Active/Applied Research on Online Learning and Quality Assurance

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Implementing QM: What We Know, What We’re Learning

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Session Objectives

• Describe the ongoing research at Quality Matters on QM implementation, quality assurance, and change management
• Identify your institutional implementation progress
• Explain ways to overcome barriers and maintain momentum
• Learn how to engage with QM on this research
Continuum of Excellence for Quality Assurance (CEQA)

- Ad-Hoc
  - Episodic or custom application
- Quality Evaluation
  - Demonstrating a QE process
- Continuous Improvement
  - Going beyond quality thresholds
- Benchmarking
  - Compare and connect across institutions
- Institutional Change
  - Sustaining a culture of quality
More on CEQA

• CEQA is grounded in Change Management theory and Diffusion of Innovation

• We know from related research that there are common issues

• Prior research on QM & CEQA revealed it’s not often a linear path, & must be led well
A “classic”* Model of Change Management - Phase 1 Research

1. Create a sense of urgency**
2. Build a guiding coalition**
3. Form a strategic vision**
4. Enlist volunteers**
5. Remove barriers
6. Generate and celebrate short term wins**
7. Sustain momentum
8. Institute the change

*Kotter, J. 1996. Leading Change
**QM Research found as critical factors

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Change Management in Higher Education - Phase 2 Research

• Top-down does not work well
• Leaders need emotional intelligence – “commiseration”
• Leadership from below is critical – “bridging staff”
• Faculty members must help shape

**Key leverage points:**
- Faculty professional development
- Designated funding!
- Rewarding and disseminating exemplary practices
Chat: Share your struggles & successes

What barriers to change have you encountered or overcome, when implementing QM at your institution?
QM Implementation Research - 2021

• Special Issue - Policy, Leadership and Organizational Change
  o Focused on “policy, implementation, & transformation”
  o Study link between policies and institutional culture change

• Case study approach - using the QM Framework to examine course QA implementation

• Opportunity to connect with QMC’s who have been on this journey

• Opportunity to inform new audiences about the QM Framework and implementing QM
Defining Organizational Culture

• Accumulated shared learning of organization members which creates set of organizational norms
  • Examples - shared language, reward systems

• What is taught to new members:
  • “correct” way to perceive, think, feel, and behave; organizational values.

(Schein and Schein, 2016)
Organizational Culture Challenges

- Changing organizational culture is extremely challenging.
- In the context of Higher Education, it is even more challenging:
  - Norms include views of faculty autonomy, definitions of teaching quality, online versus face-to-face.
Defining a Culture of Quality

Having a significant percentage of institutional faculty, staff, and administration collaboratively work to create guidelines and engage in practices to achieve quality assurance goals, as well as demonstrate and communicate a collective commitment to continuous improvement.
What is an Implementation Plan?

A plan for course design quality assurance and continuous improvement that:

• Is tied to institutional goals
• Includes specific targets, metrics, and data to evaluate progress and efficacy
• Was created in collaboration with institutional stakeholders.
What is an Implementation Plan?

The implementation plan includes:

• Professional development planned for the next year or more that supports institutional QA goals

• An associated budget & administrative support

• Target goals and metrics for facets such as internal and/or Certified course reviews.
Let’s Chat!

Does your institution have an implementation plan for online course quality? [yes or no]

If yes, is it tied to institutional goals?
Framing the Research - The Big Question

Drivers of Institutional Change

- People
- Policies
- Practices
- Supports
- Stakeholders
Mixed Methods Study

Questionnaire
Characteristics of institutions & the QMCs

Interviews
Questions for QMCs
Participant Information

• 109 = population of “high activity” member institutions
• 43 = survey respondents (Response rate = 39%)
• 17 = qualitative interview respondents

“high activity” based on:
1. Number of Internal QM Reviews conducted in QMs Course Review Management System
2. Number of Official QM Reviews
3. QM Professional Development participation
Research Question for Survey

RQ1: What goals, supports, people, policies, and processes are related to higher implementation activity on QM internal reviews, Official QM reviews, and QM faculty professional development?
## Survey results - Institutional Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>had a course quality implementation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63%</td>
<td>had a committee of stakeholders invested in online learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>reported that all faculty had the opportunity to work with an ID to design their course</td>
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<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>offered LMS templates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>offered syllabus templates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77%</td>
<td>had faculty development staff knowledgeable in online pedagogy</td>
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</tbody>
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Let’s Chat!

*Does your institution have implementation supports?*

1 = LMS template  
2 = online syllabus template  
3 = Committee of stakeholders  
4 = Dedicated staff or PD for online faculty development
Select Internal Review Correlations

- Ensuring that faculty teaching online receive a minimum level of professional development/preparedness for online learning
- Celebrating faculty achievements related to QM
- Recognizing faculty’s QM work in RPT
- The availability of online course syllabus templates
- Having clearly articulated minimum quality standards for online learning
Select QM Certified Correlations

- Full-time faculty are required to attend one or more QM workshops.
- Faculty are compensated if their course achieves formal QM certification.
- Faculty being encouraged to design their course to meet quality standards, but not being required to do so.
- The institution communicating their QA metrics and goals to students.
- QM workshops and certifications are recognized in RPT.
Select PD Correlations

- Acceptance and use of quality standards for online learning
- The institution has a way to track and formally reward or recognize successful completion of workshops and required professional development
- QM workshops and certifications are recognized in reappointment, promotion, and tenure
- Demonstrating to stakeholders a commitment to an external and unbiased evaluation of online quality
Qualitative Interview Questions

- **RQ2**: What supports, people, policies, and practices were key drivers for QM quality assurance implementation at your institution?

- **RQ3**: What effect did QM implementation have on your institutional culture?

- **RQ4**: What barriers to QM implementation did you experience, and how did you address them?
Interview Themes

- People
- Policies and Practices
- Culture Shift
- Barriers and Disruptors
Theme #1: People

- Champions and cheerleaders
- Faculty voices matter, especially to other faculty
- Friends in high places/ Support from multiple stakeholders
Theme #2: Policies and Practices

- Templates, reviews, and streamlined processes
- QM as a “means to an end”
- Friendly competition can be leveraged/ Celebration of successes
Theme #2: Policies and Practices

- Tailoring the message
- Relationships and trust
- Accreditation, strategic planning, and budgets
Theme #3: Culture Shift

- The pace of change
- Shifting the perspective
- Changing conversations
Theme #4: Barriers and Disruptors

- Gaining and losing momentum
- Barriers to implementation are common
- Disruptive events
Recommendations

• Choose the right person to lead the effort; include stakeholders via collaborative efforts
• Center faculty-inclusive practices & approach
• Administrative and financial support is crucial
Recommendations

- Support faculty with templates, good design process, IDs, compensation
- Multiple stakeholders + Institutional strategy spurs the creation of a Culture of Quality
- Recognize the effort (RPT) & Celebrate successes
Next Steps for QM Implementation Research & Support

• Gaining feedback from a broader cross section of QM members than those included in original survey
• Interviews and focus groups with OL administrators
• Strengthening our commitment to assisting QMC’s and their colleagues in implementation using research-founded principles and strategies
Thank you for attending!

For further information, questions, or to receive a copy of the ADJE article: research@qualitymatters.org