



ePortfolios to capture learning gain: Their potential role in the Teaching Excellence Framework

Alfredo Gaitán (Psychology Dept.)

Diana Pritchard (CLE)

Aims

In current UK HE context, Government is implementing a 'Teaching Excellence Framework' in order to evaluate institutions and raise the quality of teaching .

- Problematise the concept of 'teaching excellence' (TE).
- Stress the need to include indicators of input, process and output of the learning process, in an assessment of TE.
- Propose that ePortfolios can make an important contribution in the TEF by privileging the student perspective, in terms of goals, learning experiences and achievements.
- Discuss some ways this can be done.

Understanding Teaching Excellence

- What is excellence?

- Individual **practices/activities** reflect **shared goals**, in turn related to the institutional **mission**, which has the **user's needs** at the forefront (congruence or alignment).

- Critical engagement, commitment to **continuous improvement** (search)

- Effectiveness/impact:

- Practices achieve the goals proposed
- Practices are continuously adapted

- Validation by a community (judgement by someone)

Excellence in context

- The specificity of the (culture of) HE sector and of each university
 - Different types of university (Ron Barnett, 2011, 2013) imply different ideas of teaching excellence.
 - Teaching excellence as an object of quality in the ‘bureaucratic university’.
 - The place of teaching in the ‘entrepreneurial university’.



The Teaching Excellence Framework

- Trajectory so far
 - Inquiry on TEF (Report 29th Feb. 2016)
 - Green Paper (DBIS , Nov. 2015)
 - White Paper (6th May 2016)
 - Technical Consultation (16th may 2016) Closes: 12th July!

Conclusions of a critical reading:

- TEF is but a component in a much broader strategy to reform the HE system ('architecture') in order to open up the market to new 'providers' to increase competition = privatisation!
- TEF is a tool to provide students (customers) and employers (stakeholders) with the information needed to make choices.

- Proposed timeline of implementation (White Paper)
 - Y1 (2016/17): All providers with a successful QA award -> 'Meets expectations'.
 - Y2 (2017/18): Trail year. Voluntary applications. Assessments at institutional level.
 - Y3 (2018/19): Assessment at institutional level and pilots at subject level.
 - Y4 (2019/20) Assessments at subject level.

Rating (1-3)



Fees cap (and fees loan) uplift

TE and how to measure it, according to the Government

- White Paper:
 - This is a really difficult issue, but it includes
 - Teaching itself
 - Environment
 - Outcomes
- Metrics (Green Paper)
 - Student satisfaction (NSS)
 - Retention (HESA)
 - Employment/destination (DELHE)
 - Teaching intensity and engagement with study

That's it!!

Admission: *The metrics are mostly proxis, I'd say very poor ones. The reason is that there is no conceptual understanding of what Teaching & Learning are all about!*

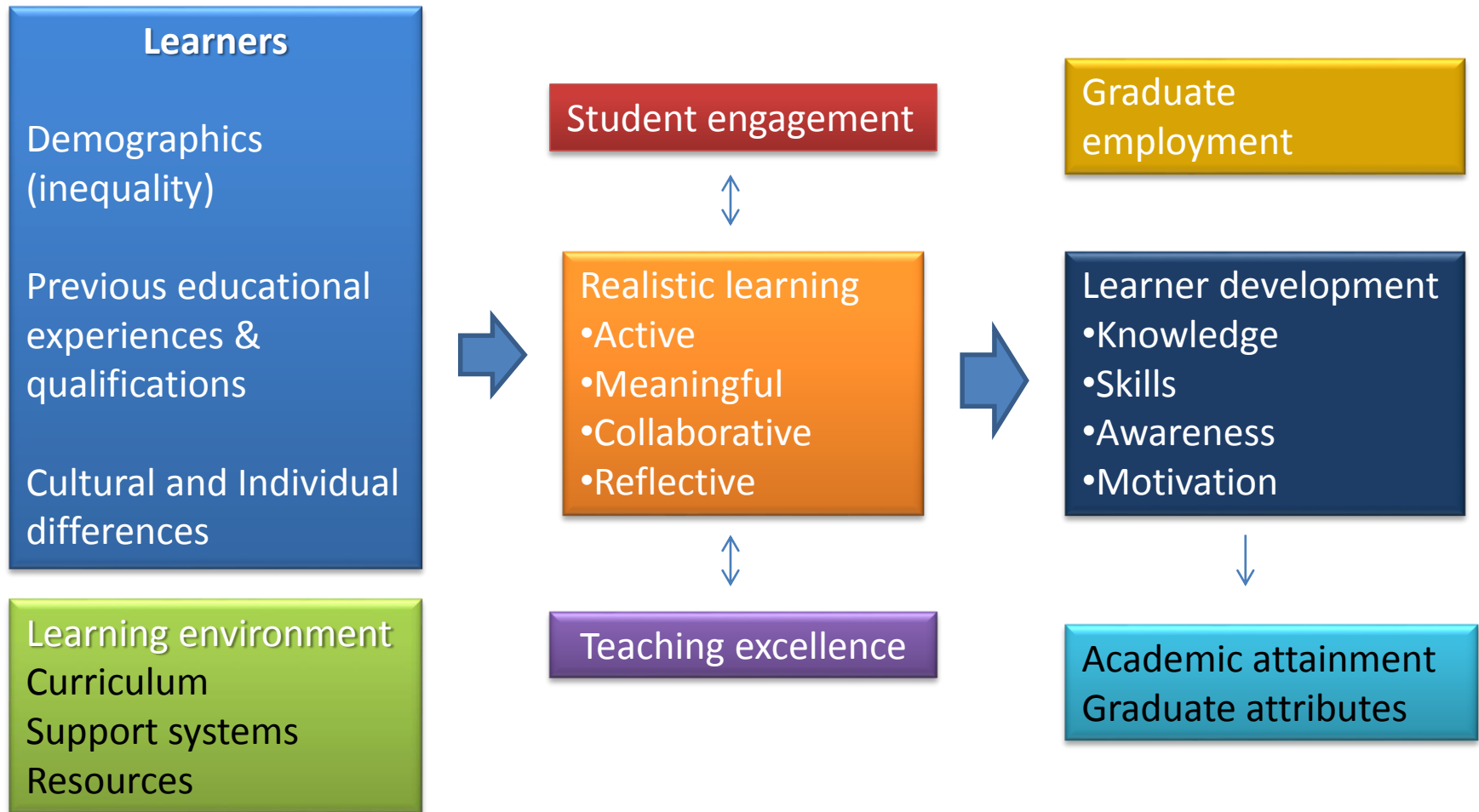
Qualitative element
(additional evidence)

TE in the context of the leaning process

Input variables

Processes

Outcomes



Mapping metrics and other measures

	Input (conditions)	Process (direct)	Outcome (indirect)
Standardised/ quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student demographics • Organisation & management (NSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching (NSS) • Assessment (SS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression/ retention (yearly) (HESA) • 'Good degrees' (final) • Employment (DELHE) • Personal development (SS)
Idiosyncratic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning (Peers) • Assessment (EE) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject review (QAA) • Accreditation (external bodies) • Validation (Internal) 		

Where would ePortfolios make an important contribution?

The value of ePortfolios

- Unique opportunity to access information regarding **learners' backgrounds** (cultural, educational, etc.) and **motivation** (input).
- Describe significant learning experiences, the reasons for their **engagement**, as well as the role of **teaching** (process). *Not proxies, but the real thing!*
- Recognise and celebrate the **learner' achievements**, in terms of their goals, and **development** (output).
- They privilege the **student's views**, not as averaged responses to questionnaires or interpreted focus groups, but perspectives expressed as they wish to express them.

How to use ePortfolios in a TEF submission: some suggestions

Version A (unstructured)

- Use ePortfolios in their current form (variety of structures and content).
- Select a random sample.
- Content analysis to illustrate aspects of excellence associated with outstanding outcomes.

Version B (structured)

- Introduce a minimum of standardisation (agreed areas, templates).
- Select a sample representing different levels of attainment.
- Content analysis to identify aspects of input, process

Version C: Target stories of significant transformation or leaning gain.

References

- Barnett, R. (2011). *Being a university*. London Routledge.
- Barnett, R. (2013). *Imagining the university*. London: Routledge.
- DBIS (Nov. 2015). *Fulfilling our potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*. Retrieved from: https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/he/fulfilling-our-potential/supporting_documents/Fulfilling%20our%20Potential%20%20Teaching%20Excellence%20Social%20Mobility%20and%20Student%20Choice.pdf
- House of Commons BIS Committee (Feb. 2016). *Teaching Excellence Framework: Assessing Quality in Higher Education*. Third Report Session 2015-16. Retrieved from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmbis/572/572.pdf>
- DBIS (May 2016). *Success as knowledge economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523396/bis-16-265-success-as-a-knowledge-economy.pdf
- DBIS (May 2016). *Teaching Excellence Framework: Consultation for Year 2*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523340/bis-16-262-teaching-excellence-framework-techcon.pdf