

A Holistic Approach to Achieve Quality in Higher Education

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Quality Management Experience

Individual	Academic / Programme Leader
Institutional	<p>Key role in ELIR (2 universities): eg institutional self-evaluation</p> <p>Director, Centre for Academic Practice</p> <p>Programme Approval panel member & chair (external + internal) and led approval teams</p> <p>Guidance to Programme Teams on programme review</p>
National	<p>Subject assessor, England (1990s)</p> <p>National Steering Group: 3 Enhancement Themes</p> <p>Trained as Institutional Reviewer (QAA Scotland)</p> <p>External Examiner (7 universities)</p>

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My (department's) job...

- Enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and research



Centre for Academic Practice

- Learning and Teaching Development
- Technology-Enhanced Learning
- Researcher Development
- PhD Student Training Programme
- Student Skills Support
- Employability
- English language support

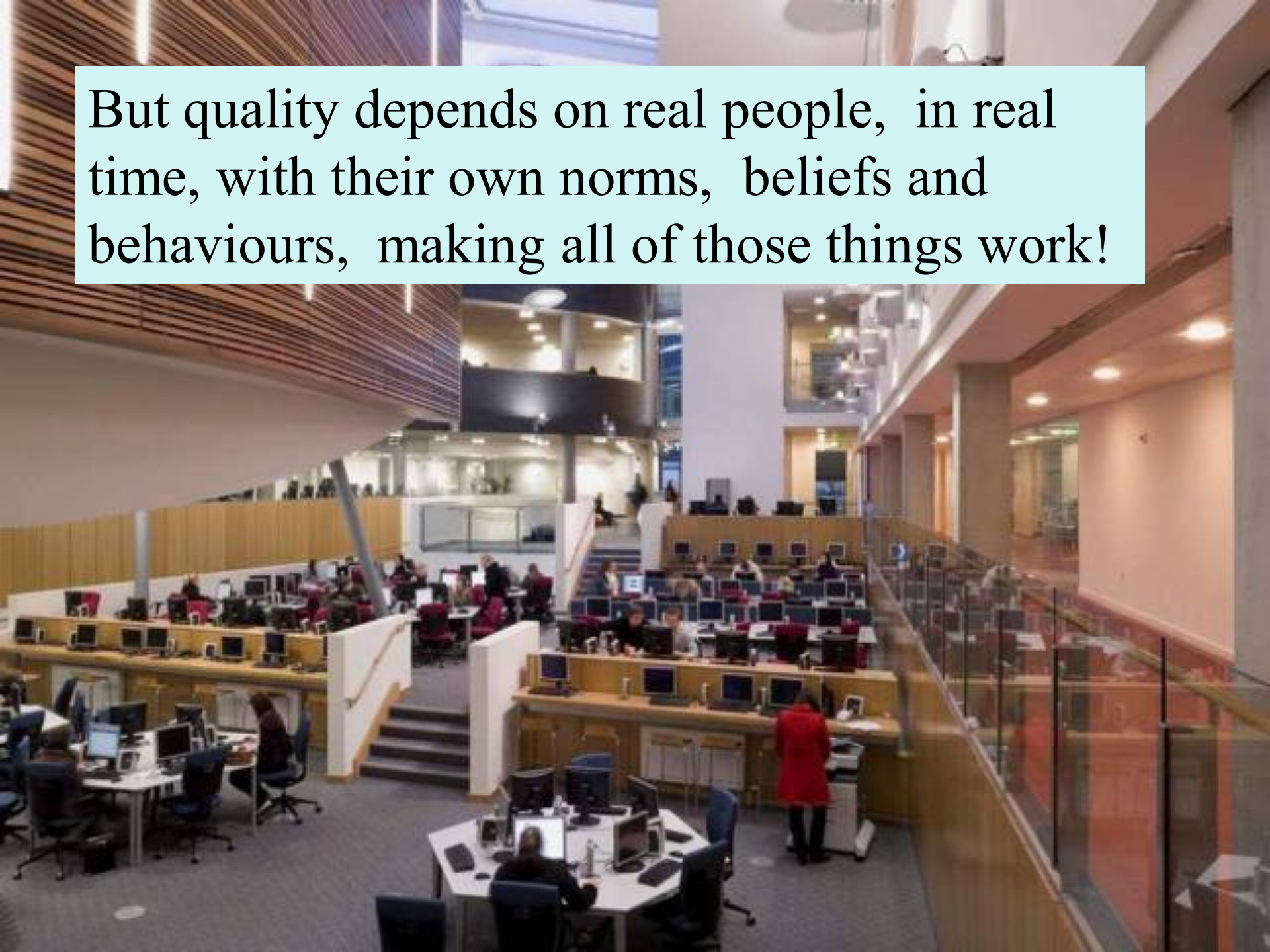


Easy job? To help us, we have

- Regulations
- Quality manuals / procedures
<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qm/AZindex.htm>
- Strategy documents (University, Internationalisation, Student Experience, Research, HR, Campus Services...)
http://www.qmu.ac.uk/the_university/policy_strategy.htm
- Governance (committees, roles & responsibilities)
<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/gr/default.htm>
- Services <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/services/default.htm> (& reviews)
- Risk management procedures



But quality depends on real people, in real time, with their own norms, beliefs and behaviours, making all of those things work!



Aim for this session

To use an organizational analysis framework for a holistic approach to managing quality



Key question
to / from staff

Why bother with trying to
manage quality?



Moral Imperative

‘Higher education is a human right and a social public good. States have the fundamental duty to guarantee this right. States, national societies and academic communities should define the basic principles upon which citizen training is based, and assure that it is pertinent and of quality.’ (UNESCO, 2010: 120)



Financial Imperative - External Governance of Universities

- ‘the institution is actively engaged in seeking continuously to **enhance the quality of its programmes and services** and to **involve students** and other stakeholders in these processes’
- ‘the institution’s activities are conducted in an appropriately open, **transparent** and fully **accountable** manner’



Market Imperative

- Other universities can demonstrate their quality, can we?
- Eg KIS: Key Information Sets



Cultural Imperative - 'Responsible Autonomy'

Across Europe

- Move towards responsible autonomy
- Away from direct / indirect government control (Aghion et al, 2009)



How it works in Scotland

Quality Enhancement Framework

- Internal institution-led reviews at institution /subject /function level
- QAA review at institution level (Self-Led Institutional Review - ELI)
- Student involvement in quality
- Public information about quality
- National enhancement themes

**Emphasis
on dialogue**

**Looking
forward**

**Continuous
improvement**



ELIR reports

Overarching confidence judgement and commentaries about institution's:

- i. **Management** of the student learning experience
- ii. **Monitoring** and review of quality and standards
- iii. Strategic approach to quality **enhancement**



Some challenging areas for quality management

- Achieving a Shared Vision
- Getting Strategy right
- Getting Systems working
- Getting the right Structures in place
- Using a helpful management Style
- Engaging Staff with Quality
- Ensuring Staff have the Skills we need



Framework for Action

- The 7S framework for quality implementation
- Case example from QMU, using 7S Framework
- Using 7S framework to work out how to tackle these challenges within the realities of (your) academic life



Why 7s Framework (Peters and Waterman, 1982)

- Holistic approach to organisational analysis and change
- Inter-related elements
- Focus on soft elements recognises universities as social systems
- Helps us ask the right questions, to move to a:
 - **Quality culture**
 - In which staff are active protagonists
 - In which we manage complexity, within academic cultures



Used implicitly or explicitly?

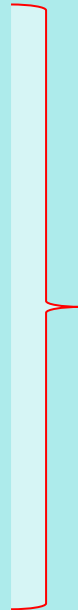
- Depends on your institutional culture
- But “Quality has to be part of the DNA of what we do”



The 7S framework

HARD ELEMENTS

- Strategy
- Structure
- Systems

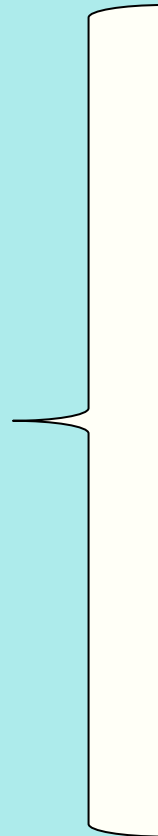


The easy
part



The 7S framework

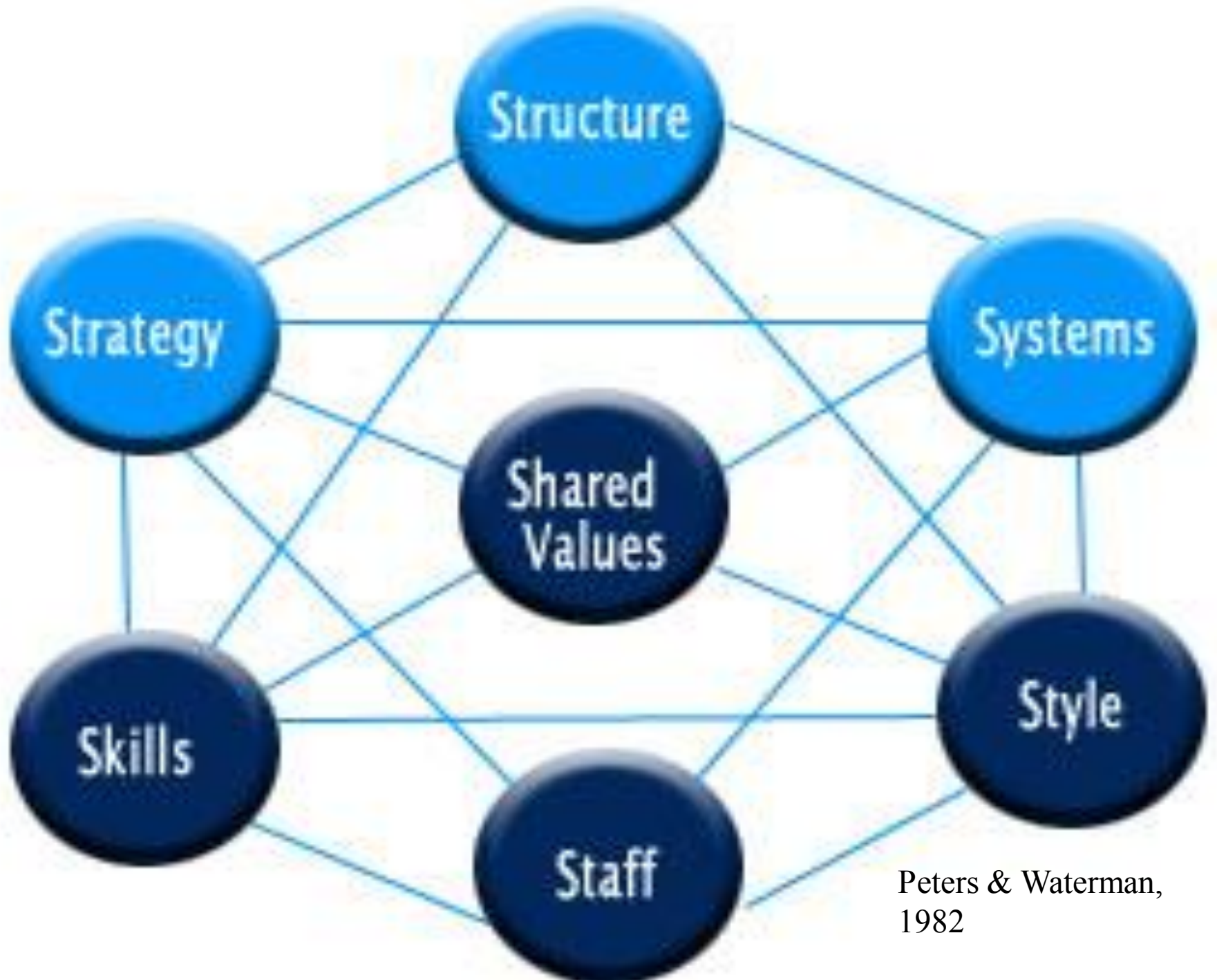
The hard part



SOFT ELEMENTS

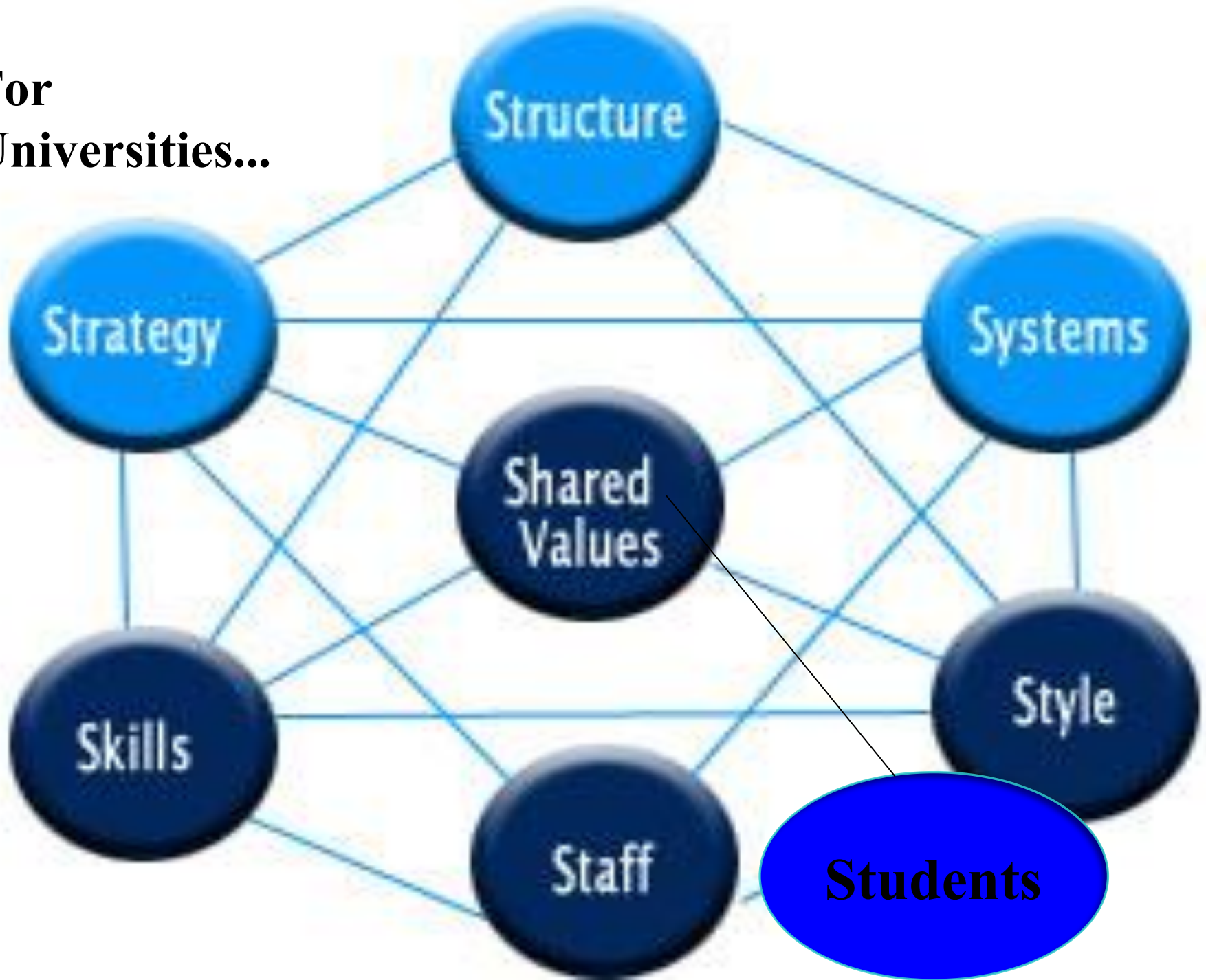
- Shared values
- Style
- Staff
- Skills





Peters & Waterman,
1982

**For
Universities...**



Let's look at our quality
management challenges within
the 7S framework...



Challenge 1: Achieving a Shared Vision & Shared Values

- How?
 - “likely to involve frequent **reaffirmation** of **core educational/academic values** in small ways, in particular reaffirmation **by senior staff for middle managers**, who might otherwise assume, perhaps wrongly, that **managerialist** thinking is expected” (Cuthbert, 2011)
- Eg King Saud University



Association of African Universities (2004)

5/6

- Institutional vision and mission statements exist

3/6

- Statement is well publicised on-and off-campus
- All stakeholders identify with the institution's vision and mission
- Institution's activities are carried out with deference to its vision and mission



Recommendation: From Vision to Action

“Articulating a value is not enough to bring about institutional change, however. The value needs to be borne out in the **policies** and **practices** of the institution.” (Krause, 2011)



Shared Values - Action

“If academic institutions are committed to quality, then the management challenge is to establish it **as a belief at the operational level**” (Newby, 1999: 265)

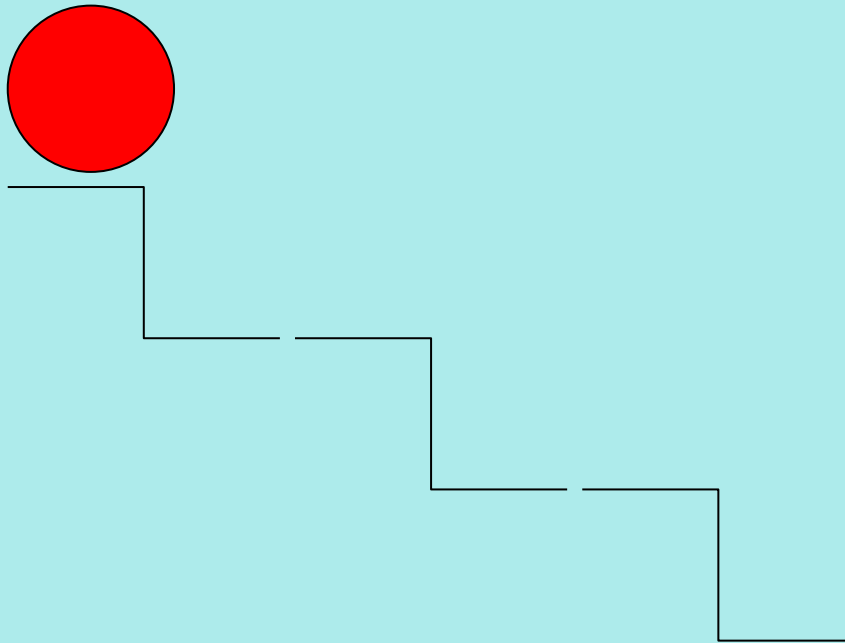
= Culture

(“How we do things round here”)



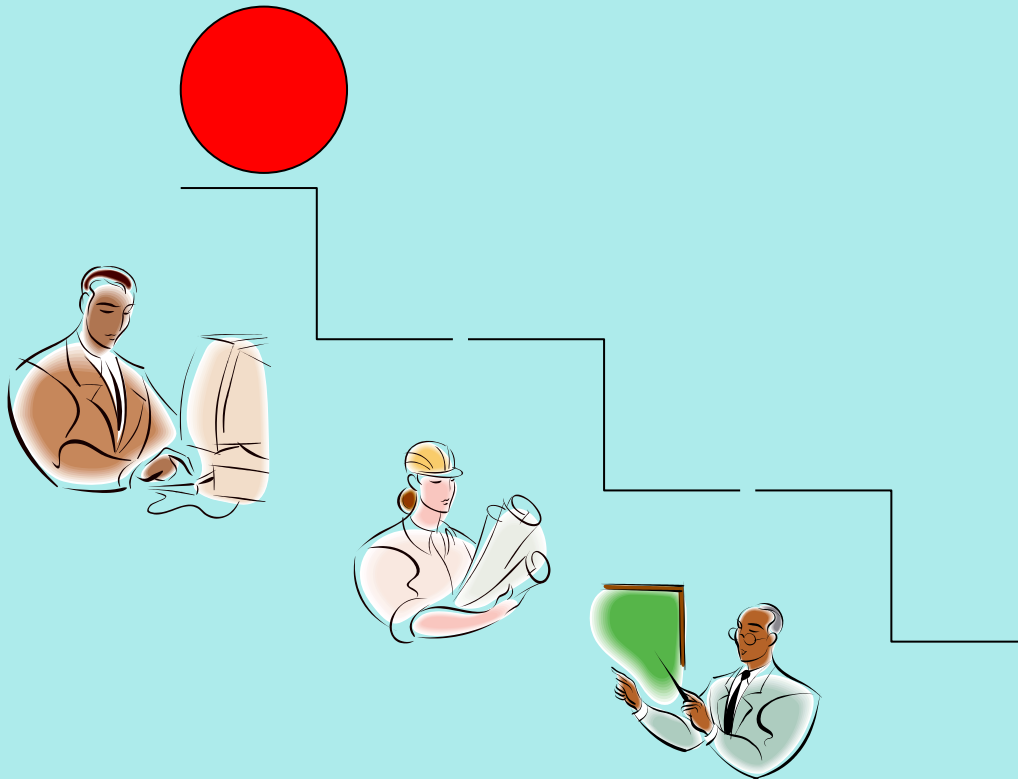
Strategy

Challenge 2: Strategy Implementation Gap



Strategy

Recommendation: Recognise Implementation Staircase

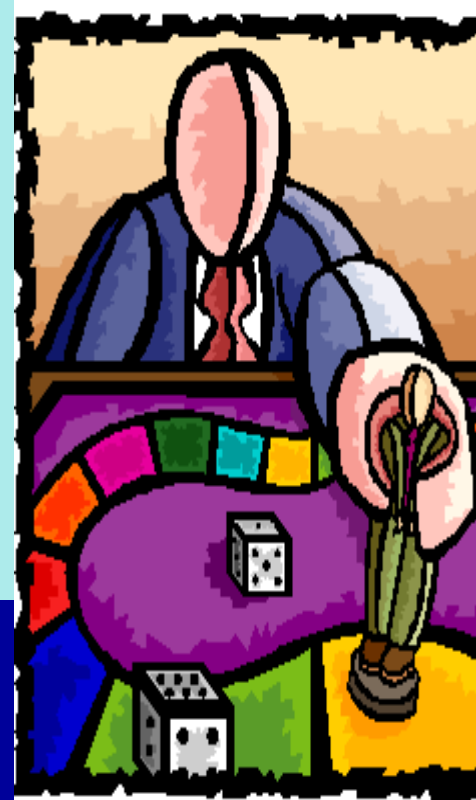


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Recommendation

- ✓ Consult on Strategy
- ✓ Link L&T Strategy to operational plans of all departments / faculties
- ✓ Cycle of 1/3/5 year strategy review
- X Over-simplistic performance indicators that alienate staff and reinforce boundaries between senior management staff



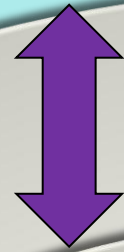
Challenge 3: Getting Systems working

- Systems at different levels not aligned
- Systems not used by academics



Systems

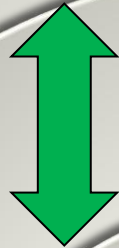
Recommendation: Whole system approach – Interacting layers of activity



National



Institutional



School /
Programme



Individual
Academic



Recommendation: Systems rooted in academic practices

- Eg University Monitoring and Review
 - Programme committees
 - Moderation of assessments
 - External Examiner System
 - Annual programme monitoring / review
 - 5 year programme validation / review



Recommendation: Systems rooted in academic practices

- Eg build evidence base = Evaluation
- Surveys to ‘nudge’ change
 - Gather and analyse data
 - Close the loop:
 - Feed back results / action plans to students + staff
 - Actions Plans: University + Programme
 - Fuel commitment to change



Eg National Student Survey

(<http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>)

- About quality of the student experience
- Most UK universities participate
- Linked to university league tables – public data
 - Institutions motivated by it
- Drills down to subject level
 - Staff motivated by it



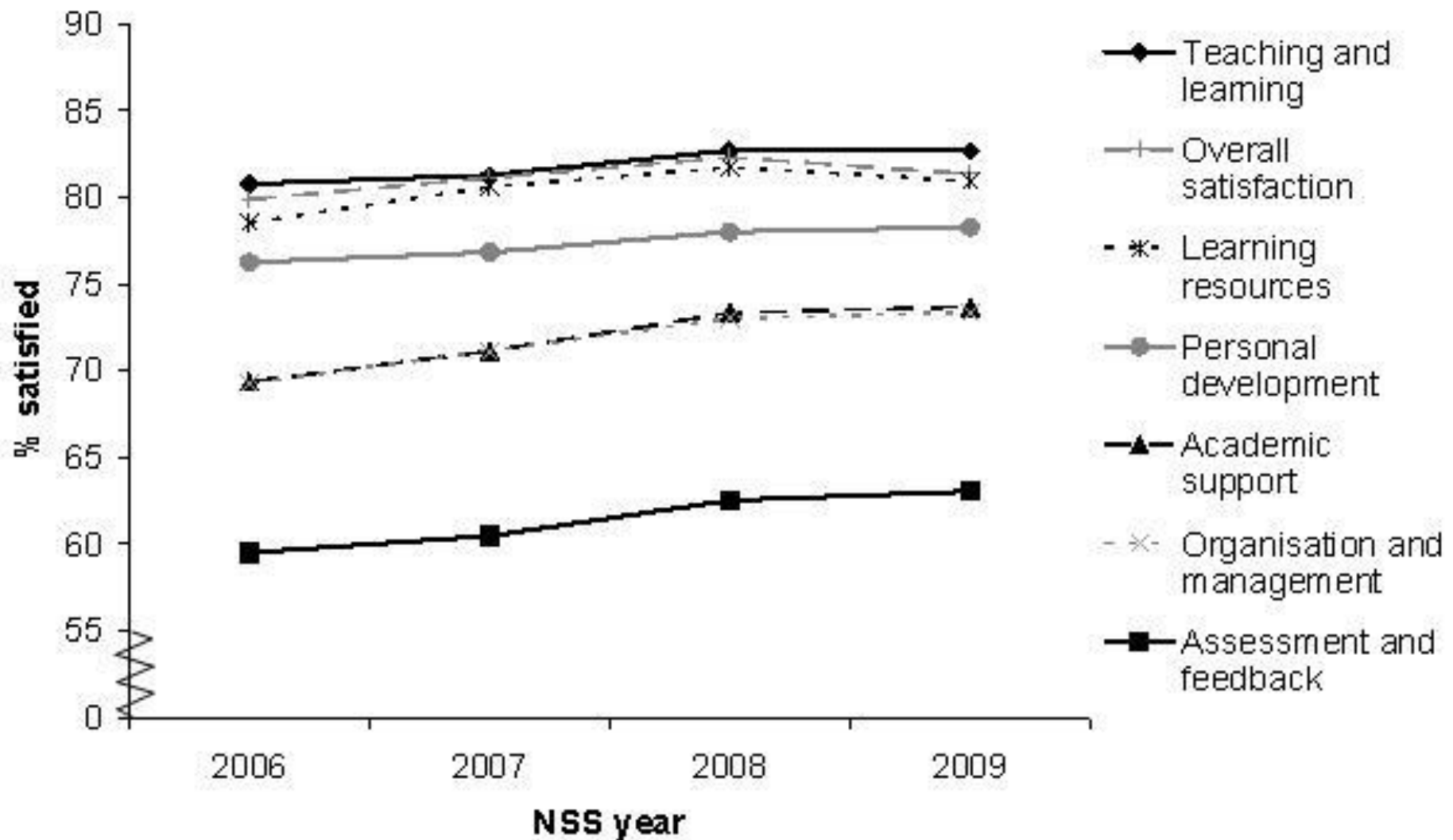
University
Action Plan



School
Action Plan



NSS Satisfaction scores for full-time UK students



But - Challenge of measurement

- Counting what is measured rather than measuring what counts
- Measuring inputs and processes rather than measuring outcomes
- No magic bullet!



Challenge: Getting the right Structures in place

“You need systems and structures that
aren't obstacles”



Recommendation: Aligned Structures

- Governance (Court, Senate, strategy review)
- Quality Management = Plug and socket, University and faculty / school
 - Roles & responsibilities
 - Committees
 - Quality Unit and Quality Coordinators in Schools
 - Enhancement Unit (CAP)



Style

Challenge 4: Using a helpful management Style

- Quality framework perceived as a procedural, bureaucratic, regulatory, audit-driven, managerial imposition?
- Staff alienated from management?



Style

Recommendation: Collegial Leadership

- Consult, communicate
- Use champions, working groups, committees
- Persuade, facilitate, not just mandate



Recommendation: Top down + bottom up + middle out (Trowler et al, 2002)

National

Institutional

**School /
Programme**

Individual
Academic

Eg
Programme
Leaders'
Network



Staff

Challenge 5: Engaging Staff with Quality

- Getting the right people doing the right things, right
- “Your quality is only as good as the people you’ve got to deliver it, people who understand the impact of what they do”



Staff

What happens?

- Support from some of the staff, some of the time
- ‘Usual suspects’
- (Passive) resistance
- So: how to engage those who don’t want to (individuals **and** subject communities)?



Staff

Recommendation: Engage with your Staff!

‘**Teachers** must be recognized as **key actors** in education systems. They must be guaranteed appropriate **initial and ongoing training**, **working conditions and hours**, **salaries** and **career paths** in order to make effective the **quality** of teaching and research.’ (UNESCO, 2010: 124)



Staff

People + Systems = Quality

- Take staff with you – you can't do it without them
- Involve staff (and students) at each stage:
 - Development of quality
 - Communication
 - Implementation
 - Ongoing review and adaptation



How?

- Reward and recognition (carrot):
 - Promotion criteria
 - Institutional small grants and incentives to change
 - Teaching fellowships / awards
- Performance management (stick?)
- Probationary requirements (new staff)
- Support (eg ‘How to write strategy docs’)
- Dialogue



Skills

Challenge 6: Ensuring Staff have the Skills we need

- And getting staff buy-in
- And Union buy-in
- And Head of Department buy-in...



Recommendation: Training & Development

- National recognition (eg HEA Fellowship)
 - <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/professional-recognition>
- Institutional recognition
 - PG Cert in L&T as probationary requirement
(Bamber, 2003)
 - Not just new staff - changing needs of experienced staff
 - Allow for development in Workload Allocation Model



Skills

Skills - how

- PG Cert in Professional and Higher Education
- 5 day Short Course
- Workshop programme (CPD)
- Programme Team provision
- External events
- Small grants



Students

Challenge: Engaging students in quality

- Training needed, quality varies...



Students

Recommendation: Student Voice

- ❖ Extremely important tool in UK quality enhancement
- ❖ Eg “You said, we did”



Students

Recommendation: Student Voice

- Student-Led Teaching Awards
- Students on all university committees
- On all Validation and Review Panels
- Senior mgt – Student Union meetings
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Class Reps

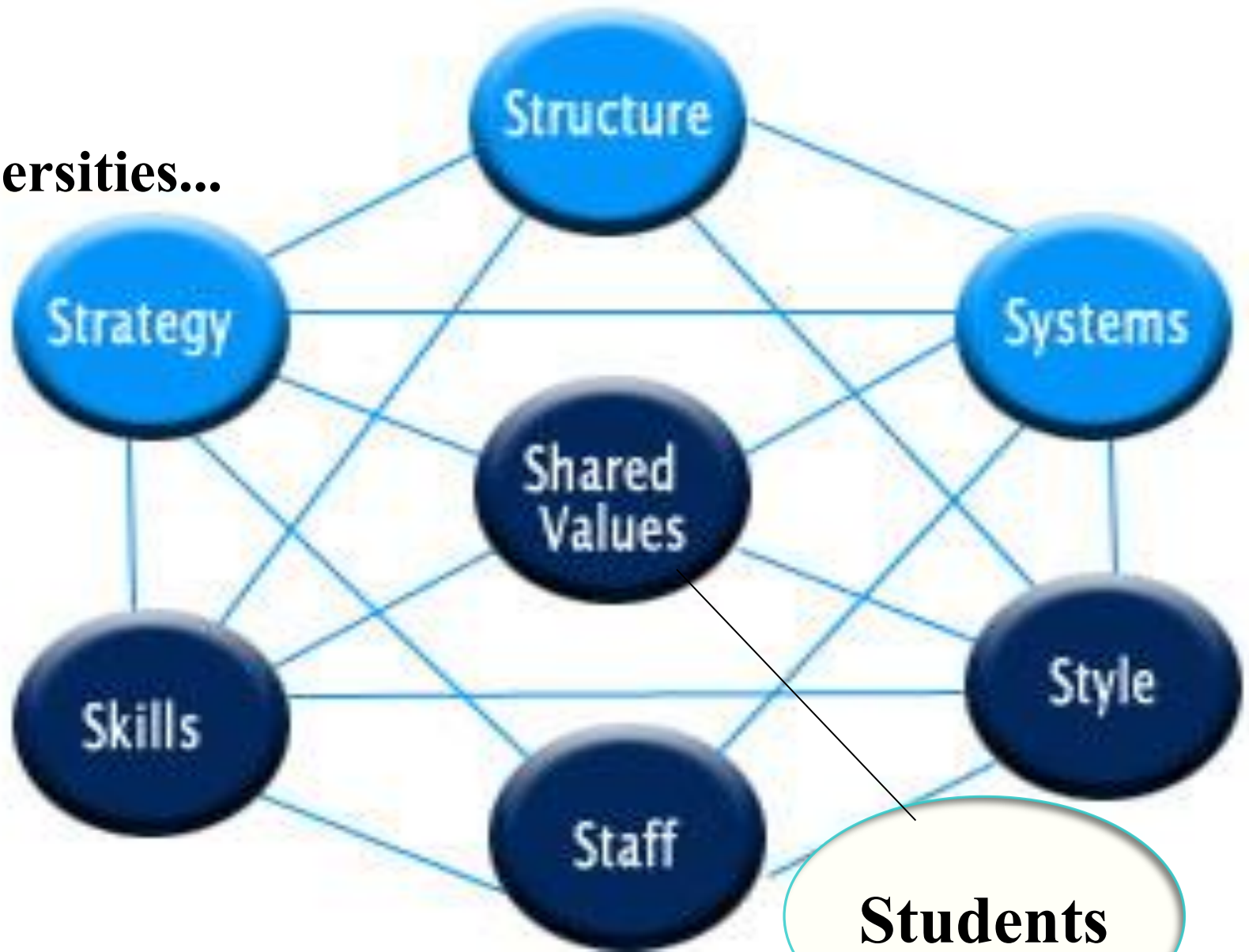


Example of strategy
implementation using 7S

Assuring and
enhancing teaching
quality



**For
Universities...**



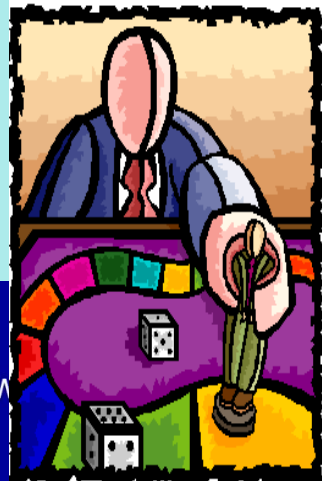
Shared Values

- How?
 - Senior management articulation of commitment to quality
 - Discussion at senior committees
 - Discussion with staff and students
 - In University Strategy documents / discussion
 - In School / Services documents / discussion
 - In programme documents / discussion



QMU Strategy example

- University strategy:
“Support the development of staff to become in-depth critical and reflective thinkers who use evidenced based expert knowledge to inform their teaching and the facilitation of student learning “



Strategy

Strategy → Operational plans

- Schools and professional service departments
- Eg Centre for Academic Practice
 - “Promote an effective professional development infrastructure for learning and teaching
 - Build probationary support, to include attendance at PG Cert in MSc PHE, and mentoring
 - Develop a CPD framework in support of HR policies and practice and the enhancement of learning, teaching and research
 - Promote staff networks and communities which enhance practice”



Systems

- National:
 - External Examiners
 - Enhancement Themes
 - NSS

Systems

- Institutional:
 - Module / programme evaluation
 - Programme Approval & Review (5 yrs)
 - Programme monitoring & review (annual)
 - Teaching observation
 - Moderation of assessments
 - Student Staff Liaison Committees



Structure

Structure – Professional Services

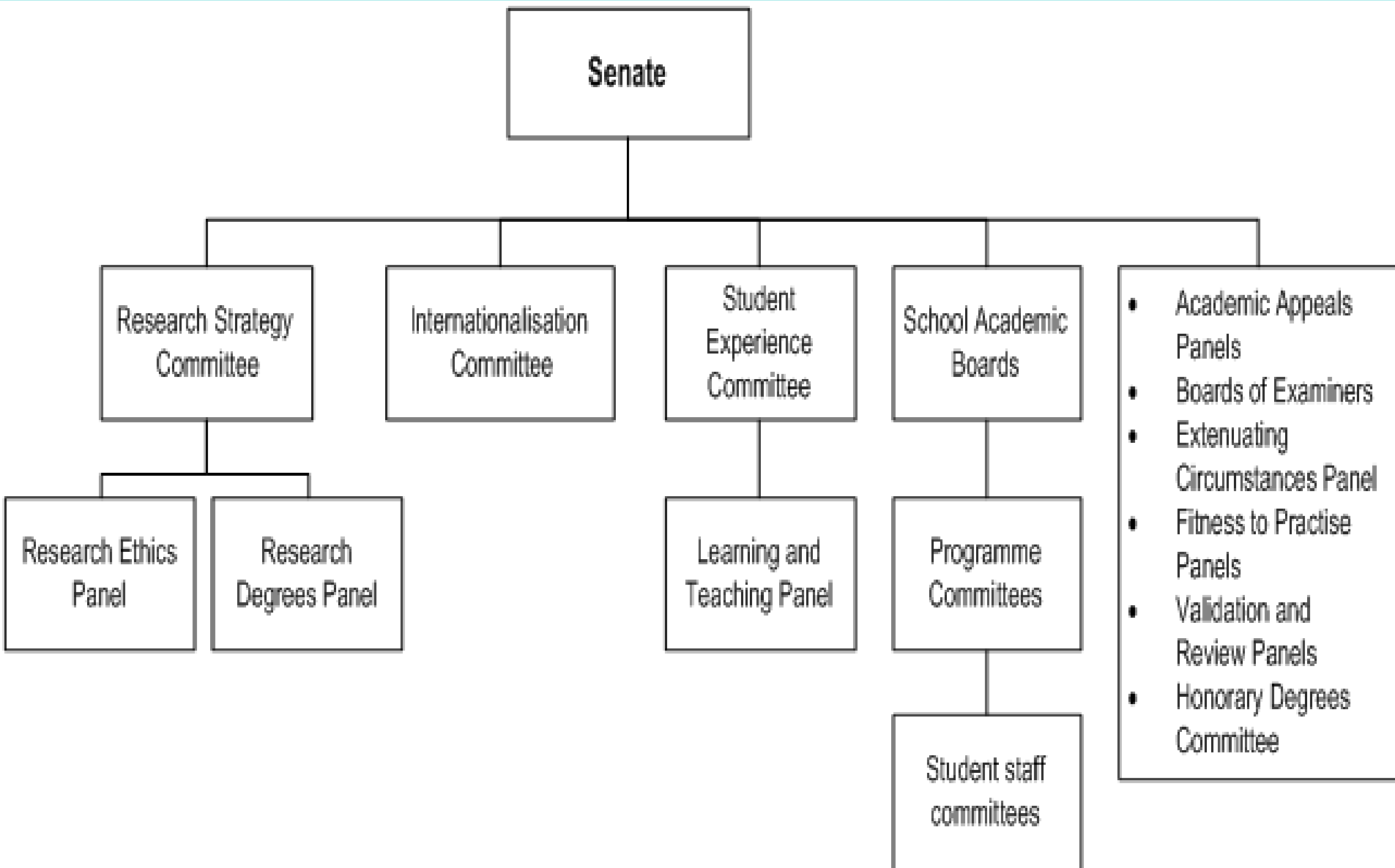
- Enhancement:
 - Centre for Academic Practice
- Quality processes:
 - Quality Enhancement Unit

Close
working
relationship

Working with
Schools /
Programmes



Committee Structure



Style

Style

- Who makes decisions?
 - Committees – pluralistic, contested
 - But with senior management backing and vision
- Who talks to whom?
 - Eg VP Academic meets with Programme Leaders



Staff

Staff

- Reward and Recognition for teaching quality?
 - Performance review
 - Promotion criteria
 - Scholarship of teaching v Research?
 - Workload Allocation Model
 - Resources / Incentives. Eg Small grants (innovation)
- Representation



Skills

Skills:

Training & Development

- Formal training:
 - new + experienced staff
 - PhD student tutors / part-time staff
- CPD:
 - Workshop programme for all
- Sharing good practice
 - L&T Conference
 - Scholarship (publication)
 - External events
- BUT: Policy v practice? Eg teaching observation



Students

Students

- Student participation:
 - ✓ L&T committees
 - ✓ Equal voice
 - ✓ Meetings of Students' Union & Senior mgt

- Student representation:
 - ✓ Class rep system
 - ✓ Programme reps
 - ✓ Student Parliament



Conclusions

- How to eat the elephant?
 - In chunks
- Iterative process of improving quality management: alignment + realignment
 - Joined-up thinking, strategy, actions
- Ensure all stakeholders (especially staff) understand why and how (and consequences of ‘why not’)



Conclusions (2)

- Use 7S as aide memoire to help us ask the right questions
- Don't neglect the soft elements of 7S: they're what make things work
- And don't let bureaucracy go mad

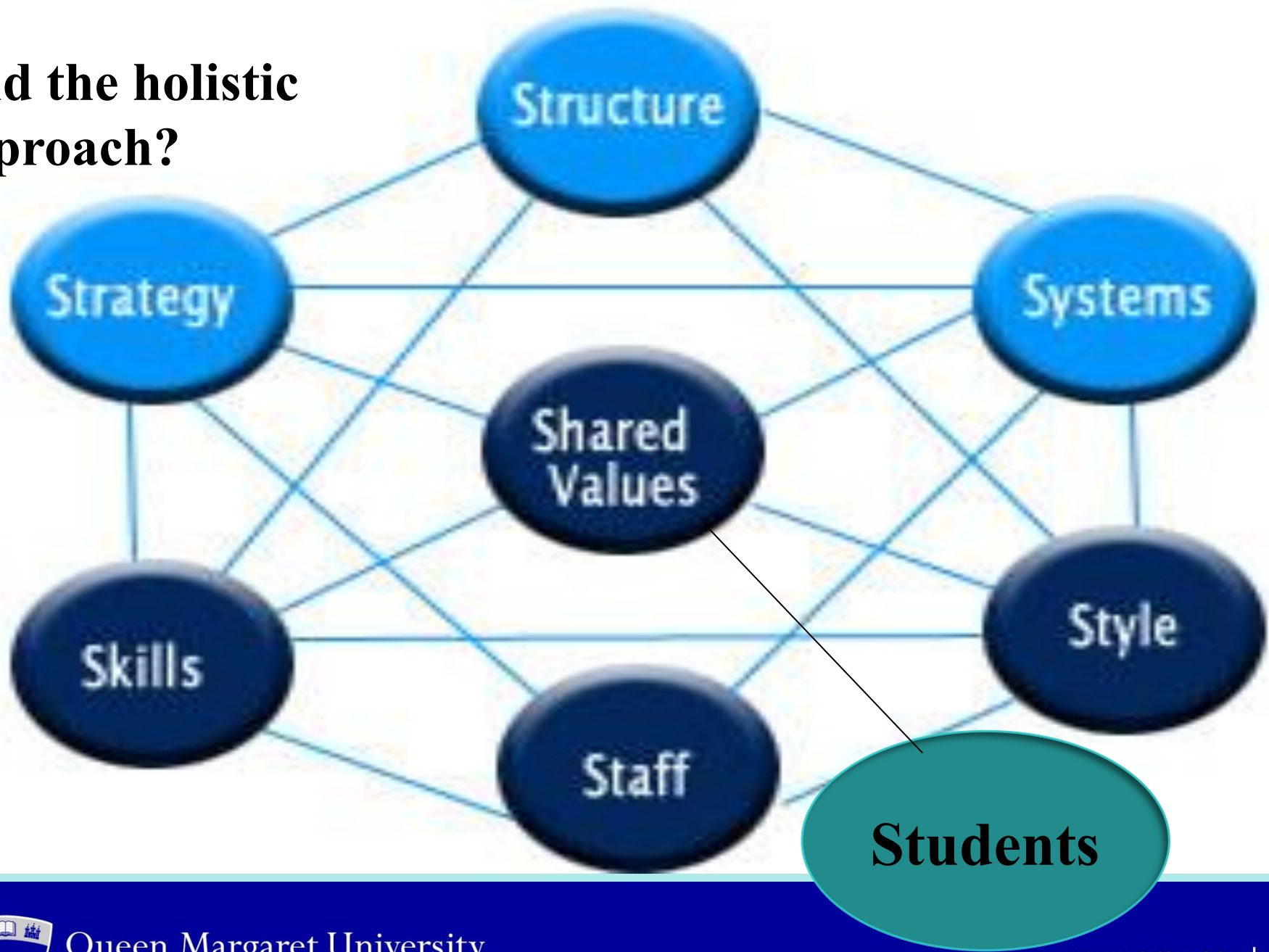


Conclusions (3)

- How to prioritise order of activities (which chunks of the elephant first)? Eg
 - Plan the hard 7S elements
 - Involve stakeholders in planning
 - Work on the soft elements
 - Involve stakeholders in planning
 - Involve stakeholders in implementing
 - Involve them in review and updating



And the holistic approach?



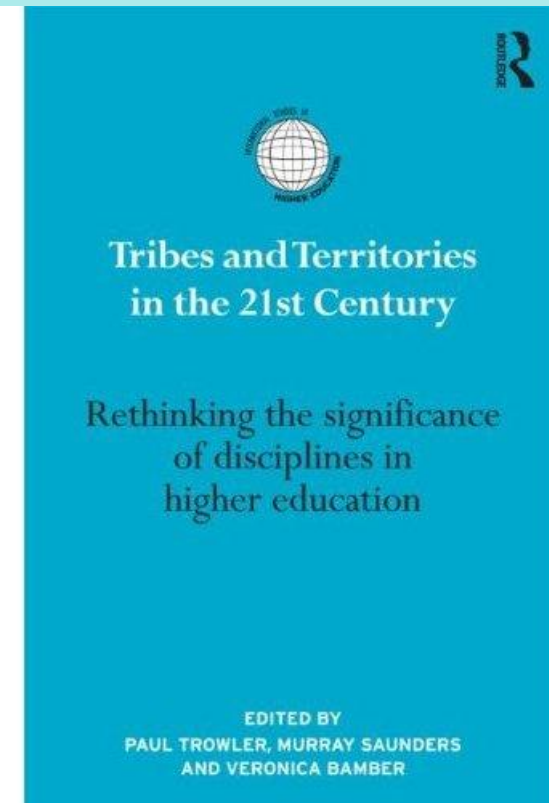
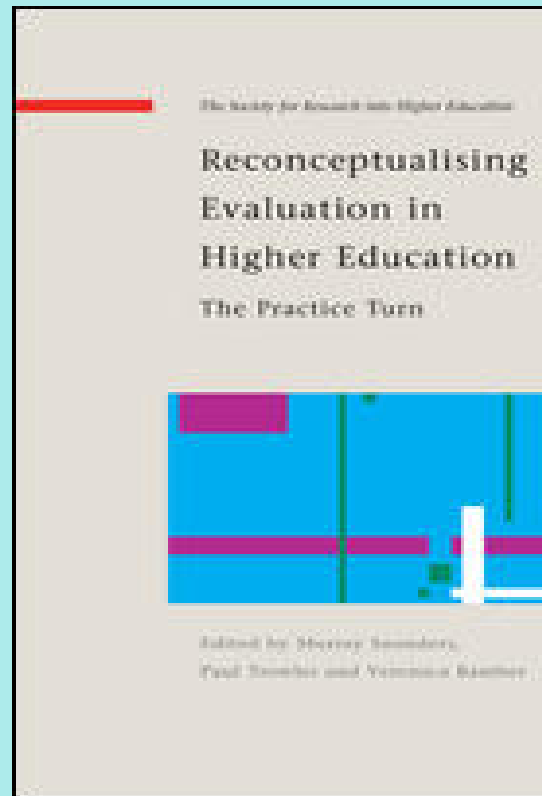
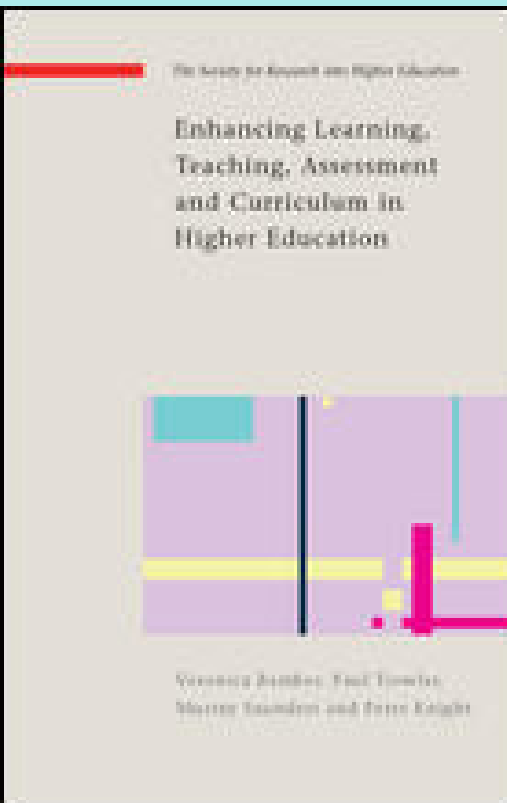
Now to you...

- Which of these ideas do you think are worth taking forward for your institution?
- Barriers?
- Opportunities?

Shokran



Some further reading: my research



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