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Article *in* Management in Education · May 2018

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Quality Management and Education

The need of quality management originated from large manufacturing industry with the aim of producing items conforming to standard guides and avoiding low quality production.

An approach of total quality management system evolved by demanding standardizations and guidelines. The International Organization for Standardization 9000 (ISO9000) is one of the best known as regards to Quality Assurance (QA).

There are many standards in the ISO 9000 family, including:

- ISO 9001:2008 - sets out the requirements of a quality management system
- ISO 9000:2005 - covers the basic concepts and language
- ISO 9004:2009 - focuses on how to make a quality management system more efficient and effective

Quality Assurance (QA) in Education

Quality Assurance (QA) in education is of paramount importance to develop proper aims and objectives for the benefit of the individual. QA in education is still a work in progress even though models used in the industry are being adapted for education. For example Total Quality Management it is being adjusted to assess quality during the educational progress at all stages.

QA must be assessed not only internally but as well as externally. External and Internal auditing guidelines are presented in “**Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area**” in two parts Part 1 Internal QA part 2 External QA.

External QA

External QA in education ensures that standards are respected while delivered by teachers and or lecturers making sure that students receive proper education through regulated body wards.

Who are the right persons to judge?

Auditors are professional judges, but can they judge on a process system which they have no expertise in? After this consideration QA committee requested that the judgmental process must be formed from both ends, auditors and experts. See figure below:

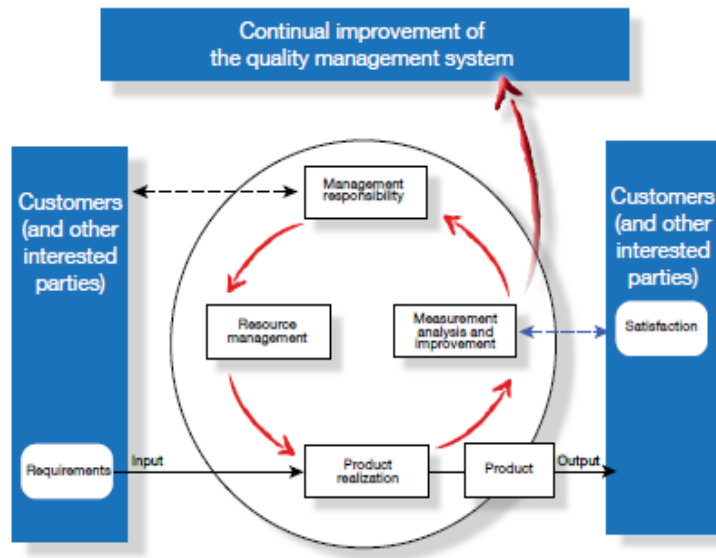


Figure 1 - the ISO 9000 process approach

The figure above demonstrates the ISO 9000 approach guidelines for QA. As you can notice the **input requirements** part which is made of "**Customers (and other interested parties)** " is the same as The **output satisfaction** this means that the people evaluating the product are the same persons which will be making use of the final product (Clients), therefore QA in education must be assessed from people that have expertise in the specific area to satisfy the outcome criteria that is going to be used by students (Clients).

If the evaluation is not assessed form experts in the field this can lead to individual judgment inappropriately due to the fact that the judgment will not be focused on objectives but on details.

Why we need quality assurance?

Quality Assurance enhances

- Competition
- Customer and or student satisfaction
- Maintaining standards
- Accountability
- Improve for motivation
- Credibility

Quality assurance must be proactive exploiting the elements listed above rather than passive to archive high standards.

Prevention rather than cure as the key to quality (Deming 1986).

QA in E-Learning

E-learning is producing modern educational activities presenting new challenges in relation to QA standards. Various institutions dedicated appropriate rules to standardize QA in E-learning including code of practice. Other institutions treat E-learning the same as other educational methods as regards to QA. For example the “UK Quality Code for Higher Education” includes also E-learning as part of the general educational methods. The ENQA for E-learning also brings to our attention not to treat e-learning differently as regards to QA in certain areas:

“E-learning should not be an exclusive methodology for particular programmers.” (Josep Grifoll, 2010)

A QA element that exalts more than others in E-learning is competition. Competitiveness between universities in E-learning can be an important element to improve QA standards in education if appropriately assessed and reinforced with a good code of practice regulations. This situation is creating an approach in the direction of QA in E-learning that combines traditional face to face learning and e-learning. This integrates QA standards based on communication between students and lecturers’ evaluation, focusing on the understanding of what each individual is capable to do rather than focusing only on the quality of material to be delivered.

The above summary is addressed in detail by Yuri *Rubin, from Akkor Russia Chapter 3 of the ENQA report for the Quality Assurance of E-learning.*

Management in Education

Leadership is an essential part towards success and long life reward.

*“If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship, he would keep it in port forever”
St. Thomas Aquinas (Scholastic philosopher and theologian, 1225-1274).*

Maureen Elizabeth Cain and Helen Gunter present the Purpose, Identity, Values, Options and Trust (PIVOT). Maureen and Helen argue that the use of the PIVOT framework allows senior managers to work together in ways which help build interconnections and interdependencies that better enable schools to address key educational issues around values, ethics and morality.

(SAGE, 2012)

A good management leads to a good reputation and quality of improvement. If reputation is not achieved neither trust is acquired. Without these two main elements a leader cannot lead his crew successfully. Achieving trust is not an easy task and once trust is achieved it must be well safe guarded to avoid its loss. A step towards trust is to share teaching practices within the college through exchange of communication.

One of the greatest challenges in educational management (but not only in educational management) is the issue of conflicts which may result if schools policies go against values. If a good code of practice is

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not well planned values contradictions and conflicts will continuously arise. A well-structured code of practice is the path towards an effective solution, not only as regards to conflicts but also for a good QA base structure.

Values to Individuals

The ingredients of a good investment towards individual values are:

Ethics, Social Responsibility and Law, Communication, Critical Thinking Individuals with knowledge and understanding in these fields will develop the right foundation to approach future challenges.

A good management in education with the appropriate skills and a dose of assertiveness in leadership will deliver the right tools to individuals to be responsible and contribute to a healthy socio economic status leading to job opportunities and creation of new jobs.

How are applicable for e-learning

Effective learning runs in parallel with the industry demand. E-learning plays an important role for the industry lifecycle investment. Management for E-learning it's a complex matter compared with the traditional educational method.

All projects have one thing in common, strategy. E-learning strategy shares most of the traditional education management but demands more specific management responsibilities. The main four management phases to create an effective E-learning structure are:

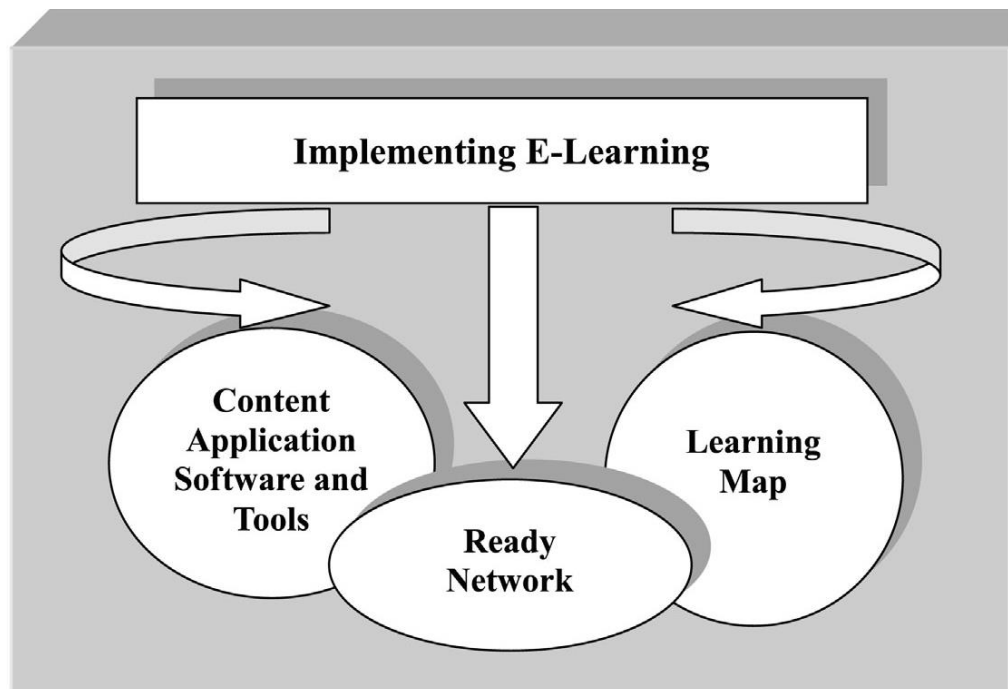
Phase 1: Asses and prepare.

Phase 2: Design appropriate content.

Phase 3: Design appropriate presentation.

Phase 4: Implementing E-learning.

To complete the above phases a strategic knowledge management in different areas is necessary. See figure below.



Exploiting the proper strategy using appropriate management knowledge will result in an effective E-learning implementation.

Code of Practice

A good code of practice needs a solid frame work that demands professional rules to guide teachers and students in a correct conduct to maintain quality of education exchange.

As mentioned earlier if reputation is not achieved neither trust is acquired. Any educational method face to face, distance learning or E-learning need to be well structured based on a solid code of practice regulation which promotes public trust and reputation.

E-learning code of practice framework procedures:

- Accessibility - students and teachers need an effective support and detailed guidelines as regards accessibility for learning and teaching.
- Evaluation - an appropriate evaluation of activities including appropriate guidelines of delivery teacher to student - student to teacher.
- Supportive Virtual learning Environment.
- Collaborative learning procedures.