



arteveldehogeschool

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BENCHMARKING

THE WORK OF MANY FOR THE QUALITY OF ALL

Structure of the presentation

- The context
- A definition
- Hands on experience
- Conclusion
- Q&A

context: change is here to stay

01 Print media production industry

- Communication technology is fastly evolving, technological knowledge is evolving along;
- New applications, consumer trends, business models... generate new services, new products, new demands;
- Technological change brings about new functional profiles, require new competence portfolio's;

context: change is here to stay

2. Tertiary education is also subject to change and external pressure

- New competence portfolios require other training content e.g.

a shift from technical to generic and transversal competences;
- For a better match between skill demands (industry) and skills supply/qualifications (universities)
- Demand for greater involvement of all stakeholders away from the academic ivory tower;

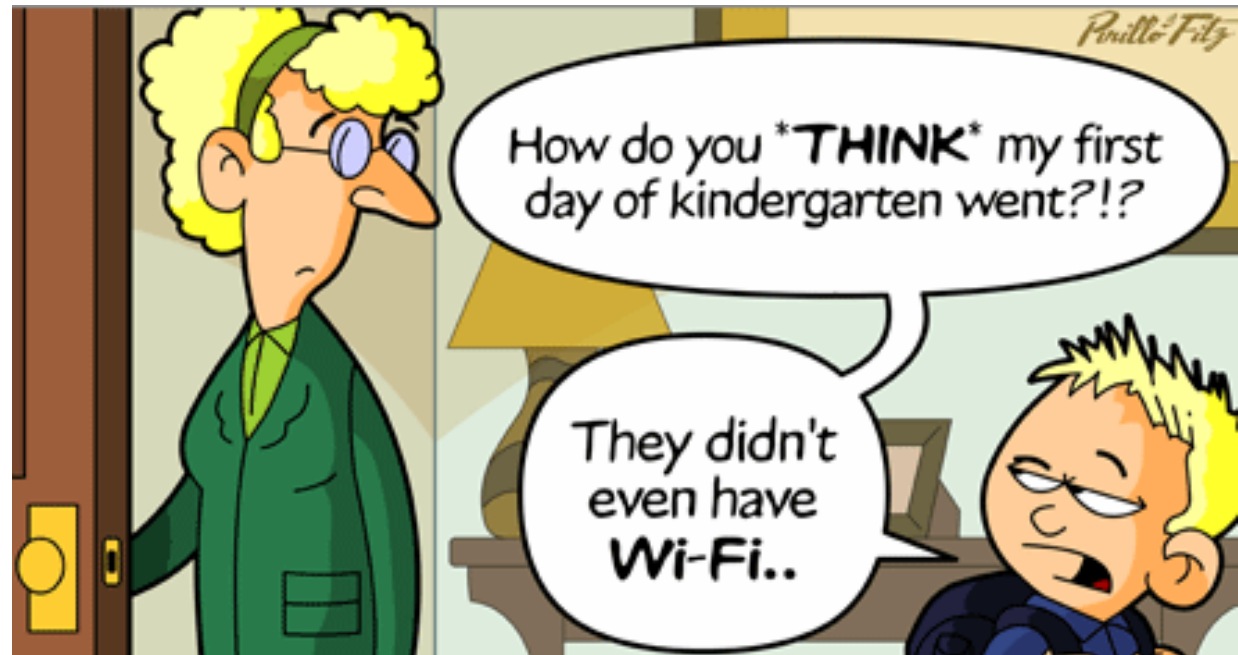
context: change is here to stay

2. Tertiary education is also subject to change and external pressure

- Adoption of new assessment methods and implement quality assurance;
- Integration of new methodological & pedagogical approaches (e.g. designing interactive online tools require time and skills).

In short:

HEI's in print media experience increased pressure to perform.



A context of increased pressure

for individual staff

- to upgrade their skills and become future proof;
- Increased admin. workload;

A context of increased pressure

for HEI's

- to invest in high tech infrastructure and staff training;
- to attract enough quality students for the programmes they offer (more and more in/output financing systems);
- to develop good working relations with all stakeholders;
- to establish international networks for mobility, projects (e.g. joint masters, IP's, etc.) and research.

A context of increased pressure

for both

- Internal and external research shows increased stress levels & work loads.

A context of increased pressure

At the same time:

- Number of students in print media education is declining in Belgium (= less fin. resources).
- Limited number of HEI's specialised in print media production.
- Consequentially
 - only few specialist teachers in the country for each domain;
 - hardly any Dutch handbooks focusing on print media education available. Teachers have to write/update their own courses.

- To tackle this, the department is currently studying the operational implications and eventual relevance of international benchmarking to its current programme and methods of work.
- Doing some research
- Playing peeping Tom

How can benchmarking help us?

- Benchmarking differs from ranking.
- University rankings are seductive, simple methods to chart the quality. On the basis of a number of parameters each institute is awarded a score. On the basis of this score a list is drawn and a position is assigned.
- Benchmarking refers to a cooperative effort to identify best practices (f.i. evaluation of internships, language teaching) and to create a conducive environment for peer learning.

How can benchmarking help us?

- (International) benchmarking is a reflective and systematic process whereby various departments with comparable characteristics compare their characteristics, methods, performances, outcomes in a safe, non-threatening learning environment.
- During this process of comparison, each entity seeks best practices in order to continuously improve its functioning.

How can benchmarking help us?

- This process of comparison focuses on ‘how to improve’ and intends to trigger and support implementation of good working practices.
- Benchmarking for us, a Flemish HEI, will be with a foreign HEI.

Benchmarking: lessons learned

It takes time! 18 to 24 months as a rule of thumb!

- To prepare carefully and to understand every one's working context.
- Comparability is positively influenced by possible equivalence of the institutions (e.g. in terms of structure, size, vision, etc.)

Benchmarking: lessons learned

- Two, physical meetings a year are the minimum.
- One partner has to take the lead and coordinate this effort;
- Write down all the agreements and do not hesitate to refer to it;
- Show respect for the specific working context of every partner;
- Create a challenging environment for staff;
- Involve representatives of the students and the industry. They provide interesting views and observations as critical friends;

Benchmarking: lessons learned

- A closing ceremony or seminar highlights the accomplishments and provides the HEI and the individual staff member with good standing;
- It strengthens partnerships. It strengthens the existing networking or expands it. It fuels mobility of students and especially staff members.
- It serves as the subject of articles in journals and of presentations on international congresses.
- It allows all partners to 'score'.
- All are very positive about the outcome!!!

**What are the don'ts?
Recipes for failure?**

Incomparability



What are the don'ts? Recipes for failure?

Absence of
transparency
& openness



What are the don'ts? Recipes for failure?

Be aware of
copycats!



What are the don'ts? Recipes for failure?

Be clear
about what
you want



What are the don'ts? Recipes for failure?

...And about
what you're
saying...



What are the don'ts? Recipes for failure?

And you can't
trust the online
translation
system...



Thank you for your attention!

Luk Bouters