISIT
- SELF ASSESSMENT
- ANALYSIS
- INTERVIEWS
- CONCLUSIONS

ACTION PLANNING

Support: manual, proposed agenda, assessors’ notes, glossary.
Experience from E-xcellence + Activities

- Applicable in a broad range of institutions
  - Specialist on line masters in ancient f2f universities
  - V large scale programmes in a mega university
- Quickscan very effective tool for provoking group discussion
- Inter-departmental involvement essential
- E-learning concentrated in pockets
- Exemplars of good practice emerging
- Linkage with institutional policy not always present
ESMU Benchmarking Exercise

• Participants
  – 9 universities Portugal to Finland Ancient to Modern
  – e-learning as blended learning in campus based institutions

• Methodology
  – Quickscan trial exercise
  – Customisation workshop
  – Self evaluation preparation
  – Consultants review
  – Review Workshop
ESMU Benchmarking Exercise

• Definitions
  – E-learning vs Blended Learning
  – Campus vs distance/distributed learning
  – Teacher centred vs Learner Centred
  – Flexibility place/time/pace
  – e-communication vs e-interactivity
  – Community vs individual study
Strategic Management

• Top Down vs Bottom Up
  – Single overarching strategy
  – Incremental departmental initiatives

• Ownership of e-learning
  – Institution
  – Department
  – Individual

• Time Scales for change
  – Risks of lock-in to technologies and pedagogies
Curriculum Design

• Reshape curriculum
  – Movement to blended and flexible models
  – Consolidation of on-line deliverable and essential face to face components
  – Student study patterns

• Changing pedagogy
  – shift to student centred flexible learning

• Constraints of Accreditation
  – Accreditation based on face to face norms
Course Design

• Learning Design
  – Links with curriculum learning outcomes
  – Learning design tools, work load estimates

• Assessment Strategies
  – Mix of quiz and essay styles
  – Feedback: how, when, how much

• Media use and development
  – Consistency
  – Professionalism
Course Delivery

• VLE
  – Belongs to administrative or academic divisions?
  – equally accessible to on and off campus students

• Technical Infrastructure and services
  – Effective management
  – Appropriate and clear availability targets

• Study Centres and resources
  – available to suit student needs
  – attendance compulsory or optional
Staff Support

• **Staff Development**
  – Training for new pedagogy
  – Technical training and ongoing support

• **Work load management**
  – Differing patterns associated with development
  – Staff planning norms

• **Rewards**
  – Recognition of achievement
  – Parity of esteem with “conventional” teaching
  – Recognition of scholarship associated with pedagogic innovation
Student Support

• **Skills**
  – Preparation for online study
  – Community participation

• **Services**
  – Availability of online resources
  – Technical support

• **Administration**
  – Online registrations
  – Accessibility by time and place
  – Office hours vs student free time availability
ICDE Global Overview of Quality Models
2015 http://www.icde.org/quality

- Broad review of quality approaches used in open, online and distance education
- Tension between norm based, consumer protection focused and system enhancement based approaches
- Commonality in approach: ACODE, e-xcellence, Quality Matters
- Concepts of progression to maturity are explored in QA systems and institutional processes. Norm Based → Enhancement based
- Challenge greatest in situations where f2f systems are in crisis, pressure to expand HE provision but uncertainties over regulation and quality of innovative approaches.
ICDE Global Overview of Quality Models
2015  http://www.icde.org/quality

- Norm based approaches subject to rapid obsolescence
- Staff development in institutions and agencies a challenge
- Focus on principles and flexibility
- As systems converge f2f sector can learn from distance education sector
Conclusions

• Pedagogies of face to face and distance teaching institutions are converging

• Flexible quality assurance systems that focus on principles are applicable to the full spectrum of blended learning approaches

• Quality Assurance systems must recognise the particulars of institutional mission and adapt to them.

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Why use social networking?

• Social networking has two primary purposes in education:
  – facilitating learning
  – building communities

• Exploration of social networking in education has tended to focus on the community aspects.

• Sites such as Facebook and Twitter are used to support connections among students and teachers.
Updating *E-xcellence*

E-xcellence development started in 2005, before the launch of Facebook and the rapid growth of the Open Education Resources movement.

Experience of use of tools in 30+ institutions, distance teaching and face to face.

Need to update - embedding current knowledge and practice …….
Facilitating learning

• Social learning theories emphasise that learning takes place through communicating with others.

• Social technologies can support the interaction and collaboration that is needed for learning.
Building community

• Connections and communication help to build trust and openness.
• These are necessary for effective learning and teaching.
• Awareness of these ideas has led to the concept of a learning community.
• Participation in an online learning community can help with students’ motivation and progress.
Social networking – what works?

- Forums to support discussion and debate.
- Wikis to support co-creation of resources.
- Blogs to support reflection, sharing and feedback.
- Soc Net to support a sense of community*

- Community may be informal and social
  or
- have a focused pedagogic function such as group work, peer assessment,
Social networking benefits and challenges

Benefits

Generic
- sharing
- collaboration
- community-building

Challenges

Social Networking Sites
- privacy issues
- lack of control
- blurring of boundaries between social and academic life.

Cloistered garden or online Sports Stadium?
Open Education Resources

- OECD: ‘digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research’
  - Content – but also tools, licences, practices…

Stakeholder motivations

Institutions
Altruism:
Reduction in cost by sharing
Quality improvement
Showcasing
Alternative business models…
Panic!

Individual Academics
Altruism: traditional academic values
Improved reputation & visibility, ie non-traditional publishing
Not worth the effort to exploit
Quality improvement by collaboration, dialogue…

Government
Widen participation, social inclusion
Low cost system expansion
Promote life-long learning
Bridge gap between informal and formal learning
Development / aid agenda

Learners
Flexible resources
Independent / informal study
Choice of perspective
Flexible study routes
Try before you buy
Patterns of use

• Generators or consumers?
• Top-down or bottom-up?
• Developed world:
  – Teachers use to enrich teaching
  – Institutions use for marketing
  – Individuals use for informal learning
• Developing world:
  – Consortium development
  – Institutions use to refresh curriculum
Quality

*Is it possible to evaluate quality of components in isolation, or only in the context of their use?*
Quality points

- Checking
- Creation
- Peer review
- User recommendation
- Use
- OER repository
- Provenance
- Reputation
- Brand

Quality points involve the process of checking, creation, peer review, user recommendation, and use, all contributing to the OER repository's provenance, reputation, and brand.
Quality Dimensions

Content
- Accuracy
- Currency
- Relevance

Pedagogic Effectiveness
- Learning objectives
- Prerequisites
- Learning design
- Learning styles
- Assessment

Ease of use
- Clarity
- Visual attractiveness, engaging
- Clear navigation
- Functional!

Reusability
- Format
- Localisation
- Discoverability: metadata
Just how open is ‘open’?

- Technological barriers
  - bandwidth / software / tools
- Interoperability
- Disability
- Culture / localisation
- Digital preservation
Trends with greater use of OER / OEP

- use → create
- teacher centred → learner centred
- transmission → constructivism
- (sage on stage) → (guide on side)
- focus on outcome → focus on process
- standardised → personalised learning
- individual → social/ peer learning

Assumes institutions evolve to higher forms

... Use OERs → Adapt OER material → Create OER material

See, for example, OPAL OEP Guide
http://opal.innovationpros.net/publications/guide/
E-xcellence NEXT benchmarks

- Generic in form
- Reflect current experience and practice
- Informed by identifiable trends
- Resilient to developments
Acknowledgments

e-xcellence partners in 3 project phases

e-xcellence core partners

ESMU benchmarking institutions

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