Outline

1. Quality and Quality Assurance (QA)

2. What do we need to know about OER?

3. QA of Teaching and Learning Materials

4. Extending it to OER

5. Challenges to be addressed

   Discussions

1. Quality and Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality

Definitions vary...

- Excellence

- Zero defect

- Conformity

- Customer Satisfaction

- Transformation

- Value for money

- Fitness of purpose

- Fitness for purpose

Fitness…

Fitness *Of* Purpose

- How good are your purposes…
- What is the motivation? Rationale? Why are you doing this?
- For HEIs, these are defined by their vision and mission

Fitness *For* Purpose

- How good are you for your purposes…
- Does not question the worthiness of the purpose or motivation.

An emerging innovation...

New Developments often pose challenging questions to QA agencies about their FOP vs FFP

Distance Education, Open and Distance Learning, Cross-Border Education.....

Latest in the line is Open Educational Resources (OER)

Ten years old?

Open Educational Resources (OER)

OER gets a big tick for Fitness *of* Purpose

Increasing access to quality teaching and learning material, ...moral and ethical value....Public good

Institutions need to demonstrate that OER is good enough *for* the Purposes in various contexts

It has implications for the quality assurance agencies

What do we need to know about OERs?

2. What do we need to know about OER?

Changing times…

- Collaboration in research
- Centrality of peer review

- Parallel developments in teaching and learning
- Open Educational Resources (OER)

Defining words…

- Free educational content
- 'free'
- 'open'
- 'collaborate'
- 'share'

Defining OER

...educational materials (usually but not always digital) that are offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some type of license to re-mix, improve and redistribute (UNESCO)

Extended to include…

'learning resources; courseware, content modules, learning objects, learner support and assessment tools, online learning communities; resources to support teachers; tools for teachers and support materials to enable them to create, adapt and use OER, as well as training materials for teachers; and other teaching tools; and resources to assure the quality of education and educational practices.'

Some examples…

- Repository of materials
- MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW)
- MERLOT
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Rice University

Discussion forums on OER by UNESCO, COL, IIEP, OECD….

Incentives - Individual

- Gaining access to good quality and flexible materials

- Enabling exchange with colleagues

- Reducing costs for students

- Keeping students/alumni up to date on self-study basis

- Outreach to disadvantaged groups

- Collaborating with a wider group

- Showcasing and promotion of work

- Ethical/moral duty

Incentives - Institutional

- Cost reduction

- Leverage of public funds

- Experimenting with new business models

- Encouraging innovation

- Quality enhancement and diversity

- Public relations/showcasing

- Attracting future students

- Continuous education of alumni/students

- Ethical/moral duty

Barriers - Individual

- Lack of time – heavy teaching schedules
- Lack of innovation in pedagogy
- Lack of capacity and knowledge, leading to fear of loss of control
- Lack of reward system and incentives
- Little management or peer support
- Lack of appropriate tools

Barriers - Institutional

- No clear OER policy

- Lack of capacity and financial resources

- Fear of competitors and loss of competitive advantage

- Difficulty in acquiring/implementing OER production

- Constraints of academic culture

- Constraints of existing production tools

How can we respond?

Most QA agencies have not been involved in the discussion on OER….

Awareness about the benefits and issues that OER bring may be new to many of us.

But we have parallel lessons of experience to draw on…

QA of Teaching and Learning (TL) Materials…

Extend it to OER but we need to be mindful of the ***differentiating aspects of OER…***

3. QA of Teaching and Learning (TL) Materials

Approaches to QA

Three 'A's – Accreditation, Assessment and Audit

In all the three 'A's, the QA agency needs evidence and probes a set of common issues in carrying out its evaluation

Three 'U's - Unit of QA: Program, Aspect (eg. Teaching Learning Assessment), Institution

In all the three 'U's, scope and emphasis may vary but the way quality is understood and assessed is the same

Three 'A's and the TL Materials

Accreditation would set minimum expectations – Level of difficulty of content, peer review, presentation style, self assessments, etc – Check-lists and specific prescriptive guidelines to follow

Assessment would set criteria to assess how good the materials are – Rating the material against the criteria such as readability, comprehensiveness, interactive nature

Audit would examine whether you have the right systems in place for development and use of quality TL materials – Is there a sound plan, are responsibilities clear, how do you monitor (eg IT Plan, Library Plan).

Shared QA Responsibilities:
Internal and External QA

Good practice in QA indicates that external QA is based on and strengthens Internal QA. Institutions are responsible for their own quality.

QA of TL material depends largely on internal institutional mechanisms.

External QA can ask the right questions (is peer review included, how do you ensure that the materials are updated etc).

Internal QA needs to have the ways to implement them. (Eg. Guidelines, training etc for authors, reviewers, support personnel)

Adapting to new models of education…

QA agencies have been successful in adapting their policies and procedures to consider the new forms of education.

Increase in Blended learning, Flexible learning, Distributed learning

Specialised initiatives as well as general approaches

General QA - Move from dedicated QA approaches to Integrated approaches

Traditional Vs Distance Education

Student interaction – Is it a missing element? – This is not a problem anymore. The question now is: How do you compensate for that?

Focus now is on 'what are the differentiating aspects and how do you ensure quality in that?'

More emphasis on self pacing and self assessment

Accommodating variations…

University of Southern Queensland (USQ) audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency - Same learning package to all students irrespective of location or mode of delivery

Dual mode universities in India assessed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council in India – Learning resources are different

In summary,

QA approaches vary but they all give due place to quality learning resources within their contexts

QA of learning resources is a shared responsibility (IQA & EQA)

In new forms of education, the differentiating elements are given more attention but the QA principles remain the same

The stigma attached to new forms of education has changed in a number of countries with visible attention to QA

What are the implications for OER?

4. Implications for OER

Challenges of the Differentiating Factors

Does 'Free' mean 'Second Grade'?

Does 'Flexibility for Adaptation' mean 'No Structure'?

Does 'No Certification' mean 'No Quality'?

Can strengthened quality assurance of OER be an answer?

What external QA attention can we give?

OER & Internal Quality Assurance

+++

- spirit of peer review

- strengthened internal institutional quality control

– – –

- general awareness?

- Technology integration?

- Embedded?

- influence on the teaching-learning policies of an institution?

-

What might EQA look at…

- Is there an efficient institutional model for OER development: Is it realistic?

- Is the model backed by a sound institutional policy? Are the responsibilities and accountabilities clear?

- What resource has the institution invested or will continue to invest for the OER initiative? Is it sustainable?

- Is there a shared understanding of the initiative among the stakeholders and is there overall support?

- What are the support systems in place for users and how effective are they? (There are OER initiatives where users can ask questions or request clarification from the course instructor or other users through e-mail or discussion forums.)

What might EQA look at...

- Are the communication channels and feedback mechanisms working well in the OER initiative? What does the user feedback analysis indicate? How has the institution acted on the feedback?

- How does the institution satisfy itself that the OER initiative's outcomes are of good quality?

- Who is involved in monitoring achievement of targets?

- What are the development opportunities for staff who are involved in this initiative?

No Certification?

Certification has not been the original intent of OER

Does 'no certification' mean 'no quality'?

MIT website states that:

- 'OCW is not an MIT education.

- OCW does not grant degrees or certificates.

- OCW does not provide access to MIT faculty.

- Materials may not reflect entire content of the course.'

Consortia of institutions might explore the possibility of developments similar to the *Transnational Qualifications Framework* to recognise the work completed by the users.

Certified education need not be the target for an innovation such as OER.

It might become significant in the near future…

auqa

Certification…

Examples of exam waivers and Assessment of Prior Learning

Implications for EQA

- Black Cat in a Dark Room

- The Due Place

- Growing together

- Good Practices

- A new monster?

- Transnational Qualifications Framework

Where to from here?

- Understanding OER in the national and institutional context.

- Understanding institutional perspectives, policies and procedures

- OER in the institutional culture.

- IQA for OER.

- Good practices

- Reflection on resource implications and sustainability issues

Comments and Questions?