

Bridging the Partition between Quality Assurance Units and Educational Development Centres at University: Leverage Points for Quality Development and Enhancement

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ABSTRACT In efforts to develop, assure and enhance quality teaching and learning in universities two structures have emerged in higher education in South Africa namely Quality Assurance (QA) Units and Educational Development Centres (EDCs). The role clarity of these structures in this mandate are however sometimes not explicit resulting in tensions between the two. Using a social realist analytical framework this paper proposes strategies for enhancing synergy between educational development and quality assurance at one South African university named the University of Higher Learning to protect its identity. The paper argues that several leverage points between the two can be used to develop an understanding of their complementary roles, for example, ensuring that educational development expertise is integrated into quality-related work by structuring it into for example programme development, review, accreditation and institutional audit processes and leveraging on the second round of institutional audits with its focus on teaching and learning. The study recommends an integrated model in which quality assurance and educational development work together in developing and implementing both the teaching and learning and the quality assurance agenda in the university.

INTRODUCTION

Both the Academic Development Movement ((Scott et al. 2007; Boughey and Niven 2012; Quinn 2006; Vorster and Quinn 2012) and the Quality Assurance Movement (SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum 2002) seem to have been in place for some time in the South African Higher Education landscape. Boughey and Niven (2012) trace the history of research in the Academic Development (AD) movement in South Africa and identify three phases, the academic support phase, the academic development phase and the higher education development phase. Dating back to the early 1980s they argue that the slim volumes of work of the academic support phase show that overwhelmingly the research was practice-based and often focused on the courses researchers were involved in teaching. During the academic devel-

opment phase some practitioners and researchers began to look towards 'social' understandings of students' learning and research around the language issue and academic literacies became prominent. In the higher education development phase according to Boughey and Niven (2012) the new academic development mandate was to support institutions in achieving their mission, vision and goals for student outputs and to train for and monitor academic teaching and research therefore shifted to these issues. Initial attempts toward quality assurance for higher education in post-apartheid South Africa can be traced to the South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) which was originally established as a statutory body for the 21 public universities in South Africa during the apartheid era by the Universities Act (Act 61 of 1955). According to SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002), the first move by the universities to formalise quality assurance was the establishment in January 1995 of the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU). A brief overview of the historical development of both Educational Development and Quality Assurance is discussed in the next section before looking at how the two entities can be harnessed to complement each other for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

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ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study uses the social realist analytical framework of Archer (1995, 1996, 2000) to advance suggestions on how educational development and quality assurance can work in tandem with each other. Archer (2000) distinguishes between the people (agents) and the parts (structure and culture). The structural domain in Archer's social realist theory comprises things which exist in the institution such as policies, committees, educational development centres and sub structures within the centres such as specialised units like the Educational Development Centre (EDC) and the Quality Assurance directorate (QA). In a university setup, Maphosa (2014) gives examples of structures as faculties, departments as well policies and argues that these determine, constrain and oppress the activities of educational developers. Similarly, these structures, as Danermark et al. (2002:181) show, constrain and enable the actions of the agents (for example the educational developers) and in turn agents reproduce and transform structures. The cultural milieu comprises how and what we think about things. This includes values, beliefs, attitudes, ideas, ideologies, theories and concepts which are manifest through discourses used by particular people at particular times (Quinn 2012). Agents coming into the scene (such as new educational development practitioners joining the educational development centre) inherit a set of doctrines, theories and beliefs which dictate what can have an impact on them and these shape what agents can do (Quinn 2006). Agency, according to Archer (1996) refers to the personal and psychological makeup of individuals, their social roles and relates to the capacity people have to act in voluntary ways. Agents can engage in concerted action to re-shape or retain the structural or cultural features they inherit. Agents, for example educational development practitioners in the new EDC can have causal effect on the relationship between QA and EDC by either working towards building a close working relationship or perpetuating the seeming antagonism between the two. This analytical theoretical framework is used at the level of agency to analyse the role educational developers can play in 'bridging' the partition between educational development and quality assurance for the purpose of improving teaching and learning at one South African University.

OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENTS

Educational Development

The terms academic development and educational development tend to be used in interchangeably in the literature and will be treated as such in this paper. Those who work in this field are referred to as educational development practitioners. Gosling (2009) reporting on a survey of academic development centres in South Africa concludes that there is no clear consensus about what academic development (AD) embraces. A key component of academic development is the improvement of teaching with the express purpose of improving student learning (Ndebele 2014). Quinn (2012) explains that in the international literature the terms academic/educational development are most often associated with academic staff development while in South Africa the term academic development can be used to refer to a number of interlinked areas of work such as student support and development including foundation provision; curriculum development; institutional development including quality assurance work and staff development. Quinn's definition resonates with that of Shay (2012) cited in Boughey and Niven (2012) who broadly defines the field as a range of development and research practices aimed at the professionalisation of teaching and learning most commonly associated with various forms of student, staff, curriculum and policy development.

Amundsen and Wilson (2012) use the term educational development to describe actions planned and undertaken by academics themselves or by others working with academics aimed at enhancing teaching. According to Baume (2002:109) however, academic development is wider and embraces educational development. "Academic development is concerned with the improvement of the process of Higher Education –educational development and with enhancing the capabilities of those who directly support learning in HE. It is a professional activity carried in an academic setting." Citing Lee et al. (2010), Makura and Ntoni (2014) see educational development as involving an understanding of the practices and meaning of higher education teaching and learning while for Maphosa

(2014) the main function of educational development is to support and enhance the quality of teaching and learning with the view of ensuring that throughput rates are improved. For Volbrecht and Boughey (2004) cited in Boughey (2010) the issue of quality is integral to educational development work and they define it as an open set of practices concerned with improving the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. Such definitions in the researcher's view help educational development practitioners and quality assurance practitioners to realise why they should be working closely together.

According to Volbrecht (2003), South African Academic Development (AD) emerged as a liberatory educational and social movement in the 1980s. This is corroborated by Boughey (2010) who states that in South Africa academic development (AD) was introduced into the higher education system in the early 1980s in response to the perceived needs of the then small numbers of black students entering historically white liberal universities. Few authors seem to have written on the history of the academic development movement in South Africa with notable work from (Volbrecht 2003; Volbrecht and Boughey 2004; Boughey 2007, 2010, 2012; Boughey and Niven 2012). A boost to the movement in its early stages according to Boughey and Niven (2012) was the establishment of the South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD), a professional organisation that had begun within a few historically black campuses in the 1980s. Internationally the AD movement in South Africa participated when in 1995 South Africa was represented at the second international meeting of the International Consortium of Educational Development (ICED) (Volbrecht 2003).

Volbrecht and Boughey (2004) identify three phases in the development of the academic development movement in South Africa, the Academic support phase, Academic development phase and the Institutional development phases. During the academic support phase focus was mainly on students' status as speakers of English as an additional language. The earliest initiatives as shown by Boughey (2010) were adjunct in that they were located outside mainstream teaching and learning. She goes on to give examples of the kinds of support that were the focus which included tutorials, language

development courses and skills courses often coordinated by central units staffed by practitioners who had been appointed on the basis of their expertise as teachers.

The second phase of the development of the AD movement in South Africa emerged in the mid-1980s. In the second academic development phase which can be dated from the early 1990s onwards the focus shifted from the student to the institution as the higher education system prepared to transform itself in anticipation of a new political order (Boughey 2010). Focus turned to the development of teaching methodologies and curricula which would meet the needs of the anticipated black majority in the student body. Mehl (2000) cited in Volbrecht (2003) indicates that it was the Education Portfolio of the Independent Development Trust (IDT) that became the major supporter of academic development in the country during this phase. Dependence on donor funding for academic development had a negative effect on the movement however when at the end of 1995 the IDT withdrew its funding for the staffing of AD units and projects in South African higher education institutions resulting in loss of jobs for some of the educational development practitioners. In this regard, Boughey (2007) is of the view that although Academic development had a crucial role to play in addressing equity issues in the 1980s and 1990s it was nonetheless symbolic since it was mostly reliant of soft funding.

The third phase, Institutional Development dates from the 1990s onwards and resulted from the need for universities to align to demands related to globalisation and a more neo-liberal agenda at policy level (Boughey 2007). In order to remain relevant as Boughey (2007) notes, the Academic Development movement responded to policy and other developments at a national level by constructing its work as a form of institutional development. This has seen Academic Development Centres aligning themselves with university teaching and learning agendas by renaming themselves Teaching and Learning Centres (for example the University of Fort Hare). Centres for Higher Education Teaching and Learning (for example the University of Venda) or Centres for Higher Education Development (for example the University of Cape Town). One other issue worth noting as shown in Boughey (2007) is that during the time when the academic development movement was in dire financial

straits, the quality movement began to become more visible in universities and some educational development practitioners sensing threats to their jobs moved over to join the quality assurance units or directorates. Given this scenario, one wonders why quality units and educational development centres do not seem to peacefully co-exist yet there has been staff mobility across the two.

Quality Assurance

Several conceptions of quality and quality assurance are reflected in the literature on the subject. SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002) defines quality as maintaining and applying academic and educational standards both in the sense of minimum expectations and requirements that should be complied with and in the sense of ideals of excellence that should be striven for. For Kahsay (2012) a quality assurance system in higher education may be described as the totality of the policies, values/attitudes, procedures, structures, resources and actions devoted to ensure continuous improvement of quality of the educational processes. Similarly Woodhouse (2013) says quality assurance denotes the policies, attitudes, actions, and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is maintained and enhanced. Harvey and Green (1993) identify five conceptions of quality; quality as exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation. Closely related to the fitness for purpose concept, SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002) adds 'fitness of purpose' as another conception of quality. According to Harvey and Green (1993) quality as exceptional denotes quality as special, distinctive, excellence, elite and unattainable by most. Parri (2006) cited in Shava and Ndebele (2014) argues that this definition sets a goal for universities and academic communities to be always the best to belong to the elite and achieve better outcomes than the others.

In the second notion of quality as perfection, according to Harvey and Green (1993), quality is seen as zero defects and the emphasis is on process and conformance to standards rather than exceeding high standards. A third conception of quality, the value for money approach to quality, foregrounds the notion of accountability. As Biggs (2001) shows, a quality institu-

tion in this view is one that satisfies the demands of public accountability providing an assurance that the university keeps its promises to its customers. The focus in the value for money concept is on efficiency and effectiveness, measuring outputs against inputs (Kis 2005).

In the quality as fitness for purpose concept according to Harvey and Green (1993) quality only has meaning in relation to the purpose of the product or service. Parri (2006) concurs and argues that such a definition enables the institutions to define goals in the mission statements and the quality is assessed and presented through mission statement and goal achievement." Thus, when an institution states objectives it is implicitly claiming that this is what it will do. SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002) argues that working with a fitness for purpose definition of quality raises the issue of 'fitness of purpose' and states that if the vision and mission of an institution were generally seen as inappropriate by wider society or if an institution set its sights very low then fitness for purpose has little value. The purpose has to be appropriate in order for fitness for purpose to become a valuable concept of quality for universities. The purpose must be to respond to societal needs. The CHE Institutional Audit Manual (2007) stresses that the fitness of purpose of the mission, goals and objectives of an institution should be determined in relation to institutional responsiveness to the local, national and international contexts.

Another conception of quality embraced in the South African higher education sector is that of quality as transformation. The concept of transformation in the South African context is linked to the past. As the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (1996) shows, successful policy will have to overcome a historically determined pattern of fragmentation and inequality. A key feature of the new transformation agenda is an expansion of student enrolments using the principles of equity of access and outcomes and redress. "Such 'massification' of South African higher education will necessarily involve different patterns of teaching and learning, new curriculums and more varied modes of delivery" (Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation 1996).

From the conceptions of quality above a definition of quality assurance is then deduced.

Filippakou and Tapper (2008) see quality assurance as making judgments against defined criteria. According to SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002: 11), "Quality assurance should be understood as a measure of the value of what we do and the system of benchmarks that we use to make sure that standards are maintained and improved where possible on a continual basis". It is about making certain there are systems in place so that the organisation continues to deliver the right things every time to meet customers' requirements (Harvey and Green 1993). Furthermore, the SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002:11) provides a definition of quality assurance aligned to the 'fitness for purpose' concept of quality when they state that, "If quality is defined as fitness for purpose then quality assurance is 'assessing the level of fitness for purpose'. Put more simply, quality assurance is 'providing assurance that the university keeps its promises to its customers that the actuality lives up to the promotional material."

What can be inferred from the definitions in the preceding paragraph is that quality assurance is seen as essentially a checking mechanism using predetermined criteria on the effectiveness of programmes or interventions. These definitions imply that quality assurance might result in simple compliance (what is sometimes known as the 'tick box' phenomenon) where improvement of learning is no longer a priority but rather the priority is satisfying authorities. Filippakou and Tapper (2008) argue that viewed in this light quality assurance could be destructive should the quality goals be pursued through the imposition of a narrow evaluative framework.

In contrast to quality assurance, quality enhancement (a conception that as an educational development practitioner the researcher aligns himself to) according to Filippakou and Tapper (2008) is about instilling in every member of staff the desire to improve quality and giving them the time, the incentive, the means to actually improve quality that might or might not involve quality assurance. This involves taking deliberate steps to bring about continual improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students (University of Aberdeen Quality Assurance Handbook 2007). The CHE Institutional Audit Criteria (2004) uses quality development and enhancement concurrently and states that these include the policies, systems,

strategies and resources used by the institution to develop and enhance quality. Biggs (2001:223) underscores the importance of quality enhancement when he argues that an institution needs not only to design its teaching delivery system in accordance with its espoused theory but also to establish built-in mechanisms that allow it like the individual reflective teacher to continually review and improve current practice.

NATIONAL QUALITY AS SURANCE STRUCTURES

The need for universities to be able to assure quality of the teaching and learning they offer to students has become increasingly important as governments, parents and industry begin to question the 'value for money' provided to institutions of higher education competing in a global market place. According to SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum (2002:5), the first move by the universities in South Africa to formalise quality assurance was the establishment in January 1995 of the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) whose role was to "...assist universities to conduct productive institutional self-evaluation at different levels; and create a basis in the HE system for accreditation of programmes for the purpose of articulation". The initial focus of the unit was on institutional audits based on self-evaluation and site visits by a panel of peers. The philosophy was one of self-regulation of quality improvement rather than quality control, of evaluating institutions against their own mission statements rather than uniform standards and the emphasis was on quality systems rather than quality per se and fitness for purpose was the principal term of reference. "The QPU planned to audit all 21 universities within its first three years and had undertaken two pilot audits and seven formal audits by the time the decision was taken to close the unit in December 1999" (SAUVCA's National Quality Assurance Forum 2002:5.) It appears the Council on Higher Education when it was eventually established as shown in a subsequent section adopted this approach to quality assurance. Reasons for the closure of this seemingly important quality assurance structure in 1999 are however not given in the National Quality Assurance Forum report.

In 2001 the Executive Committee of SAUVCA recognised the value of a universities qual-

ty assurance forum and the SAUVCA National Quality Assurance Forum (SNQAF) was formalised within the SAUVCA structures. The following quotation summarises the rationale for the formation of the forum; “Fundamental to the QA Forum is the recognition that if QA is to take roots in our system and if South Africa is to avoid some of the problems other systems have encountered then the institution needs to own and co-shape its structures and processes. SAUVCA’s premise is that the sector has a fundamental role to play in building a culture and practice of self-regulation and accountability. Complementing the work of the HEQC in proactive and partnership-based processes is therefore vital (SAUVCA’s National Quality Assurance Forum 2002: 2).”

Attempts at focusing on quality assurance at government level in South Africa can be traced to the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) report of 1996 which foregrounded the restructuring of the Higher Education curriculum. The report proposed a single coordinated education system. According to the NCHE report (1996:7), “The mechanisms for creating an expanded single system include a new qualifications framework, a quality assurance system ...a systematic planning process and an improvement of the capacity and infrastructure of higher education institutions... Higher education programmes must be offered within a single coherent qualifications framework based on a laddered set of qualifications from higher education certificates and diplomas to master’s and doctoral degrees.”

The proposal for a single coordinated higher education system by the National Commission on Higher education set the pace for far reaching quality reforms in the Higher Education sector as shown by the ensuing legislation and policy documents starting with the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education of 1997. The Education White Paper 3 (1997) calls for a higher education system that will facilitate horizontal and vertical mobility by developing a framework for higher education qualifications which incorporates adequate routes of articulation as well as flexible entry and exit points. The Education White Paper 3 (1997: 9) called for quality assurance of the higher education system and introduced the concept of a programme based approach which;

- ♦ Is planned, governed and funded as a single coherent national system.
- ♦ Will promote diversification of the curriculum and qualification structure with programmes developed and articulated within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) encouraging an open and flexible system based on credit accumulation and multiple entry and exit points for learners.
- ♦ The programme-based approach to planning and development by ensuring greater articulation between the different sectors of the higher education system, promoting flexibility and diversity in the range of programmes offered and fostering co-operation between institutions will result in structural changes and a reconfiguration of the institutional landscape in the medium to long-term.

Education White Paper 3 (1997:3) argues that, “there is no moral basis for using the principle of institutional autonomy as a pretext for resisting democratic change or in defense of mismanagement. Institutional autonomy is therefore inextricably linked to the demands of public accountability.” The White paper goes on to require that institutions receiving public funds should be able to report how and how well money has been spent. Secondly, it requires that institutions should demonstrate the results they achieve with the resources at their disposal. Thirdly it requires that institutions should demonstrate how they have met national policy goals and priorities. This third requirement resonates with the fitness of purpose concept of quality assurance. To assume this supervisory role the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 established the Council on Higher Education (CHE) with the proviso to among other things; promote quality assurance in higher education and audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions. In addition the Council for Higher Education (CHE) was to be responsible for advising the Minister of Higher Education and Training on higher education and to support the development of higher education. The state’s role thus constitutes a mode of involvement that is supervisory creating an enabling higher education policy framework that includes appropriate structures, substantive policies and adequate public funding. To fulfil its mandate in terms of the Act the CHE established the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in 2001 as

a subcommittee; responsible for building capacity in teaching and learning; building and enhancing capacity of quality assurance systems and improving the quality of Higher Education provision at systemic, institutional programme and individual levels. According to CHE (2004:1), "The mandate of the HEQC includes quality promotion, institutional audit and programme accreditation."

Following the various institutional mergers and the creation of the three main institutional types the year 2007 saw the promulgation of the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) and an accompanying implementation handbook with timelines for institutions to align their qualifications to the new framework. This signalled the removal of the responsibility for setting standards for Higher Education from the South African qualifications authority (SAQA) to the CHE. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is assigned the responsibility for the generation and setting of standards for all higher education qualifications and for ensuring that such qualifications meet SAQA's criteria for registration on the NQF. In addition the new framework:

- ♦ Provides the basis for integrating all higher education qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and its structures for standards generation and quality assurance.
- ♦ It improves the coherence of the higher education system and facilitates the articulation of qualifications thereby enhancing the flexibility of the system and enabling students to move more efficiently over time from one programme to another as they pursue their academic or professional careers.
- ♦ The new qualifications framework establishes common parameters and criteria for qualifications design and facilitates the comparability of qualifications across the system.

The HEQC first cycle of quality assurance through institutional audits was conceptualised and developed between 2001 and 2004 and implemented between 2004 and 2011. In the HEQC audit process all institutions were subject to the same approach and criteria in order to create a common basis on which to develop a shared understanding and approach to quality. According to CHE Framework for the Second Round of Institutional Audits (2011) the institutional audit process looked at the effectiveness of an

institution's internal quality assurance mechanisms in the three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement with improvement as its main aim. Specifically the audits looked at institutional arrangements for:

- ♦ Quality assurance – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to satisfy itself that its quality requirements and standards are being met;
- ♦ Quality support – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to support and sustain existing levels of quality;
- ♦ Quality development and enhancement – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to develop and enhance quality; and
- ♦ Quality monitoring – the policies, systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to monitor, evaluate and act on quality issues (CHE Institutional Audits Criteria 2004:1).

A reflection on the first round of institutional audits by the CHE shows that there have been benefits. The CHE Framework for the Second Round of Institutional Audits (2011) shows that the institutional audit with its focus on fitness for purpose and on the effectiveness of internal systems for quality management across the three core functions provided institutions with a worthwhile opportunity to identify gaps in terms of policies, processes and structures. Institutions reported that undertaking a self-evaluation process which culminated in the submission of a report for use in the audit was a worthwhile part of the process. Furthermore the CHE Framework for the Second Round of Institutional Audits (2011) shows that as a result of the audit process institutions have developed and implemented systems for the management of quality in the three core functions. They have produced improvement plans based on audit recommendations and generally incorporated quality issues into their strategic planning processes. The CHE reflection concludes that interactions between the HEQC and institutions in relation to their post-audit improvement plans suggest that most institutions have managed to include quality in their strategic plans consequently enabling them to take a further step to embed quality into institutional practices.

The CHE has now developed criteria for the second round of Institutional Audits (now

dubbed the quality enhancement project) which is likely to impact greatly on the quality assurance of teaching and learning in higher education. According to the Draft Criteria for the Second Round of Institutional Audits (2011: 4) the second round of audits is intended;

- ♦ To support pedagogic and curriculum innovation as well as the professionalisation of teaching and learning and the recognition of academic staff involved in teaching and learning. The HEQC will interact with institutions about their approaches to teaching and learning; the notion of student experience and the manner in which institutions support academic staff members and facilitate their development in the area of teaching quality and facilitating engaged student learning.
- ♦ To ensure that across the higher education system there are minimum levels of quality in programme design and capacity to offer a programme. The HEQC accreditation system will ensure that all public and private providers offer curricula which meet minimum standards in terms of design and that appropriately qualified staff are available to teach on programmes.

Notwithstanding the positive spinoffs of the audits as discussed above, some critique of the audits is worth noting. In a comparison of experiences of the institutional audits at three South African universities Botha et al. (2008) found that while at all three institutions the audit preparation process especially the self-evaluation exercise was experienced to be a more useful learning and developmental experience, there were negative views about the value of the HEQC external panel audit visit which included;

- ♦ shortness of the interviews and the perceived bias of some of the panellists which militated against meaningful engagement.
- ♦ The interviews were very fragmented
- ♦ there was little engagement with the panel
- ♦ The audit visit seemed more focused on accountability (Botha et al. 2008: 8).

The finding above confirms findings from the literature that have challenged the over-reliance on peer review as a method for conducting quality assurance by some writers on the grounds of the subjectivity of peers in a competitive market-based and hierarchical system (Blackmore 2004; Harvey and Newton 2004).

RECONCILING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HIGHER LEARNING (UHL)

The concepts of quality as enhancement and quality as assurance seem to be conceived as separate at UHL with quality enhancement associated with the work of educational developers while the concept of quality assurance is associated with the quality assurance unit as shown by the tension that brewed between the two entities in 2011 discussed in a subsequent paragraph. Biggs (2001) distinguishes between assuring quality either in prospect or in retrospect. He explains that retrospective quality assurance looks back to what has already been done and makes a summative judgment against external standards. "The agenda is managerial rather than academic with accountability as a high priority; procedures are top-down and bureaucratic..... the procedures adopted address "value for money" and are frequently counter-productive for quality in the sense of providing rich teaching contexts and enhanced learning outcomes" (Biggs 2001: 222). Most indicators of performance in retrospective quality assurance tend to concentrate on administrative procedures and processes rather than on the actual academic project. This seems to be the dominant discourse within Quality Assurance units. Educational Development Centres on the other hand seem to be aligned to what Biggs (2001) terms prospective quality assurance which is concerned with assuring that teaching and learning does now and in future will continue to fit the purpose of the institution and encourages continuing upgrading and improvement of teaching through quality enhancement. This is corroborated by Kis (2005) who writes that quality procedures for improvement purposes aim at promoting future performance rather than making judgments on past performance and that the criteria and procedures used are intended to strengthen the conditions, motivations, scope and level of information of higher education institutions towards quality improvement. This difference in philosophical underpinning between the quality assurance units and educational development centres seems to be a source of tension between the two entities. In this regard, Gosling and D'Andrea (2001: 2) note, "Because they also have competing improvement

agendas based on often opposing values the relationship between educational development and quality assurance is a complex one. The differences between these values are at the heart of the tensions occurring between them". This paper is an attempt to propose an alternative integrated model in which educational development and quality assurance would benefit from working together. To enrich the discussion in this concept paper, a survey was conducted with the two educational development practitioners and the two quality assurance practitioners at the University of Higher Learning to solicit their views on how the partition between the educational development centre and quality assurance directorate could be bridged. The data is integrated in this section.

At the University of higher Learning at the level of structure the relationship that the educational development centre (EDC) has with schools and administrative departments plays a vital role in enhancing its visibility as well as ensure its impact on the institutional core business of teaching and learning. A sub-structure of Senate called the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee has been established. The inaugural Senate Teaching and Learning Committee meeting was held on 16th of November 2011 and quarterly meetings of the committee were held in 2012 where the EDC director tabled four key teaching and learning issues namely: the New Staff Academic Preparation programme, the Vice Chancellor's Excellence in Teaching awards, the Student Academic Excellence awards for returning students and the initiative to introduce targeted academic support to all first year students of 2011 repeating a module in 2012 (Senate Teaching and Learning Committee Minutes 2012). At school level School Teaching and Learning Committees which report to the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee are also being established. The years 2011 and 2012 have mainly been of putting structures in place to enable the operationalisation of the centre's mandate. The centre's business/ strategic plan has now been developed for the next five years and presented to school boards for input and buy in and has been positively received.

Referring to the importance of key agents in quality enhancement and quality development, SAUVCA National Quality Assurance Forum (2002: 17) emphasises that, "The one essential pre-requisite to the development of an effective

QA system in a university is commitment from the very top. The University Council, Senate and Vice-Chancellor need to be formally committed to a high quality institution and the development of an effective QA system. As already indicated in a preceding section, the director of EDC sits on various committees that deal with teaching and learning, curriculum, assessment and quality assurance issues. Both EDC and QA belong to the following subcommittees of Senate which are directly linked to the implementation of the teaching and learning agenda; Executive Committee of Senate (SENEX), Academic Planning Committee, Quality Assurance Board and the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee which has just been established. This enables the two Centres to clarify their roles and in the process reduce tensions. The Academic Planning Committee is responsible for the approval of any changes to existing programmes and scrutiny of any new programme applications before these can be tabled before council. As a member of this committee the director of EDC plays a significant role in ensuring that the curriculum is aligned. The director specifically focuses on the alignment between learning outcomes, content, teaching methodology and assessment criteria to ensure that these are explicit and talk to each other. Where there is need for improvement the director then arranges for consultations with lecturers concerned to assist them improve their submissions.

One area that needs to be addressed in order for the educational development centre and the quality assurance directorate to work closely is the role clarity of the two entities. The four respondents were asked whether they felt there was role clarity in the university between the educational development and the quality assurance directorate. Three of the four respondents felt there was no role clarity between the two directorates as shown in the responses below;

I think the role of the two Directorates are very clear as outlined in the University strategic documents and their business plans, but the only issue that needs to be done is to make awareness to the University community for them to understand what the two directorate do.

There seems to be misunderstanding of the role description especially by academics. Some do not know where to go for assistance when working on a programme. This could be clarified through collaboration between the two

units. Currently we are operating in silos and this is detrimental to the university community. At times I sometimes feel the two units could be integrated into one big institutional quality promotion unit.

The roles of the educational development centre and the quality assurance directorate overlap in some instances and there is need for their activities to be streamlined explicitly. The areas that need clarity include the skills needed by personnel in the educational development centre and personnel in the quality assurance directorate. You find quality assurance staff attending capacity building initiatives in teaching and learning methodologies instead of quality assurance activities in higher education.

We both don't really know where we are supposed to give each other a hand I guess. It is not clear as to when and how should the educational development centre and the quality assurance directorate work together, and I think if this can be addressed then the working relationship will be a good and healthy one so as to avoid a situation where one will think that the other directorate is taking the responsibility and or role of the other.

In line with the majority feeling by the respondents that there was no role clarity, the role of the educational development centre in curriculum development and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) programme alignment process has in the researcher's view not been clearly understood by the Quality Assurance directorate (QA). The university is currently in the process of aligning its qualifications with the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) and this involves considerable re-circulation in some modules. The QA directorate however initially left educational developers out of this process. This is probably due to lack of understanding of the role of educational development in the university's quality development agenda compounded by the fact that probably before the establishment of the educational development centre the educational development role was conflated with the quality assurance role and located in the Quality Assurance unit. Hénard and Roseveare (2012) call for the need to clarify the ownership of pedagogical development and develop a clear-cut understanding of these responsibilities at departmental or school level and to this the researcher adds the

importance of understanding these roles at institutional level. Despite repeated requests to participate in alignment workshops held by the QA; in 2011 such participation was not granted with QA preferring to work only with academics on the process. Yet as Boughey (2010:14) argues, "The long awaited finalisation of the HEQF means that all institutions will now need to review qualifications and the programmes leading to those qualifications in order to ensure they are aligned with the framework... For this to happen a number of things need to be in place at institutional level including the will (on the part of management and mainstream staff) and capacity (on the part of AD practitioners and mainstream staff) to drive and implement the review process."

It appears this peripheral role of academic development is not peculiar only to the University of Higher Learning. Boughey (2007:6) writes that in the majority of institutions quality-related units are separate from academic development structures and that while academic development practitioners might be called upon for advice in programme development or review processes they do not necessarily have a structured role to play in assuring and developing quality. There is therefore urgent need in the researcher's view for educational development to gain entry into the quality assurance domain and work more closely with the quality assurance practitioners and exercise more 'agency' in the curriculum development and implementation agenda of the university.

There is need for formalized synergy between the Quality Assurance directorate and the EDC if educational development is to play a meaningful role in quality assurance and promotion of the curriculum. As Boughey (2007:7) shows; "Harnessing the potential and capacity of Academic Development in pursuit of the conception of quality ... will require new linkages to be formed between existing structures Expertise on issues related to teaching and learning residing in Academic Development structures needs to be linked to quality-related activities in a formal way rather than in the informal 'we call on Academic Development when necessary' manner which currently characterises much interaction between the two fields of work."

As Boughey (2007:7) shows, a focus on structure essentially involves a focus on process. It would be possible for example, she argues, to

locate academic development and quality-related work in different structures (Teaching and Learning Centres versus Quality Management Units) but still ensure that academic development expertise was integrated into quality-related work by structuring it into for example, programme review, programme development and accreditation and institutional audit processes rather than constructing this expertise as something to be called upon in the event of a problem. In this regard, Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) propose an integrated educational development model that creates the links between curriculum development and quality assurance by creating a collegial environment within which to design curriculum that provides advice and guidance on assuring the quality of the curriculum developed and argue that, "This integrated approach has a number of benefits for the institution staff and most importantly students. It begins by addressing the tensions between quality assurance and educational development by providing wide-ranging support for teaching departments to enhance the educational experience of students. It also creates the opportunity for dialogue between quality-assurance staff and educational developers around the internal and external quality-assessment policies and procedures (Gosling and D'Andrea 2001:6)."

On the issue of synergy between the two directorates, the four respondents for this study (two educational development practitioners and two quality assurance practitioners) were asked to state what they felt should be the relationship between the educational development centre and the quality assurance directorate. All the four respondents felt there was need for a closer working relationship as both entities were concerned with improving the quality of teaching and learning as shown in the following responses;

Because the educational development centre deals with supporting and enhancing teaching and learning while the quality assurance directorate deals with quality in teaching and learning among other things, the relationship should therefore be strong in that both directorate support the core business of the University and strive through ensuring that the core business is executed smoothly.

The quality assurance directorate and the educational development centre should work together in coordinating and promoting pro-

grammes and services to address the challenges facing academics and students in achieving expected outcomes of teaching and learning in the institution as well as coordinating quality promotion and capacity development activities.

I think they are all concerned about driving the quality agenda of the university.

One respondent felt a service level agreement should be developed between the two entities and that they should work closely in research as shown in the following response;

There should be some service level agreements between the educational development centre and quality assurance. Since both pursue issues related to quality teaching and learning they should collaboratively engage each other in this pursuit. This entails coordinating institutional research activities related to teaching and learning together.

Attempts have already been made to forge a close working relationship with QA in this regard and to try and overcome the challenge which seems is for the educational development centre to demonstrate that deeper understanding of the teaching and learning expertise resides in educational development than in QA units. At a recent new staff induction workshop for example the researcher co-facilitated a session on assessment of student learning with the QA director. The EDC has made deliberate efforts to co-facilitate workshops with the QA. For example at a workshop organised by the QA in 2012 the EDC was able to present a session on how to prepare a learning guide. It is the EDC's intention to invite the newly appointed Head of Department in quality assurance to the EDC workshop series and to even request him to facilitate some of the sessions related to quality assurance. Further stronger relations have begun to emerge between the two directorates. During preparations for departmental reviews in the University EDC and QA have started working closely through organising joint workshops for departments undergoing reviews and sharing the responsibility of chairing the departmental review sessions. In addition, during the recently introduced Vice Chancellor's Excellence in Teaching awards in the university which are driven by the EDC the QA directorate was invited to sit in adjudication panels for the portfolios of academics who had applied for the awards. Furthermore during a recent policy review pro-

cess for both teaching and learning and quality assurance related policies the two directorates organised a joint retreat where together with School Deans, Heads of Departments and academics policies were jointly reviewed. All these efforts have brought the two directorates closer to each other 'bridging the divide' that initially characterised interactions between the two.

One major concern at the level of structure seems to be in terms of the office where the QA reports which is the Vice Chancellor's office. On the issue of reporting lines two of the respondents felt the quality assurance directorate should continue reporting to the vice Chancellor as it dealt with some strategic issues that were not directly academic, one respondent felt the directorate should move to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic's portfolio while a fourth respondents felt quality assurance should have a dual reporting line to both the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Vice Chancellor. The following were the responses on the issue;

The directorate of institutional planning and quality assurance is at institutional level, therefore it should report directly to the Vice Chancellor's office. The educational development centre deals with teaching and learning, which belongs to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic.

QA also deals with strategic planning of the University which falls under the wing of the Vice Chancellor; therefore on this matter it is necessary that the reporting line should remain. But the other part which QA also deals with, (academic side), programmes and enrolment planning should be shifted to the DVC academic as this office is the one responsible for every academic side of the university. Therefore if I was a decision maker I would suggest that QA should report to both offices.

I do not have a problem with quality assurance reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor but in some institutions similar departments report to Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic because of the nature of the work done by these structures. The issue of reporting lines can be further explored in order to ensure that there is consistency.

I think this is a flaw that leads to some form of disfunctionality in the university. I believe that if the two could report directly to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, whose function is directly linked to the smooth running of aca-

demic activities, a lot of malfunctioning in the university could be avoided.

The researcher tends to agree with the respondents who felt quality assurance should either report directly to the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic or have a dual reporting relationship to both Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic and Vice Chancellor. For quality assurance to be effective it has to be strongly linked to the teaching and learning portfolio which falls under the auspices of the DVC Academic. The fact that the QA at UHL reports to the Vice Chancellor directly rather than to the Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for teaching and learning would be the first structural constraint that needs to be rectified. If both EDC and QA report to the same executive head synergy between the two centres would be more easily achieved. In the researcher's view therefore the Quality Assurance portfolio should report and be accountable to the DVC Academic.

In the domain of structure according to the newly developed strategic plan the Educational Development Practitioners from EDC and Quality Assurance Officers from the QA will sit in various school committee structures such as the School Teaching and Learning Committee and the School Quality Assurance Committee while the directors sit in similar committees at institutional level. This offers opportunities for both QA and the EDC to collaboratively influence the culture of the institution in relation to teaching and learning as through such committees we will be responsible for driving the review of teaching and policies including policies related to the quality of teaching and learning, assessment and curriculum

The recent institutional audit by the Higher Educational Quality Committee (HEQC) has provided leverage for the EDC to gain entry and exercise agency in quality assurance related matters. Following the HEQC Institutional Audit in 2010 the EDC been asked to lead a task team that has developed an improvement plan for a recommendation related to assessment. This brings the QA and EDC directors closer to each other as they work on the improvement plan process and this assists in bridging the divide between the two entities. The CHE's next round of institutional audits (dubbed the quality enhancement project) with its focus on teaching and learning will be a leverage the EDC intends to use to gain entry into the quality assur-

ance arena in the university through showcasing teaching expertise during the preparation process for the next round of audits. This it is envisaged will further contribute positively to the working relationship of the two entities. According to the Draft Criteria for the Second Round of Institutional Audits (2011) the second round of audits is intended to support pedagogic and curriculum innovation as well as the professionalisation of teaching and learning and the recognition of academic staff involved in teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that both quality assurance and educational development have a critical role to play in enhancing quality teaching and learning in higher education. While academic development and quality-related work can reside in different structures (educational development centres versus quality assurance units) this paper demonstrates that synergy can be attained by ensuring that educational development expertise is integrated into quality-related work by structuring it into for example programme development, review, accreditation and institutional audit processes. The Council on Higher Education's second round of institutional audits with its focus on teaching and learning will provide a good leverage point for such integration as educational development centres will play an integral role in the preparation process for the audits as opposed to the previous round of audits where this role seems to have been peripheral.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations are put forward: Firstly that the Quality Assurance Unit and the Educational Development Centre should work together to enhance quality teaching and learning and secondly that a committee incorporating both the quality assurance unit and the educational development centre be put in place to work on the preparation for the second round of institutional audits (now dubbed the quality enhancement project). The study further recommends that the quality assurance director reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for teaching and learning rather than directly to the Vice Chancellor.

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