



## FOSTERING QUALITY TEACHING: POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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### **Abstract**

*Quality education includes learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities; Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities, Educational reforms of the last decade have received increased scrutiny regarding their effectiveness in raising student achievement. A number of research studies have examined the relationships between academic achievement and isolated factors such as class size, teacher experience, and students per computer or hours of instruction per year. To date, however, considerably less attention has been given to, or research conducted on, institutional practices that affect teaching and learning. This paper attempts to study the policies and practices to be followed by the institutions to develop quality teaching.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within educational institutions. As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes. Much attention is given to public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to over emphasize research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging. Quality teaching in higher education matters for student learning outcomes. But fostering quality teaching presents higher education institutions with a range of challenges at a time when the higher education sector is coming under pressure from many different directions. Institutions need to ensure that the education they offer meets the expectations of students and the requirements of employers, both today and for the future.

### **QUALITY TEACHING**

Quality teaching is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. It involves several dimensions, including the effective design of curriculum and course content, a variety of learning contexts (including guided independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, etc.), soliciting and using feedback, and effective assessment of learning outcomes. It also involves well-adapted learning environments and student support services. Developing quality teaching is a multi-level endeavor. Support for quality teaching takes place at three inter-dependent levels:

- **Institution-wide level:** including projects such as policy design, and support to organization and internal quality assurance systems.
- **Programme level:** comprising actions to measure and enhance the design, content and delivery of the programmes within a department or a school.
- **Individual level:** including initiatives that help teachers achieve their mission, encouraging them to innovate and to support improvements to student learning and adopt a learner oriented focus.

These three levels are essential and inter-dependent. However, supporting quality teaching at the Programme level is key so as to ensure improvement in quality teaching at the discipline level and across the institution.

### **NEW PARADIGMS FOR QUALITY TEACHING**

Education in the college need to prepare students for entry to such an environment and equip them with appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attributes to thrive in it. There is a strong drive to build and create knowledge together with an understanding of working life and reformulate the concept of knowledge in learning situations.

The new teaching and learning paradigms in higher education actually imply:

- New relationships regarding access to teachers, and a wider range of communication and collaborative working through learning platforms.
- Re-designing of curricula.



- Bridging teaching and research more intensively.
- Continuous upgrading in pedagogy, use of technologies, assessment models aligned with Student-centered learning.
- Creating of innovative learning platforms.
- Providing guidance and tutoring to students with new means and methods.
- Assessing impacts and documenting effectiveness of the teaching delivered

## **KEY ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER IN FOSTERING QUALITY TEACHING**

### **1. Goal of Quality Teaching Policies**

The ultimate goal of quality teaching policies is to improve the quality of the learning experiences of students and – through this – the outcomes of learning. Policies and practices to foster quality teaching should therefore be guided by this ultimate goal.

### **2. Long Term Teaching Policy**

Sustained quality teaching policies require long-term, non-linear efforts and thus call for a permanent institutional commitment from the top-leadership of the institution.

### **3. Setting Benchmarks**

Few quantitative standards can be prescribed and measured. Each institution is primarily responsible for the quality of its teaching and should set the bar internally. Comparative analysis within and across institutions is however likely to provide new benchmarks, as long as the method used is reliable and transparent.

### **4. Sustaining Quality Improvement**

Quality teaching happens first in the classroom. Not all teachers are innovators, and few innovations can be disseminated and sustained without an efficient organizational structure. It will require prioritization, consistent with the educational model and goals set by the institution.

### **5. Encouraging A Quality Teaching**

This culture will consist in inter-linking the various types and levelsof support so that collaboration and its likley impacts on the teaching and learning are enhanced among leaders, teachers, students, staff and other stakeholders.

## **POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF QUALITY TEACHING**

Quality teaching policies should be designed consistently at institutional, programme and individual levels. The programme levels are the pivotal place where quality teaching is likely to flourish.

### **1. Raising Awareness Of Quality Teaching**

Institutions play the key role in fostering quality teaching Emphasis on research performance – for both institutions and individual acad Many institutional leaders are reconsidering how to manage the balance in fulfilling their teaching and research missions and how to raise the quality of teaching and learning they deliver. Yet top-down initiatives may encounter resistance from faculty that perceive it as an encroachment of academic freedom and care is needed to find the right balance between institutional leadership and managerial intrusion. Despite some resistance, much improvement has been achieved. Faculty have increasinglems – has traditionally overshadowed teaching and learning for students in many countries.

#### **Practices**

- a. Prioritise quality teaching as a strategic objective:
  - b. Establish a teaching and learning framework
  - c. Promote quality teaching within and outside the institution
  - d. Strengthen links between teaching and research
- ### **2. Developing Excellent Teachers**
- A well-designed professional development programme needs to be an outcome of a collaborative reflection on the quality of teaching and learning that is aligned with university values, identity and faculty expectations. This reflection requires time, conviction, motivation and openness. It assumes that not only the individual teachers are concerned, but also deans, heads of programmes and other team leaders who are drivers of change.

### Practices

- a. Anchor teaching in the quality culture of the institution:
- b. Identify and articulate pedagogical competencies required for quality teaching:
- c. Upgrade pedagogical skills through professional development
- d. Support inspired teaching.

### 3. Engaging Students

Student engagement is most powerful as a driver of quality teaching when it involves dialogue, and not only information on the student's experience. As students are the intended beneficiaries of quality teaching, they are able to provide crucial "customer feedback" not only on what works well but also on what they would like to be done differently and how.

### Practices

- a. Give students a clear role in fostering quality teaching
- b. Develop reliable instruments and techniques for gathering and using student Feedback

### 4. Building Organization for Change and Teaching Leadership

Change is conducive to improved quality teaching and learning only to the extent that an appropriate internal organisational support is in place. Institutions are complex adaptive systems and there is no single pathway to make change happen and achieve real improvements in teaching quality. Moreover, effective change is typically driven by a combination of top-down and bottom-up initiatives that changes and evolves over time.

### Practices

- a. Map the distribution of responsibilities in teaching and learning
- b. Foster leadership on quality teaching
- c. Ensure consistent implementation of institutional teaching and learning strategy
- d. Establish a specific unit to support teaching and learning

### 5. Aligning Institutional Policies to Foster Quality Teaching

Institutions should therefore seek to enhance the coherence of their policies (including those apparently peripheral to quality teaching) to ensure that they support enhancement of teaching quality. A systematic approach would ensure that the various department- or programme-wide policies are consistent with the strategic objective of quality teaching and fully compatible with the institution-wide orientation of the teaching and learning framework – while accommodating the different needs and contexts that apply to individual departments and programmes.

### Practices

- a. Strengthen coherence across policies
- b. Coordinate quality teaching with human resources policies
- c. Coordinate quality teaching with technology policies
- d. Coordinate quality teaching with learning environment policies

### 6. Highlighting Innovation as A Driver For Change

Innovation can be one of the main drivers of quality teaching improvement when supported at institutional level. Innovations in teaching and learning can be spurred by a number of factors. Research and development stimulates the search for creative solutions for problems and challenges at various levels and promote new forms of student learning by problem-solving. Pressure from employers and students (including an increasing proportion of lifelong learners) to deliver learning outcomes more relevant to corporate and societal demands, including skills such as critical thinking, self-management, teamwork and communications, as well as technical or discipline-specific skills.

### Practices

- a. Encourage teachers and students to be active innovators
- b. Strengthen institutions as "learning organisations"
- c. Embed support for innovation in other institutional policies.

### 7. Assessing Impacts

The evaluation of support for quality teaching is widely accepted by academia. Institutions have dedicated resources to monitor the implementation of quality teaching support (via progress reports) and keep track of the outputs.



Institutions evaluate the unfolding of the initiatives as well as the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries. Ministries, funding authorities and quality assurance bodies have also been influential in expanding the evaluation of quality teaching support.

#### **Practices**

- a. Embed evaluation of teaching quality within broader evaluation processes
- b. Develop an array of evaluation instruments
- c. Emphasise the careful interpretation of evaluation results.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Quality teaching initiatives have emphasised the role of teaching in the educational transformative process, have refined the interaction between research and teaching, and have nurtured the culture of quality within the academic community. Quality teaching initiatives have emphasised the role of teaching in the educational transformative process, have refined the interaction between research and teaching, and have nurtured the culture of quality within the academic community. The support for quality of teaching usually generates awareness of the responsibility of teachers in the learning process and justifies the institutional need for helping them to fulfill their mission.

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