Innovative Teaching Models in the System of University Education: Opportunities... pp. 255–268

Marko Gavriloski
University of Primorska, Faculty of Education
Koper, Slovenija

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A SHIFT TOWARDS THE BALANCE BETWEEN INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION WITH THE PURPOSE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Abstract: The purpose of the paper is to explain the importance of balancing the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of higher education. Only with a clear understanding and balance of this relationship and in accordance with the objectives of university education, the current researchers can analyse in a precise manner how to determine and how to ensure the quality of both parts. For the university to maintain a key historical and social role in contemporary society, higher education must maintain a balance between seeking the truth (providing knowledge) and the social services offered by such education. Due to the numerous changes in higher education (the Bologna Reform, the growth of the number of students, the multitude of higher education institutions, the imbalance between outgoing costs and public funding etc.) over the past twenty years, the focus of quality measuring has shifted more towards the extrinsic part.

This model of balance between the two parts will serve to explain how we can determine (means) and ensure (objective) the quality and excellence of higher education teaching (process), which only acquires its significance when it is connected with students' learning outcomes, motivation and student-centred approaches. This process must be planned, systematic and harmonious (in line with all stakeholders and objectives of education). In the conclusion of the paper, we propose, among other things, the introduction of conceptual mapping, which can increase the quality of higher education teaching as well as learning.

Keywords: extrinsic and intrinsic characteristics, quality of higher education, quality of higher education teaching, quality assurance.

INTRODUCTION

There were no previous or later individual questions that shook the European higher education system in the way that the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) through the implementation of the Bologna Reform (1999) did (Roche, 2014). In addition to the establishment of the EHEA

and the realization of two objectives (easily readable and comparable level and the establishment of an undergraduate and postgraduate cycle), the introduction of the Bologna Process also highlighted the key issue of quality assurance in higher education. The result of quality assurance should be the increased mobility of students who would have quality and equivalent study programmes in a transparent European Higher Education Area at their disposal (Eurydice, 2015). However, the question of the quality of higher education did not emerge with the signing of the Bologna Reform, because the quality was in different ways always a part of the historical and social role of the university. In the 1990s, due to certain external factors[1] and in the form of audits, accreditations and evaluations, quality determination and assurance were becoming increasingly implemented in the field of higher education, with higher education institutions beginning to adopt this managerial-entrepreneurial model of understanding and assuring the quality (Vroeijenstijn, 1995; Schwartz and Westerheijden, 2004). As summarized by Serrano-Velarde and Stensaker (2010), countries initially set up national quality assurance agencies (Stensaker et al., 2006), resulting in external control and the transfer of responsibility to these agencies. Consequently, internal quality assurance systems and procedures (Reichert and Tauch, 2005) were introduced, of course, with numerous external indicators that were focused merely on a few aspects of the so-called measurable (quantitative) quality.

Critics reproach the Bologna Reform and particularly the external systems of quality determination and assurance that they have departed from the classic ideas of Humboldt's model (Serrano-Velarde and Stensaker, 2010) as well as their focus on quantity, neoliberal influence, emphasizing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship as well as using managerial concepts and approaches. Palfreyman (2008) even labelled the Bologna Reform as unsuccessful, since universities[2] have largely not adapted (or adapted too slowly) to the social conditions and needs of the economy (Palfreyman, 2008) and began to focus more on the so-called extrinsic values of higher education even before the introduction of the reform (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994). On the other hand, the introduction of a business model of quality and the instruments for ensuring this quality in higher education institutions in connection with higher education teaching and learning should be understood also in the context of the development of a market economy in the 1980s and 1990s (Saarinen, 2007; Westerheijden, 2007).

The key emphasis of the paper touches upon the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of higher education. In order for a university

1 Massification of higher education, deregulation of higher education systems, constraints on government funding and neoliberal influences (Scwarz and Westerheijden, 2004).

2 With the exception of traditionally excellent ones in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, which did not have to adapt.

and its members to retain the key historical and social role defined by Van Vught and Westerheijden (1994), higher education must maintain a balance between seeking the truth and providing knowledge (intrinsic aspect) and the social services offered by such education (extrinsic aspect). According to Van Vught and Westerheijden (1994), the quality of higher education is ensured precisely by an appropriate combination of both aspects. However, in the light of the reforms of higher education in the last 20 years – in particular the Bologna Reform – the understanding, measuring and ensuring the quality of higher education have also changed, especially if one connects this with the abovementioned critiques. Today, it is known that quality on the one hand must not be the objective of higher education, but on the other hand, the emphasis must not be solely on assessing this quality. When reviewing the Rules of Quality of the University of Primorska (UP) and the structure of the self-evaluation report for the educational activities of the University of Primorska, the Faculty of Education (UP PEF), the emphasis seems to lie mainly on the extrinsic characteristics and values that emphasize the transition, satisfaction and employability of students. Of course, this does not reflect the transformational quality (Harvey and Green, 1993) and does not say anything about the ways of thinking (for example, critical thinking, reflection and conceptual mapping). Precisely the development of these qualities and competences and the connection between determining and ensuring the quality of higher education with students' learning outcomes can be a prerequisite for raising quality, easier adaptation and response to social changes as well as facing the social reality and the challenges of the 21st century.

In continuation, the current researchers focus only on one of the UP members, i.e. the Faculty of Education (UP PEF). Despite the fact that the curricula of the study programmes of the UP PEF reflect this relationship, the question is why in monitoring, determining and ensuring quality we refer only to statistical indicators that fall within the scope of the extrinsic characteristics of higher education. One of the fast answers lies in the exactness of the results, where such indicators can be obtained with the statistically relevant and representative data, with which the funds used can be justified. However, this is just a small part of a complex understanding of the quality of higher education. Such an understanding of quality can be dangerous for higher education teaching, since all stakeholders at this stage of education can be satisfied too quickly with partial answers and consequently do not develop other than achieving a certain level of set indicators. This can only lead to a greater bureaucratization of the educational process.

The development of innovative models and teaching practices is of utmost importance, but we also need to understand the purposes and objectives, the relationship and functioning of intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics as well as the

structure and dynamics of massification of higher education and know how we can measure – in order to improve – critical thinking, (critical) reflection, learning outcomes and similar indicators of the intrinsic part of higher education. The proposed solutions lead towards the balancing of intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics, with the emphasis on the construction of conceptual maps of students of the University of Primorska, Faculty of Education.

FROM THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING

Approximately twenty years ago it was established that the notion of quality is not new, although at the same time, due to some external factors, the academic world began to increasingly focus on quality (Vroeijenstijn, 1995), it is now completely clear that without a concrete definition of determining and ensuring the quality of university education, the higher education institutions cannot exist. Along the numerous pieces of research and definitions of the quality of university education, many authors (Harvey and Green, 1993; Jarvis, 1995; Vroeijenstijn 1995; Tam, 2001; Anderson, 2006; Westerheijden, 2007; Chi-Kin Lee and Day, 2016; João Rosa and Amaral, 2014, Eggins, 2014) are still discovering that defining quality in higher education is complex and challenging, especially when this concept is confronted with the processes of quality measurement and assurance, with the excellence of teaching and students' learning outcomes. Regardless of the complexity of the definition, it is currently obvious that each higher education institution sets its own quality indicators and is in line with its objectives and carries out the activities that are then evaluated in one way or another.

As determined by Harvey and Green (1993) – still the main references when talking about the quality of higher education – before their definition, not a lot was written about quality as a concept. The authors mainly dealt with "quality control, assurance, management, audit, evaluation, policies and financing" (Harvey and Green, 1993, p. 10) and did not define the concept. Quality must be seen through related aspects of different levels, which are summed up by the authors into five interconnected ways of understanding quality, which is illustrated by the following scheme:

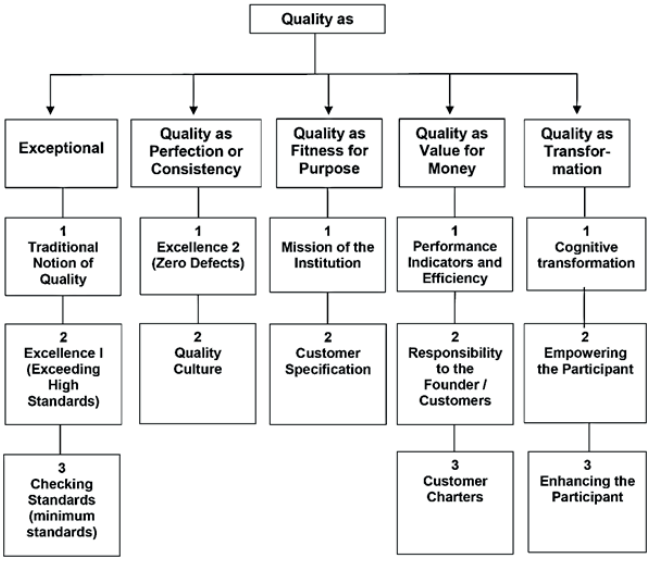

Table 1. Representation of understanding quality (Harvey and Green, 1993, pp. 11–27)

The current researchers have summarized this rough understanding of quality primarily because there will be a return to some starting points in continuation. Of course, it should be emphasized that none of the above aspects of quality can be dealt with separately because they are more or less connected with one another. In other words, in order to achieve quality standards, quality monitoring and assurance must be balanced across all five aspects. Attention must also be paid to the distinction between quality and the processes of quality assurance and measuring, since, regardless of how we perceive quality, "these processes do not necessarily define or improve it, but merely try to ensure that the pre-specified quality level is achieved "(Holt, Palmer and Challis, 2008, p. 5).

With the help of various authors, Cvetek (2015) outlined an extremely transparent development of the understanding of the quality of higher education, teaching and learning from the 1990s onwards, leaning on Oliver (2003) in the key point of defining quality. With the help of Biggs's (1989) 3P model of learning, the latter proposed that each quality model should contain both teaching and learning, each of which should further include the input, process and effect factors (Oliver, 2003). Without this construction, the current researchers cannot talk about the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. This type of model is also followed by the University of Primorska and it would make sense that it would further upgrade it with the recommendations set out in the Report to the European Commission on Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions. Of the 16 recommendations, Cvetek

(2015) mentions 4 extremely important ones: 1) didactic, continuous and compulsory training of higher education teachers; 2) taking into account the assessment of the didactic competence of higher education teachers; 3) developing and monitoring curricula through a partnership dialogue between pedagogical staff, students, graduates and labour market actors; 4) support for higher education teachers in introducing the ICT into the process of teaching and learning (Cvetek, 2015). Attention should be paid, however, to prevent this from resulting merely in bureaucratic compliance with certain regulations, only because it is necessary, but rather encouraging quality and planned professional development of higher education teachers. The question is also how to determine (measure and monitor) the quality of these processes.

	teaching	**learning**
inputs elements and attributes which describe pre-conditions for successful teaching and learning	• course establishment and course review processes • curriculum specifications • course materials & resources • teacher qualifications and currency • strategic plan for teaching and learning • facilities and resources for teaching and learning	• student selection and entry into courses • students' progression through courses
processes elements and attributes which describe on-going conditions for successful teaching and learning	• provision of appropriate learning experiences • work, community and professional engagement • assessment procedures • student support	
outputs elements and attributes which describe post-conditions from successful teaching and learning	• continuous improvement in teaching processes • reflective practice and ongoing commitment to continuous • improvement in teaching processes	• graduates are employable in various ways • graduates can demonstrate outcomes • course satisfaction and attitudes

Table 2. A model describing the quality of teaching and learning (Oliver, 2003)

Cvetek (2015) warns that in the processes of determining and ensuring the quality of higher education, there is a trap or a dilemma what should be pursued in these processes: accountability or improvement. Quality is related to the objectives of an individual study program or faculty/university. In each study programme, in addition to the objectives, the general and subject-specific competences that graduates should obtain are listed as well; with this, they should also develop a critical attitude towards contents, a systematic way of thinking, an understanding of complex concepts, a convincing way of writing etc. When talking about this dimension, it is specifically about the tendency for improvement; therefore it also must take into account the tendency for accountability (to

different stakeholders). The first is connected with the future (development model), the second with the past ("defending the actions") (Entwistle, 1993 in Cvetek 2015). These are just two aspects of understanding of quality, as defined by Harvey and Green (1993) or of the effect of teaching and learning according to Oliver (2003). Van Vught and Westerheijden (1994, p. 356) also write about this and they emphasize that throughout history, higher education has always included both the intrinsic ("the ideal of seeking the truth, pursuit of knowledge") and extrinsic qualities ("services the higher education institutions provide to the society"). Later on, Ewel (2009) and Borden (2010) discussed precisely this relationship. While Ewel (2009) mentions two types of paradigms (improvement paradigm and accountability paradigm), Borden (2010) draws attention to the paradox caused by the requirement to provide both aspects. The demand for accountability comes from external stakeholders, while the demand for improvement stems from the internal imperative and represents the centre of professional development. Precisely external control or the so-called justification leads to systemic distrust of the professional knowledge of higher education teachers (Borden, 2010).

	Assessment for Improvement Paradigm	**Assessment for Accountability Paradigm**
Strategic Dimensions		
Intent	Formative (Improvement)	Summative (Judgment)
Stance	Internal	External
Predominant Ethos	Engagement	Compliance
Application Choices		
Instrumentation	Multiple/Triangulation	Standardized
Nature of Evidence	Quantitative and Qualitative	Quantitative
Reference Points	Over Time, Comparative, Established Goal	Comparative or Fixed Standard
Communication of Results	Multiple Internal Channels and Media	Public Communication
Uses of Results	Multiple Feedback Loops	Reporting

Table 3. Two assessment paradigms (Ewell, 2009)

Despite the fact that Ewell (2009) described this type of distinction as ideal, since virtually none of the existing assessment approaches is in line with both paradigms and in his opinion, the differences between the two paradigms are exaggerated, this conceptual tool can help to eliminate some fundamental tensions associated with the implementation of quality assessment (Ewell, 2009). This definition will be returned to later in the paper.

CHALLENGES IN DETERMINING AND ENSURING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The processes of determining and ensuring the quality of higher education differ and, as Holt, Palmer and Challis (2008) mention, do not necessarily define quality nor improve it. On the basis of the analysis of 400 articles published by the international magazine *Quality and Higher Education*, Harvey (2011) concluded that until then 1) there were few theoretical discussions about quality and quality assurance, 2) that the quality of higher education does not coincide with the quality assurance systems, 3) that there is considerable confusion in understanding quality and quality standards, 4) that quality assurance is characterized by a lack of trust and expensive bureaucratic procedures, although the latter have established a certain level of transparency, 5) that a mistake was made at the very beginning, when quality assurance was linked to the improvement of the students' learning. Based on these findings, Harvey concludes that the quality assurance process has failed to integrate the quality culture with academic culture (Harvey, 2011). The attempts to solve the above problems are still ongoing and an overview of studies and researches on quality and quality assurance in higher education (Eggins, 2014; Fadeeva, Galkute, Mader and Scott, 2014; João Rosa and Amaral, 2014; Chi-Kin Lee and Day, 2016) shows that there is an active engagement in this area in order to answer the key issues of *what is quality* and *how to successfully ensure quality in higher education.* Westerheijden (2014) notes that the activities and the implementation of higher education are multidimensional, while also criticizing the current system of classifying higher education institutions on scales of excellence because they do not take into account institutional horizontal and vertical diversity. However, this falls into a completely different debate, although it is indirectly connected with these issues as well.

In 2005, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Westerheijden and Kohoutek (2014) emphasize that the implementation of these standards and guidelines strongly depends on the so-called national translation, which in other words means that each institution should ensure that determining and ensuring the quality is adapted to the objectives, specifics, attitudes and needs of all stakeholders in a higher education institution. Based on a review of the fundamental authors from the subject area, Cvetek (2015) speculates that "in Slovenia, quality is considered (and understood) primarily as 'quality assurance', while the very concept (quality) remains unclear and undefined or blurred with semantically empty expressions and phrases such as excellence, usability for customers etc." (Cvetek 2015, p. 20). In connection to this, he stresses that, precisely because of constant dealing with quality, references to quality, pursuit and assurance of the quality of higher education, in Europe and

in the world, there are increasing tendencies to return to the understanding of "quality as the virtue of the academic community, which must be the subject of a constant critical assessment and endeavour for the improvement, stemming from the university itself or from within" (Ibid.).

THE RULES OF QUALITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PRIMORSKA AND THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT OF THE UP PEF

The Rules of Quality of the University of Primorska "determine the organization, responsibilities and the system of quality management at the UP" (The Rules of Quality of the University of Primorska, 2015, p. 3). Considering the fact that the Rules of Quality are prescribed by the Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes, adopted by the Council of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, this is an external regulation, which belongs to the accountability paradigm mentioned by Ewell (2009). While the Rules of Quality of the UP (2015) define the elements of the quality system at the UP, they do not determine the elements of the quality of higher education teaching and learning. In order to improve the study activity, according to the Rules of Procedure, it is monitored by "conducting surveys among students and graduates, monitoring the burden of students in accordance with the ECTS, obtaining information on employers' satisfaction with the competences that the graduates of the UP achieved during their studies at the UP". In addition, with the quantitative methodology, the satisfaction of the students of the UP is also monitored, including the monitoring of the graduates of the UP. The aforementioned criteria do not specify precisely with which methodology (quantitative or qualitative) the institution has to collect data, nor how to ensure and improve quality. It is only important that this is performed and that it is precisely defined. This means that each institution can decide how to address these issues. Regardless of the manner in which it addresses them, it is important that both accountability and improvement dimensions are balanced. However, this is not evident from the Rules of Quality of the UP and as will be seen in continuation, nor from the self-evaluation report.

The abovementioned criteria and the Rules provide for the establishment of self-evaluation, which encourages both the university and the individual members to improve quality in all areas of operation. An example of the self-evaluation report of the UP PEF shows that the educational activity indicators are: a) the percentage of students enrolled in the first year for the first time in the first application deadline, b) the average number of points of the accepted candidates, c) the numerical ratio between the available places, the applicants and the enrolled students in the first year (without repeaters), c) the transition to higher years, d) the

percentage of repeaters in study programmes; e) the average number of years of study duration, f) the number of students per employed higher education teacher, g) the assessments of higher education teachers and co-workers in student surveys, and h) the employment and employability of graduates. These indicators correspond only to the accountability paradigm (Ewell, 2009) and belong to the area of extrinsic characteristics (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994). They testify only about the users' satisfaction and the accountability to the founder (Harvey and Green, 1993) and although it is written with many indicators that they do not reflect quality, they are nevertheless presented as indicators that fall under the framework of the UP's Rules of Quality. In any case, these indicators do not tell anything about the intrinsic characteristics of higher education or the knowledge and critical reflection (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1994) as well as about the transformation as one of the key aspects of quality (Harvey and Green, 1993) of higher education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: PROPOSALS FOR BALANCING

In the central part of the paper, the current researchers have demonstrated to a very limited extent the complexity of understanding the quality of higher education as well as teaching. Through the discussion, the conditions for understanding the balance of the relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of university education have been outlined, which in other words means that the current researchers cannot pursue merely the knowledge or merely the services that higher education institution provides to the society. Both poles have to be connected, which consequently means that determining and ensuring the quality of higher education must be linked as well. At present, the quality or the quality assurance at the University of Primorska is focused more on the assessment based on the accountability paradigm (Ewell, 2009) and is not connected among itself. Although the improvement paradigm of the pedagogical process is taking place, it is not as planned and connected as it could be. Ensuring the quality of higher education must be at an extremely high level with guaranteed high academic standards, with the university assuming the key role and responsibility for achieving this (Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme in Slovenia for the period 2011–2020). University chancellors also committed themselves to this in a resolution regarding the commitment of Slovene universities for developing a quality culture (Commitment of Slovene universities to Develop a Quality Culture, 2012). However, such definitions are insufficiently concrete to cause important changes in the quality of teaching and learning. Cvetek (2015) even cites a number of studies that show 1) that changes in teaching approaches are too slow if the didactic training of teachers is not intense (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and

Nevgi, 2007 in Cvetek, 2015); 2) that changes in the beliefs and attitudes of university teachers are possible only with long-term and profound understanding of teaching and learning by the teachers (Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead and Mayes, 2005 in Cvetek, 2015); 3) there is a positive correlation between didactic training of teachers and the use of a deep approach to teaching and learning (Gibbs and Coffey, 2004 in Cvetek, 2015).

In the academic year 2018/2019, at the University of Primorska, the Faculty of Education, a cycle of training courses in the field of higher education didactics is under way, with an emphasis on effective learning and teaching strategies in higher education. The training is carried out within the framework of the project *Innovative Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (INOVUP)*, where the aim of the project is to ensure and improve the quality of higher education by introducing more flexible forms of learning and teaching. The key question that arises in this regard is how the effects of such courses and training will be measured or monitored in the future and whether the positive changes in the form of learning outcomes, feedback and nonetheless the cognitive transformation, the transformative quality and empowerment as well as improvement of the user (Harvey and Green, 1993), will be actually seen, perceived and taken into account in the further quality assurance process.

Due to the exceptional role it has in the field of and education, the University of Primorska, the Faculty of Education, can play a pivotal role in this and also on the basis of the recommendations below develops and implements a long-term model of determining and ensuring the quality of higher education, which will not be based solely on the extrinsic characteristics, quantitative indicators and accountability paradigm. It would be sensible that the Rules of Quality of the University of Primorska would also include measures for achieving the improvement dimension. Thus, in line with the above findings and with the aim of balancing the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of higher education, we present the proposals that have already been defined by Cvetek (2015):

- Introduction of a pedagogical portfolio in the process of self-evaluation of higher education (described in more detail in Cvetek, 2015);
- Compulsory and intensive didactic training of higher education teachers and colleagues;
- Active, planned and deliberate cross-subject networking;
- Introduction of conceptual maps in teaching and learning (described in more detail in Hay, Kinchin and Lygo-Baker, 2008; Vanhear, 2012; Kinchin, 2014; Pai, 2016);
- Preparation and implementation of a qualitative methodology for monitoring

the effects and learning outcomes of the introduction of new and more flexible teaching and learning methods;

- Development and use of the assessment of teaching and learning based on the improvement paradigm;
- Collegial observation of teaching by higher education teachers and colleagues;
- Introduction of collegial mentorship to higher education teachers and colleagues;
- Recording of higher education teaching with subsequent analysis with the purpose of improvement;
- Preparation and implementation of short, one-year and multi-year training courses for the improvement in the field of higher education didactics based on the Finnish model (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi, 2008 in Cvetek, 2015);
- Systematic and long-term set of measures for the precise defining, monitoring and improvement of higher education teaching and learning;
- Systematic and accurate monitoring and encouragement of the development of critical thinking, reflection and conceptual mapping of students.

The mentioned proposals represent only the beginning of the shift in perceiving the importance of interconnectedness of higher education teaching and learning with the quality of higher education. With such measures, we should be careful not to wander off into the bureaucratization of processes, where an organization would deal exclusively with the processes of determining the quality and not with the results of these processes, namely quality assurance and the improvement paradigm. The vision and the objectives have already been set by higher education institutions; there are also numerous good practices in the European Higher Education Area, which we must only recognize and adapt to the needs of our institution and all stakeholders. After all, it will not be superfluous if we return – as pointed out by Cvetek (2015) – to that quality which we recognize as a virtue of the academic community and which the academic community recognizes as important, critically evaluates it and aims at improving it.

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