

**Quality promotion
views and practices:
An international
search for...**



**INDICATORS OF
A QUALITY
ETHOS IN
UNIVERSITIES**

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OUTLINE



- 1. Aims** of this workshop
- 2. Work in pairs:** Conceptualising *Quality & Ethos*
- 3. Background context 1:** Quality system of SA HE
- 4. Background context 2:** The longitudinal research project at UJ
- 5. Small groups:** Possible **indicators** of a quality ethos in HE (*Appreciative Inquiry* methodology)
- 6. Small groups contd:** Possible **frameworks** for the indicators of a quality ethos in HE - presentations
- 7. Plenary:** **Strategies** to enhance a quality ethos
- 8. Valuation** and possible future prospects/projects

AIMS OF SESSION



- Shared **conceptualisation**: **Quality** & **ethos** in HE
- **Contextual insight**: Quality prom and assurance system of SA and longitudinal research project at UJ
- Identification/Prioritisation of possible **indicators** of a **quality ethos** in universities
- Possible structuring of indicators in a **framework**
- **Putting indicators into action**: **Guidelines** and **strategies** for implementation

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CONCEPTS



QUALITY & ETHOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

WORK IN PAIRS

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QUALITY ??

RSA PERSPECTIVES



- **EXCELLENCE**: Maintain & improve **high** standards
- **"CLIENT"** satisfaction= multiple stakeholders
- **CONSISTENCY & COHERENCE** in practices
- Contractual **PARTNERSHIP**: Univ ←→ Student
- **Fitness FOR purpose**: University's mission & goals
- **TRANSFORMATIVE**: Personal empowerment, societal and economic contribution
- **VALUE FOR MONEY**: Range of HE purposes offered
- **Fitness OF purpose**: National goals and priorities
- **IN CONCLUSION**: **Dynamic** & **Relative**

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QUALITY ??

USA PERSPECTIVES



- **WHO** are they?
- **EXCELLENCE**: "*Striving for standards par excellence*"
- **SATISFIED CLIENTS**: Identifying and meeting their needs
- **CONSISTENCY**: "*Reduce variation in practices*"
- **STUDENT SUCCESS & EMPOWERMENT**: "*...qualifying optimally*" and "*... achieving their study & personal goals*"
- **ACCOMPLISHING GOALS**: Institutional mission & goals
- **A CONTINUOUS, TESTED SYSTEM**: "*Proven & validated practices*"
- **DYNAMIC & EVER-CHANGING**: "*Context-specific and multidimensional*"

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RSA & USA QUALITY?



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ EXCELLENCE■ "CLIENT" satisfaction■ CONSISTENCY/COHERENCE■ Contractual PARTNERSHIP■ TRANSFORMATIVE■ Fitness FOR purpose■ VALUE FOR MONEY■ Fitness OF purpose■ Dynamic & RELATIVE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ EXCELLENCE■ Meeting needs of CLIENTS■ Reduce VARIATION in practices■ Student SUCCESS■ STUDENTS achieving their goals■ Accomplishing INSTIT GOALS■ Continuous validated system■ DYNAMIC and ever-changing |
|---|---|

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ETHOS ??

USA PRACTITIONERS



- A **complex** concept to define...??
- **PRACTICES & PROCESSES:** "The way things are done..."
- Common **IDENTITY:** "Glue that ties all institutional things together..."
- **HONOURING THE LARGER "PICTURE:** "Recognition of the institutional context and that everybody contributes..."
- **MINIMUM STANDARDS:** "Accepted guidelines regarding behavior..."
- **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:** "That which distinguishes an entity from others in the same environment..."

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ETHOS? LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES



- **ORIGIN**: Custom, Habit, Character (Greek, 1855)
- Fundamental **character**, underlying **sentiment** or distinctive **spirit** of a **CULTURE**
- Dominant **assumptions, beliefs** and **practices**... of an era, institution, community or group of people
- "**Invisible tapestry**...weaves together all parts and members" (Freed & Klugman, 1997)
- **PERCEIVED** → guides behaviour unconsciously
- Establishes **cultural identity** & **boundaries** (Bennett, 2001)
- **Complex** → cannot be changed at will (Schein, 1999)

CULTURE??



PATTERNS OF SHARED

- **NORMS** : Accepted **standards**, e.g. dress code, styles of communication, nature of annual reporting, etc. ;
- **VALUES**: **Relative worth** of entities, e.g. ethics, diligence, meetings, accuracy, deadlines, professionalism, image, etc. ;
- **PRACTICES**: "...the **way things are done** around here" ;
- **BELIEFS**: Accepted "**truths**" about entities, e.g. "Students are inherently lazy" or "QA&P is government's extended arm"
- **ASSUMPTIONS**: Taken for granted **premises**, e.g. "This place would be wonderful without students" or "Faculty has to be tightly controlled"

CLIMATE?



- Manifestation of institutional culture at the **observable** level, i.e. more **tangible**
- **Leaders/ Managers** project an **ethos**, via the **climate** that they create and maintain
- Starting point in **changing** the **climate** and thus the **ethos** is...the **leaders/managers**

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CONTEXT 1



QUALITY APPROACH
OF SOUTH AFRICAN
HIGHER EDUC SECTOR

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THE HEQC



- QA responsibility in SA HE: **COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION** (CHE)
- Discharged → standing **sub-com** = **HEQC**
- Four elements of its **mandate**:
 - Quality **promotion** in HE sector in general
 - Quality **assurance** of HEIs (via audits)
 - **Programme** accreditation and national reviews
 - **Capacity** development and training

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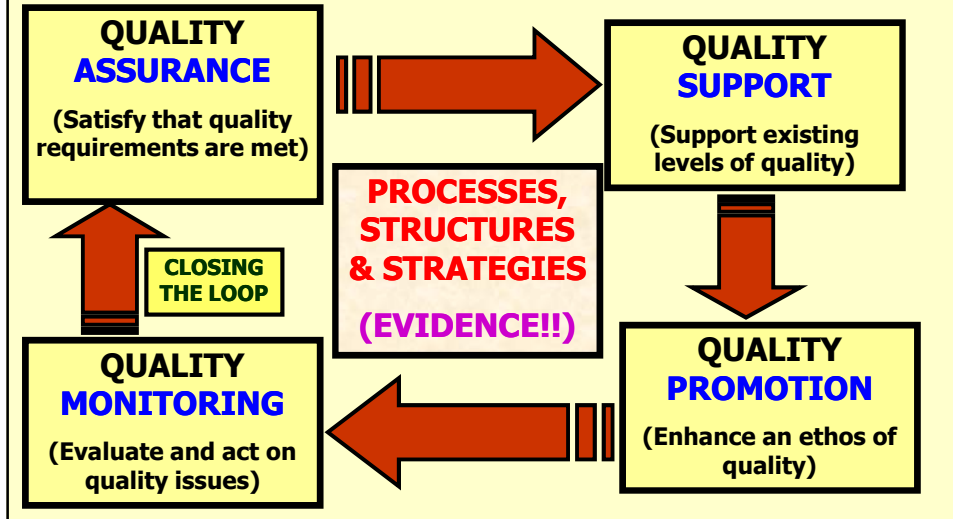
HEQC'S APPROACH



- Operational since 2001/2002...?
- Audit & progr accreditation frameworks & criteria (6 year cycle)
- **Focus: Improvement** (not punitive: "*light touch*")
- **HEIs**: Primary responsibility for QA&P
- **HEIs**: Self-evaluations & peer reviews
- **Finland-SA project**: Capacity building of QA&P systems of selected HEIs → **HEQC's capacity...??**

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HEQC's QUALITY CYCLE



DEMING CYCLE "THINKING"



QUESTION



Does the HEQC's quality approach **BROADLY CORRESPOND to quality approaches of South African Higher Education Institutions???**

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CONTEXT 2



**LONGITUDINAL
RESEARCH PROJECT
RAU & UJ: 1998-2008**

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1998 AND 2003 PROJECT GOALS



■ Extent of change in quality views of FQC's wrt:

- Quality concept
- Student development & support
- Programme development
- Teaching development
- Recognising excellent teaching by faculty
- "Client" or stakeholder satisfaction

2008 project

■ To what extent do FQCs perceive:




























- QA&P as **indicator** of faculty effectiveness
- themselves as true "**owners**" of QA&P?

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FINDINGS: THE QUALITY CONCEPT



1998:	2003:	Fitness FOR purpose	Excellent or high standards	Student transformation	Value for money	Fitness OF purpose	Multi client focus
Arts							
Econ & Mgmt							
Engineer							
Educ & Nursing							
Law							
Science							

FINDINGS: RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENT TEACHING			
1998 : 	Promotion based on good teaching	Financial and other incentives	"Public" and guest awards
2003 : 			
Arts	 		
Econ & Mgmt	 	 	 
Engineering		 	
Educ & Nursing	 		
Law		 	 
Science			

2004 CONCLUSIONS



- QA&P **climate** changed...no QA&P **ethos** yet
- **FQCs realised**: Quality **must be shown** to exist
- QA&P=indicator of faculty effectiveness? - ✓
- FQCs= true "owners" of QA&P? **???** or **X**
- **Reasons** for 2nd outcome? – Tom Angelo [Angelo](#)
- Institutionalise quality **promotion formally**
- **Expect** QA&P efforts from faculties: Difference between a **"lady"** and a **"flower girl"** (Eliza Doolittle, *My Fair Lady*) [2008](#)

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ANGELO'S RESEARCH ON QUALITY PROMOTION (1999)



Vast majority of well-intentioned quality promotion efforts seem to result in **LITTLE OR NO LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT**:

- **JARGON**: Changes have been implemented without an understanding of what **quality**, as well as strategies that are likely to promote it, really means;
- **NON-COHERENCE**: QP is attempted **piecemeal** and not as a systems-level, institutional challenge; and
- **FACULTY "FEARS"**: Deep-seated concerns that QP practices will **undermine scholarship** and academic freedom.

[2004 Conclusions](#)

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2008 PROJECT



- QA&P views → **9 FQCs in UJ**: 6 aspects [2003](#)
- Open-ended structured **SURVEY** → Quality offices of **21** SA public HEIs (**10** responded):
 - institutional QA&P strategies → **same 6** matters
 - characteristics & **indicators** of a quality ethos
 - **strategies** to enhance quality ethos
 - most pertinent institutional QA&P **challenges**

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GROUPWORK



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) METHODOLOGY

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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (1)



- Action research and **organisational change** research methodology (Cooperrider & Srivastva, mid 80s)
- **Focus:** What **GIVES LIFE TO** human systems when they function **AT THEIR BEST ?** (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003)
- **4-D's AI process**
 - **DISCOVERY** = Appreciating "success stories " positively
 - **DREAM** = Envisioning what contributed to "the best"
 - **DESIGN** = Co-constructing an effective future (picture)
 - **DESTINY** = What's needed to sustain the dream?

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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (2)



SMALL GROUPS: Discovery → Dreaming → Design

- 1. Share personal experience** where you enhanced the well-being/ethos of a dept/group (someone at work) and got recognised for it → **success stories**
- 2. Rest of group identifies contributors** to "success stories" → list on flip charts → **positive themes** or **indicators**
- 3. Construct visual illustration** of contributors to form your own **framework** → 2 & 3 to be presented

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FEEDBACK



Group presentations:

- 1. Contributors to or indicators of "success"**
- 2. Possible framework for these indicators??**

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RSA FINDINGS: QUALITY ETHOS INDICATORS



- **Responsiveness** → towards job + customers/stakeholders
- NOT compliance, but **continuous improvement** ("*...in search of quality in ever changing contexts*") → systems approach
- **Everybody's** commitment, and they should be **accountable!**
- **Desire** to be **fit for purpose**: "*...using teaching & learning, research & community engagement to drive mission and vision (to be re-examined regularly)...*"
- **Trust** – that **integrity** & **standards** will prevail
- **Credibility**: Leaders & support staff ("*It's not the What...*")
- Give **recognition** and **celebrate** small successes (*as the cock said to the hens...*)

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USA: QUALITY ETHOS INDICATORS/STRATEGIES



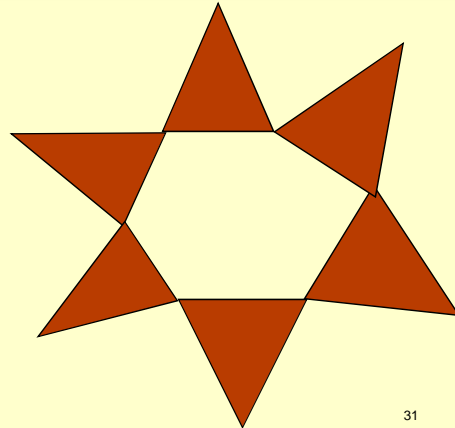
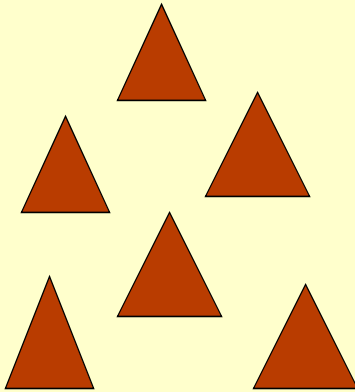
- **A COLLECTIVE SPIRIT**: "*Feeling something **mutual** in the institution...*"; "*Awareness of own **'boxes'** and how they separate us...*"; "*Communicate **common interest** to align...*"
- **REGULAR ARTICULATION**: "*Deep, honest, regular, honoring conversations...*"; "*Listen for lack of understanding*"; "*It's OK to say what you think!*"
- **TRUST IN LEADERSHIP**: "*They should act trustworthy*"; "*Trust is built over time...*"; "*Don't use humour sparingly...*"
- **CREATE & LIVE OWN REALITY**: "*Act as if this is reality...*"; "*Communicate/Determine expectations*"; "*Don't project fear!!*"
- **REGULAR STOCK-TAKING**: "*Step back frequently & reflect*"
- **STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN**: "*This place belongs to us all...*"
- **BENCHMARKING**: "*Provision of supportive comparisons...*"³⁰

USA FRAMEWORK FOR INDICATORS (1)



“Bits and pieces”

“UNIFIED- a shining star!!”



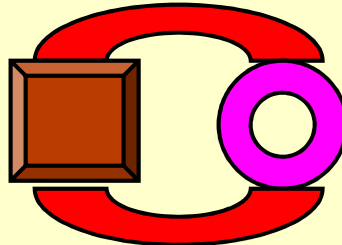
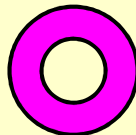
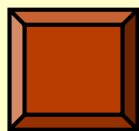
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USA FRAMEWORK FOR INDICATORS (2)

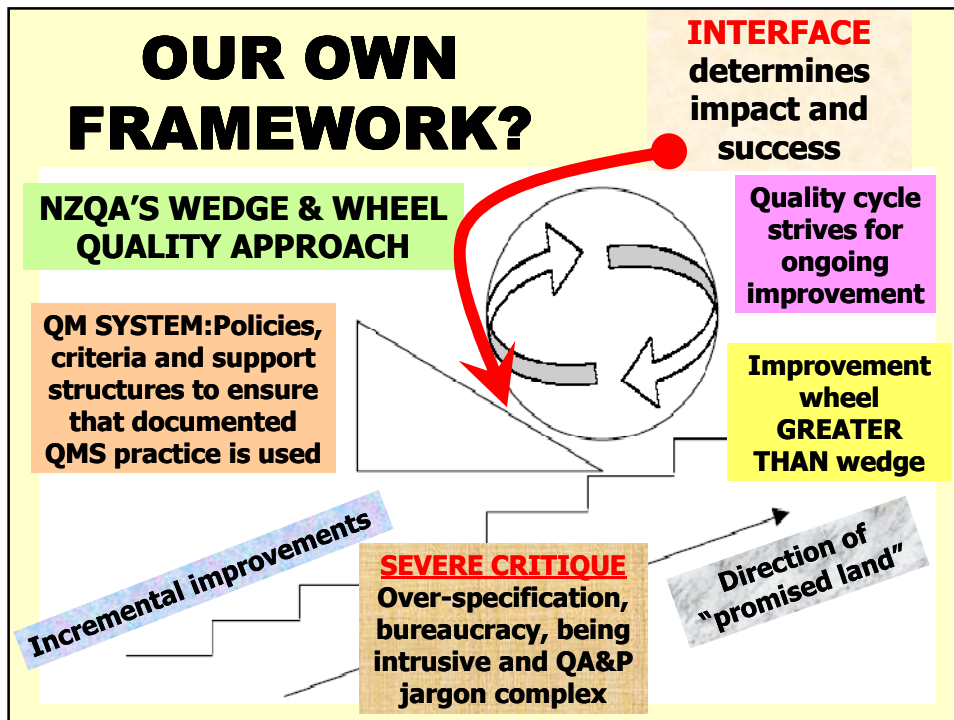


Varied perspectives


Alignment & bridging



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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (3)



WHOLE GROUP: Destiny phase

What's needed [**in an institution**] to **sustain** the indicators or contributors?

Guidelines or **strategies** for implementation?

Let's compare with **2008 project** findings

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SUGGESTED STRATEGIES



- + Quality "*champions*" in/on every faculty/school
- + Faculty and Institutional **Quality committees**
- + **Snr Mgmt** for **Quality & Planning** (linked)
- + **Discourses** on quality jargon = regular practice
- + **Reporting & review**=more than a "*rain dance*": you can improve the "*dancing*", but still doesn't influence the "*climate*" (read: **ETHOS...**)
- + **REWARD AN ETHOS** of airing, sharing & caring!!

IN CONCLUSION



Project to continue in the UK in Sept.

Learnt anything???