

Editorial

Quality and Evaluation of Faculty

ONE APPROACH to the evaluation of faculty is related to quality criteria. In their paper 'Towards Total Quality Using Problem-Based Learning' in this issue, **Hadgraft and Holecek** use an approach borrowed from quality management in an attempt to bring quality into the academic-student interaction context. Such quality measures are based on ISO 9000 standards, which, as the authors show, fit remarkably well into quality assurance requirements in higher education. Quality management is associated with cultural change. Total quality management (TQM) when coupled to problem-based learning is effective in empowering students. The 14 basic points of Deming—the doyen of total quality—are well suited for creating a framework of quality assurance for higher education. Such a quality assurance methodology leads to an organized approach towards the evaluation of faculty. **Janna and Jakubowski**, in a paper on the evaluation of faculty in Volume 7, pp. 168–183, approached the problem of quality of faculty in the way we are used to. Faculty should have a balance between teaching and research activities; student evaluation is a legitimate means of helping to assess faculty quality; faculty should decide on evaluation criteria; faculty evaluation should be an open process; and comparisons with peer evaluations should be possible. The difference between the two approaches to faculty quality is that in our usual way of assessing faculty we have a top-down approach, whereas if we were to follow the quality management route we would have an integrated approach. Total quality is about integration and teamwork, and is different from just teaching in front of a class. It is much more intensive than having a barrier between teacher and student. It involves real integrated work for a common goal of empowering the student. What it may amount to is what we have known all along—a dedicated teacher may have less time and inclination to do research. An integration of the two for top quality in both is difficult. Both research and teaching involve the whole person. It may be that excellence in both at the same time is a utopic goal, as achieving it means two full-time personal engagements. This thought may lead to the division between teaching and research universities, an idea on the agenda of UK higher education. But it must be clear that engineering is a living activity. We may ask: do we need to be involved in what is happening in order to teach really well? Is the balance then between teaching and research really a compromise or a requirement? Or is it enough to be informed but not involved? Here one may differentiate between evolving and advanced topics and fundamentals. For a comprehensive education, parts of both are probably needed. I do not know whether good educators can exist without also being researchers; some claim they can. What is nevertheless probably true is that there are good quality researchers who are not such good educators. It would be interesting to have readers' viewpoints on this question.

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