

To the Faculty Council
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Date: 20 June 2018
 Topic: Monitoring PDCA-cycles in education

In March 2017, the Faculty Council discussed some aspects of quality assurance, among others a proposal to inform the Faculty Council about quality assurance (QA 1589). The Faculty Council decided to be informed about the ‘closing’ of the PDCA cycles as suggested in 1589/3 on a yearly basis, as reflected in a communication on the website Quality Assurance (QA) about intended improvement actions.

This note reports, as agreed, to the Faculty Council the number of communications about intended improvement actions based on the evaluations of courses and modules in the academic year 2016-2017 and semester 1 and quarter 2A of the academic year 2017-2018. This note does not on the programme improvement plans, since programme improvement plans are focused on in the separate process of Quality Agreements, that has been proposed by the state minister. On this issue, the council will receive a separate proposal in September 2018.

Table 1 shows the number (and percentage relative to the total number of modules or courses) of module or course improvement plans for the academic year 2016-2017 that have been published on the website QA by the educational programmes. Table 2 shows the same data for semester 1 and quarter 2A of the academic year 2017-2018. Table 1 and Table 2 show that most educational programmes have not published there improvement on the website QA. Some programs like TBK, IEM, EST, and to a lesser extent IBA, PSTS, PSY and PA, do have published improvement plans on the website QA. It can be concluded that in itself the process of publishing improvement plans is feasible, as some programs do regularly publish these plans. However, most programs do not publish plans.

Table 1. Monitoring the 2016-2017 PDCA cycle for Modules/Courses.

	Number (%) of intranet published module improvements 1st semester	Number (%) of intranet published module improvements 2nd semester
BSc COM		
BSc EPA		
BSc IBA	2/4 (50%)	
BSc PSY		
BSc TBK	3/5 (60%)	3/5 (60%)
	Number (%) of intranet published course improvements in relation to number of courses, 1st semester	Number (%) of intranet published course improvements in relation to number of courses, 2nd semester
MSc BA	-	
MSc COM	-	
MSc ES	-	
MSc EST	3/9 (33%)	6/6 (100%)
MSc IEM	9/11 (82%)	10/12 (83%)
MSc PA	-	
MSc PSTS	5/15 (33%)	1/6 (17%)
MSc PSY	1/9 (11%)	

MSc SEC/LVHOM	-	
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Table 2. Monitoring the 2017-2018 PDCA cycle for Modules/Courses.

	Number (%) of intranet published module improvements 1st semester	Number (%) of intranet published module improvements 2nd semester 2A*
BSc COM		/ (%)
BSc EPA		/ (%)
BSc IBA	2/5 (40%)	/ (%)
BSc PSY		/ (%)
BSc TBK	2/4 (50%)	/ (%)
	Number (%) of intranet published course improvements in relation to number of courses, 1st semester	Number (%) of intranet published course improvements in relation to number of courses, 2nd semester 2A
MSc BA	1/18 (5%)	
MSc COMS		
MSc ES		
MSc EST	7/10/ (70%)	2/6 (33%)
MSc IEM	13/29/ (45%)	2/10 (20%)
MSc PA	1/10 (10%)	
MSc PSTS		01/4 (25%)
MSc PSY		
MSc SEC/LVHOM		

*) Calculation % based on number of improvement plans/ number of modules excluded Minor and Thesis modules. Date of the monitoring 20 June 2018.

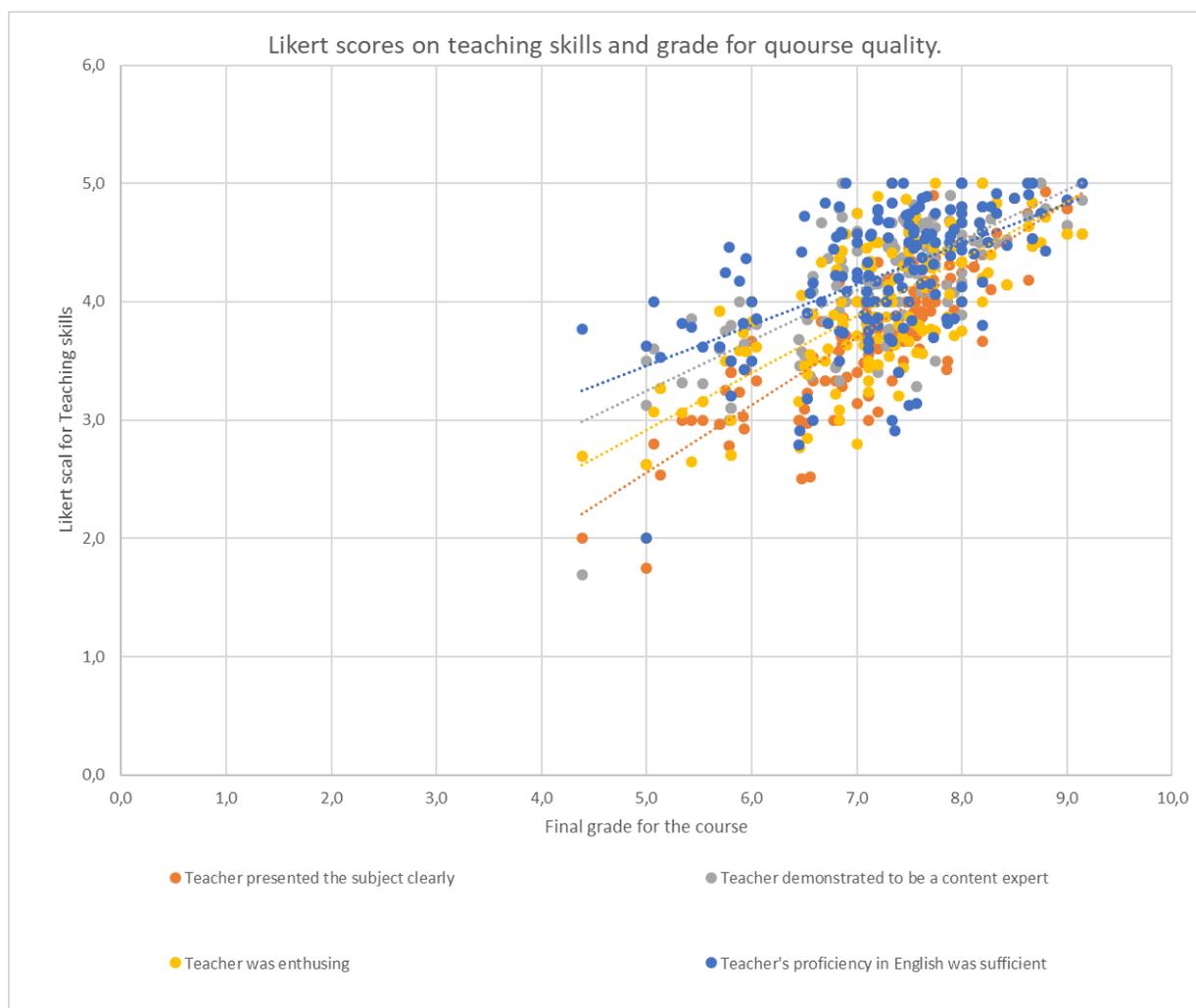
There is some uncertainty with regard to the conclusion that can be drawn from this lack of publications. It may indicate a lack of functioning of the PCDA cycle, although the lack of improvements may also indicate that no improvements are necessary (although it would be nice to also publish that observation). From a summary of results of student opinion surveys it is known that only 4% of the (total number of) MSc courses have received a score bad and 12% have received a poor score, if the final opinion on a course is taken as a criterion. In 2016-2017, for 164 courses student opinion surveys were conducted. Of the courses, 7 were graded between 1 and 5.4 (which is considered a bad score) on the ten point scale. Of the courses, 20 courses were graded 5.5 to 6.5 (which is considered to be poor score). Most courses, 76 of the 164 courses (46%), were graded 6.6 – 7.5 (which is considered a good score). Finally, a fair number of courses, 61 of 164 courses (37%) were graded 7.6 and higher (which is considered a top score). We may conclude that most courses are good to very good in the perception of students, and few courses are bad or poor. This is a possible explanation for the not closing of the PCDA cycle (= not publishing an improvement plan), at least for master courses. However, also in good courses there can be need for (minor) improvements.

Students final Opinion in 164 MSc surveys in 2016-2017 in the faculty BMS.

	164 surveys			
quality class	bad	poor	good	top
based on students final opinion	1-5,4	5,5-6,5	6,6-7,5	7,6-10
number of surveys	7	20	76	61
Average Students final opinion	5,1	5,9	7,2	8,0
percentage of surveys	4%	12%	46%	37%

For the master programmes, it can be questioned whether the elaborated system of student opinion surveys in MSc programmes does contribute strongly to improvements of our courses in a visible way. Most courses are good or top. Of the master courses, 4% are bad and 12% are poor. It is suggested to develop a student opinions survey system that is aimed at a quick identification of the worst and poor courses and that does not go to much in details over many items. Quick identification of bad or poor courses could then be followed by more extensive evaluation of these courses and a monitoring of the improvement process.

We further suggest a shift to personal feedback from students to teaching staff to foster the development of the teaching quality in the faculty. In the summarise of all 164 student opinion surveys of 2016-2017 Master courses, it can be seen that the poor grading of courses is related to poor teaching skills of which *presenting subjects clearly* seems to be most significant. For this teaching skill, we see in the figure that that most likely scores below and equal to 3,0 are in the quadrant of a final grade below 7.0.



Plotting Teaching skills against Final grade for the course from 164 student opinion surveys in MSc course BMS in 2016-2017.

This indicates the skill of clearly presenting subject matters is most essential for the course quality in the perception by students. To foster the teaching quality we advocate a system in which students give feedback to teaching staff in person via personal questionnaires, in which qualities are scored that are

linked to BKO (Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs) objectives for teaching staff. This feedback on teaching skills is to be addressed primarily to the teachers in person for the sake of their personal growth.