INQAAHE CONFERENCE 2021: RE-IMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY
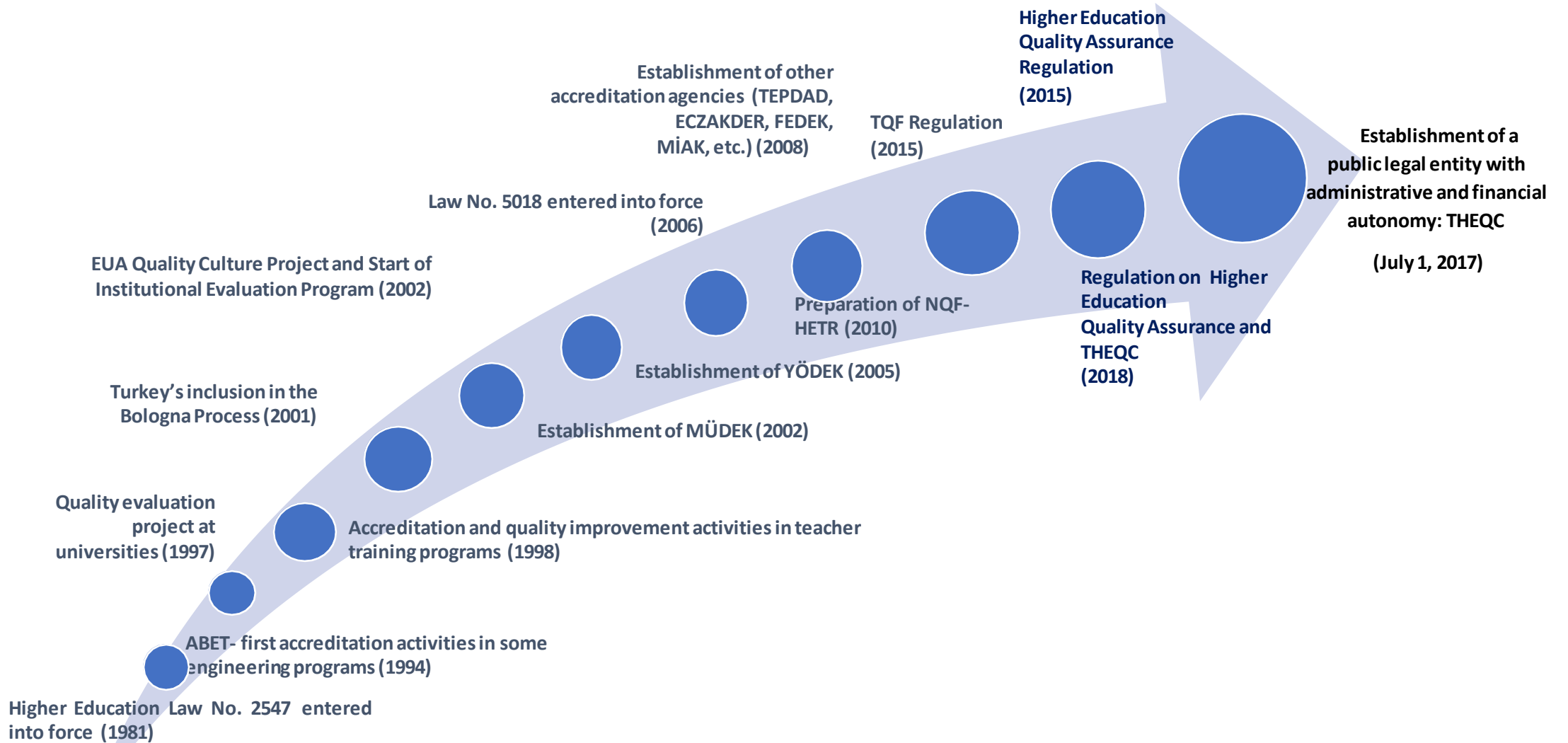
THE SUPPORTING ROLE OF QUALITY AGENCIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE QA SYSTEM: THE EDUCATION MODEL IN THE "NEW NORMAL ENVIRONMENT"

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QA Milestones in Turkish HE System

Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation (2015)

Establishment of other accreditation agencies (TEPDAD, ECZAKDER, FEDEK, MİAK, etc.) (2008)

TQF Regulation (2015)

Establishment of a public legal entity with administrative and financial autonomy: THEQC

(July 1, 2017)

Law No. 5018 entered into force (2006)

EUA Quality Culture Project and Start of Institutional Evaluation Program (2002)

Preparation of NQF-HETR (2010)

Regulation on Higher Education Quality Assurance and THEQC (2018)

Establishment of YÖDEK (2005)

Turkey's inclusion in the Bologna Process (2001)

Establishment of MÜDEK (2002)

Quality evaluation project at universities (1997)

Accreditation and quality improvement activities in teacher training programs (1998)

ABET- first accreditation activities in some engineering programs (1994)

Higher Education Law No. 2547 entered into force (1981)

Historical Evolution of THEQC
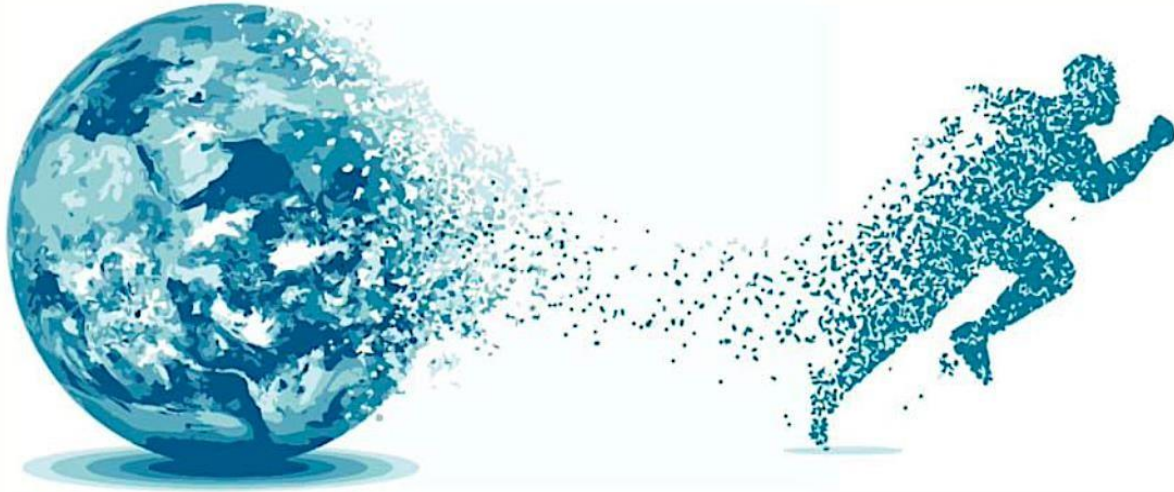
In 2015, Higher Education Quality Board of Turkey was founded as part of the "Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation".

In 2017 the Board was reorganized and renamed as the Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC), and this time THEQC became a public entity with administrative and financial autonomy.
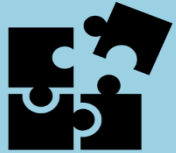
2015

2017

Foundation of THEQC

THEQC was established to evaluate QA systems of HEIs and provide quality-oriented guidance and leadership.

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Activity Areas of THEQC

Establishment of internal and external QA mechanisms in higher education system and ensuring their effectiveness

Evaluation of the quality of HEIs' learning and teaching, research and development, social contribution and governance systems in accordance with the national and international quality standards

Authorization of national and recognition of international accreditation agencies

Internalization and dissemination of QA culture in higher education system

HE Quality Commissions exist in all HEIs in Turkey and are responsible for coordinating the internal QA processes and have stakeholders like university executives/administrators, academics, administrative staff, and students.

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program

By these trainings the HE Quality Commissions were aimed to;

Develop their institutions' internal QA processes
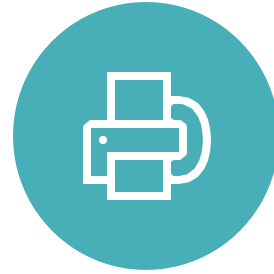
Internalise universal & national standards

Fight against the uncertainty that began with the COVID-19 pandemic

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The aim of the study is to examine the HE Quality Commissions' Training Program that THEQC realized in 2020 in terms of

- Design

- Development

- Implementation

- Effectiveness

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: Participants (1)

- The two-day training program took place 3 times between September 25 and October 8, 2020, on the THEQC E-learning Platform.

- A total of 574 members of HE Quality Commissions received training under the program.

- Participation from 202 HEIs (97.60% of all HEIs) out of 207 HEIs across the country.

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: Participants (2)

- A coordination team (including information and communication technologists and educational scientists) was present in each training program.

- Participants took active role in the online learning environment.

- A single link for access to all sessions and class-to-room transitions.

- A total of 85.68% participation was reached in the pieces of training (670 people applied, 574 people fully participated).

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: Distribution of Participants

- The University executives/administrators (rector, vice-rector, dean, institute director, vocational school director): 197 (34.32%)

- Quality coordinators (coordinator, vice-coordinator): 136 (23.69%)

- Faculty members: 182 (31.71%)

- Students: 8 (1.39%)

- Administrative staff (secretary-general, head of an administrative department, advisor, secretary, officer):51 (8.89%)

- 10 different virtual classrooms and 10 moderators in each training program attended by an average of 192 people.

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Method and Construction of the Model

- The research was conducted as part of a program assessment approach based on Driscoll & Dick (1999) and Briggs (1984).

- In this sense, as a first step, an instructional design process was carried out.

- Then, the teaching activities developed were implemented, and

- The effectiveness of the program was evaluated according to the results obtained.

Model, Institutional Design Process and Activities

- To train the HR of internal and external QA studies in THEQC's institutional external evaluation and accreditation processes, **THEQC Evaluator Training Model** was developed based on the instructional design models of Dick, Carey and Carey (2015) and Smith and Ragan (2004)

- THEQC's previous experiences in institutional external evaluation and evaluator trainings also contributed significantly to the construction of the model

- **THEQC Evaluator Training Model** is an original model compatible with the dynamics of the Turkish HE culture and global developments

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THEQC Evaluator Training Model's Components

1. **Analysis** (conditions, tasks, needs, expectations, technology),
2. **Design** (goal, target, strategy, interaction),
3. **Development** (environment, method, material, assessment tool, learning resources),
4. **Formative evaluation** (expert opinions),
5. **Moderator** (instructor) **training**,
6. **Implementation**,
7. **Effectiveness and impact**

   (success, satisfaction, long-term effects)
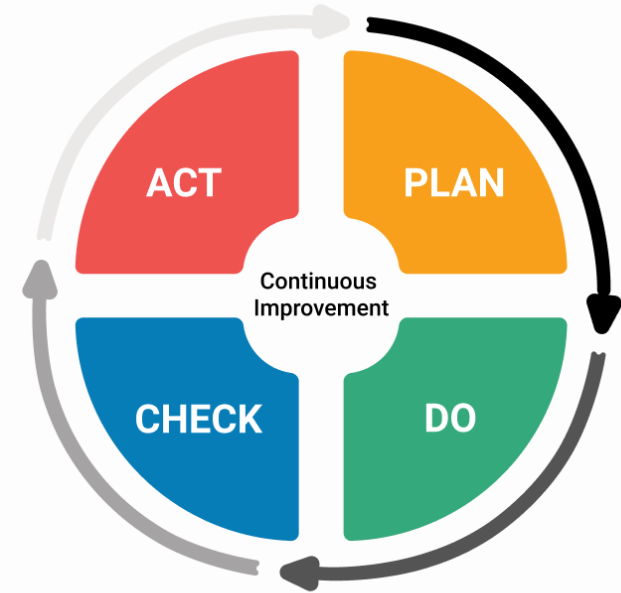
Distinctive Characteristics of THEQC Evaluator Training Model

- New dynamics of the pandemic period: Online training activities, new components of the environment, method and skills.

- Significant changes in THEQC's training activities.

- Two main components are at the core of this change:

1. **Bringing the interaction** (with dimensions such as student-material, student-student, and student-teacher) to a higher level in distance learning-teaching processes than in face-to-face processes,

2. **Increasing the competencies in combating uncertainty at the point of ensuring/evaluating quality assurance.**

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# Development Phase of the HE Quality Commissions Training Program (1)

- The development of the HE Quality Commissions Training Program began with needs and task analysis.

- In the light of the existing COVID-19 conditions, the task analysis revealed new tasks for Quality Commissions.

- The needs analysis disclosed new learning needs and to this end, the opinions of stakeholders were received.

- In this training program THEQC's stakeholders include but are not limited to: experts in QA, staff of Quality Comissions and experts in the field of Management, leadership and educational technology.

Achievements of the Needs and Task Analyses (1)

Based on Bloom's taxonomy, achievements determined have been distributed in the

- Cognitive (knowledge, understanding, practice, analysis, synthesis, assessment),

- Affective (development of the value judgment), and
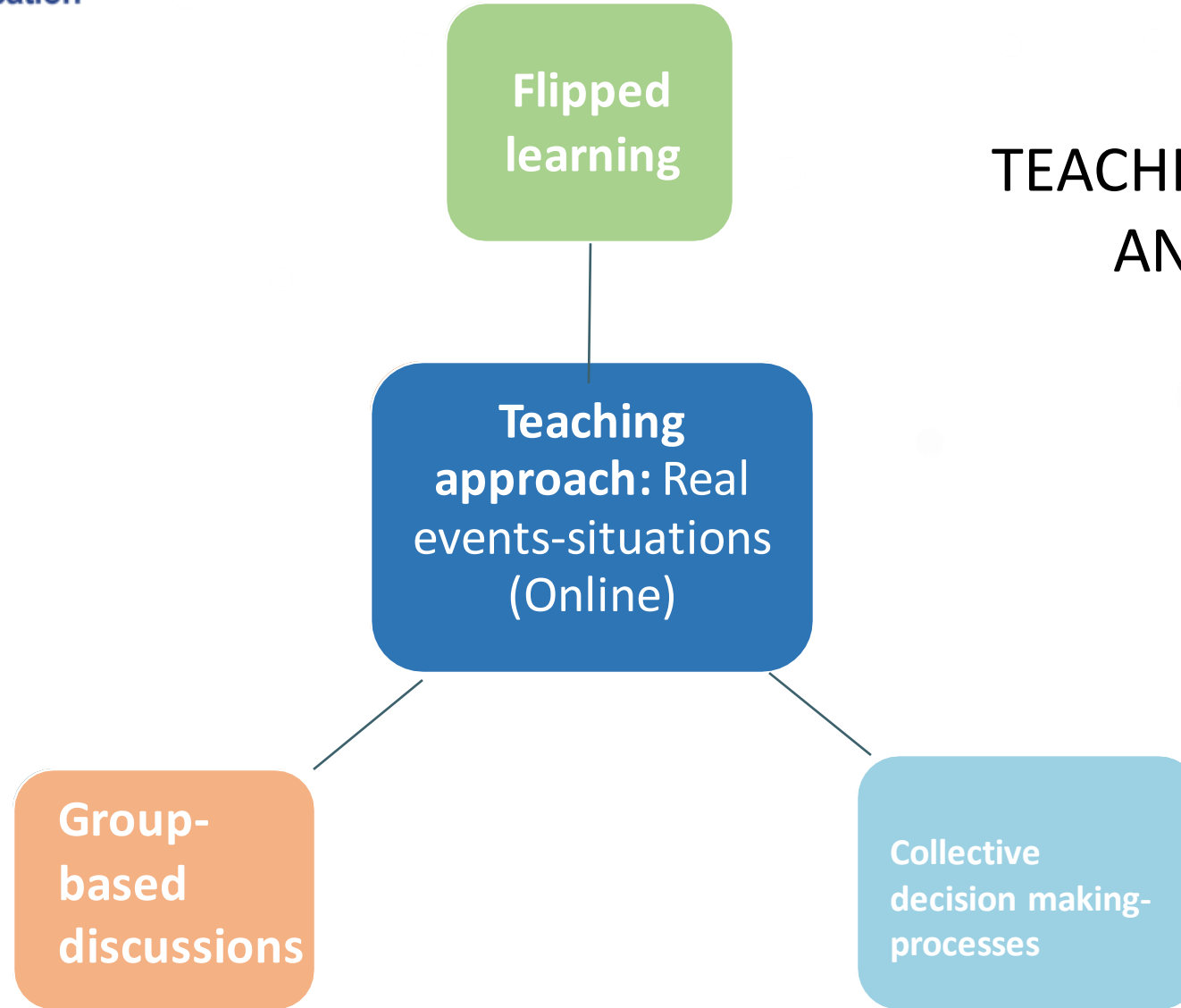
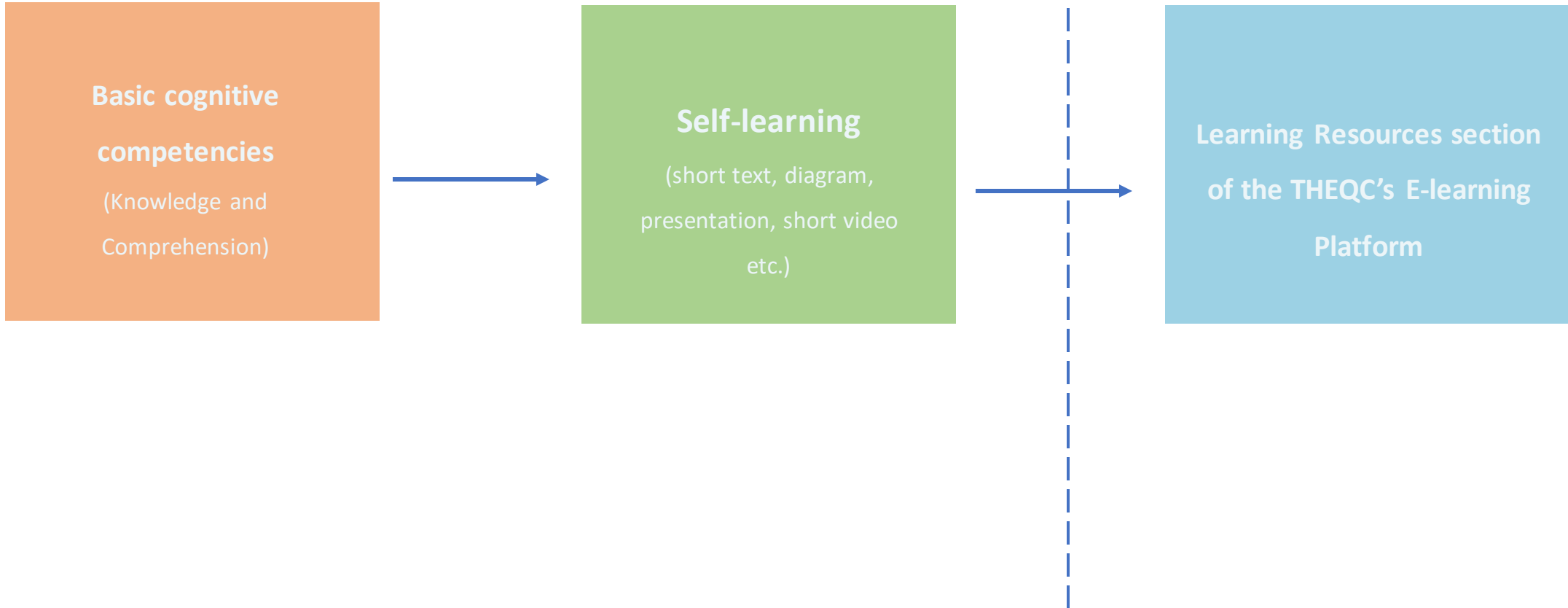- Psychomotor (skilled movements) domains.
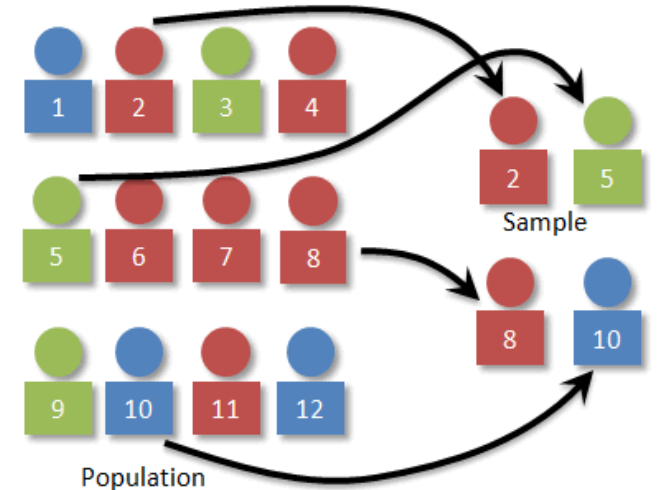
Achievements of the Needs and Task Analyses (2)

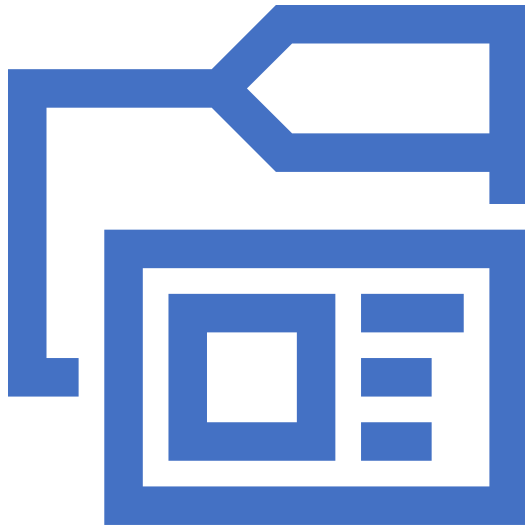These achievements are listed below.

- Explanation of the conceptual dimension of the QA system and institutional accreditation program in HE (understanding, comprehension-valuing),

- Creation of mechanisms for ensuring stakeholder participation in the QA system (application),

- Conduct of studies on strategic management and process management in the HEI (application),

- Execution of, and leadership for activities to disseminate the QA culture within the institution (valuing, internalizing),

- Execution of the institution's internal evaluation processes (review, placing importance/evaluation, internalizing, skilled movements).

Flipped learning

Teaching approach: Real events-situations (Online)

Group-based discussions

Collective decision making-processes

TEACHING APPROACHES AND METHODS

Basic cognitive competencies
(Knowledge and Comprehension)

→

Self-learning
(short text, diagram, presentation, short video etc.)

→

Learning Resources section of the THEQC's E-learning Platform

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Development Phase of the HE Quality Commissions Training Program (2)

- Development of high-level cognitive and affective abilities through activity sheets to be used in simultaneous distance learning activities.

- After formative evaluations, a moderator training was held (feedback regarding applicability and usability)

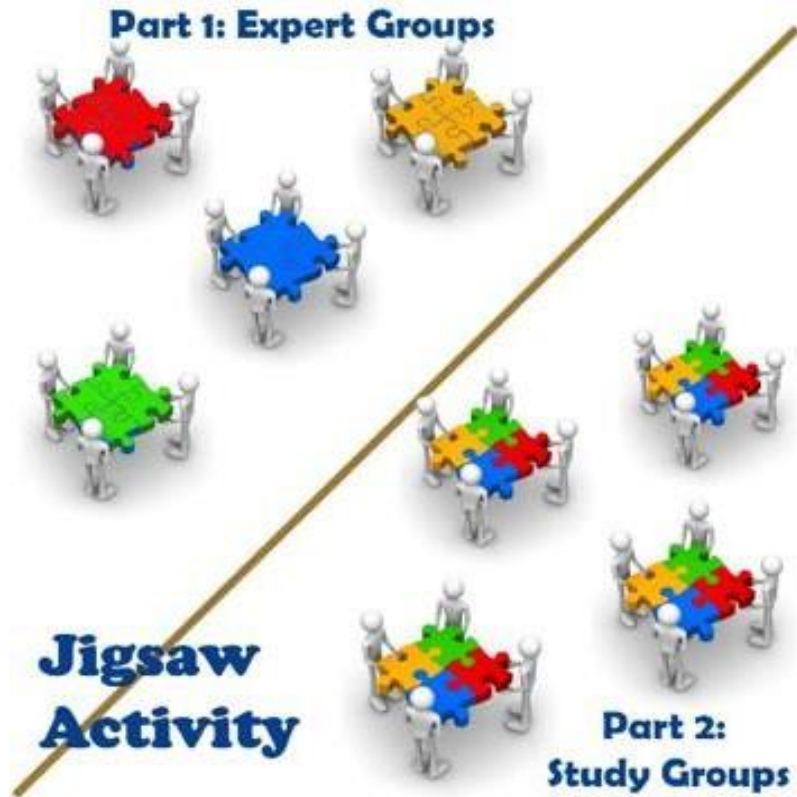**Turkish Higher Education Quality Council**

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: Content

A total of 8 discussions

Decision-making activities under 5 different modules

2 different video conferences on «Process Management» and «Leadership and Culture»

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The First Module

Part 1: Expert Groups

Jigsaw Activity

Part 2: Study Groups

JIGSAW

This was the first activity in the online learning environment. First, participants were divided into 6 groups and a topic was understood/comprehended in each group. Later, the participants returned to their classes, and discussions were held on all topics in the classes.

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The Topics of the First Module were:

What is a QA system in HE ?

QA system in the field of HE in our country
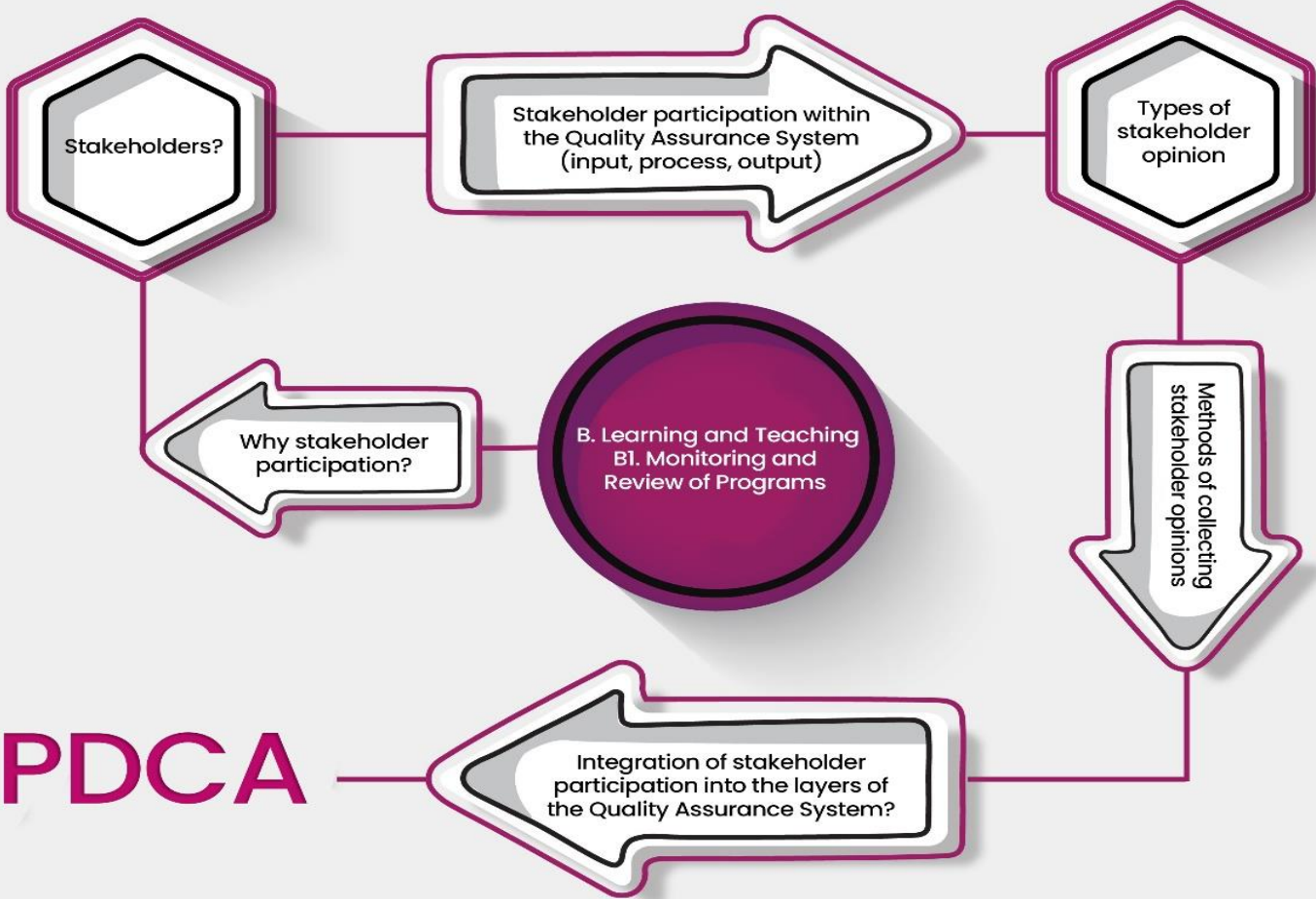
What is Institutional External Evaluation Program (IEEP) ?

What is Institutional Accreditation Program (IAP) ?

What is Institutional Follow-up Program (IFuP) ?

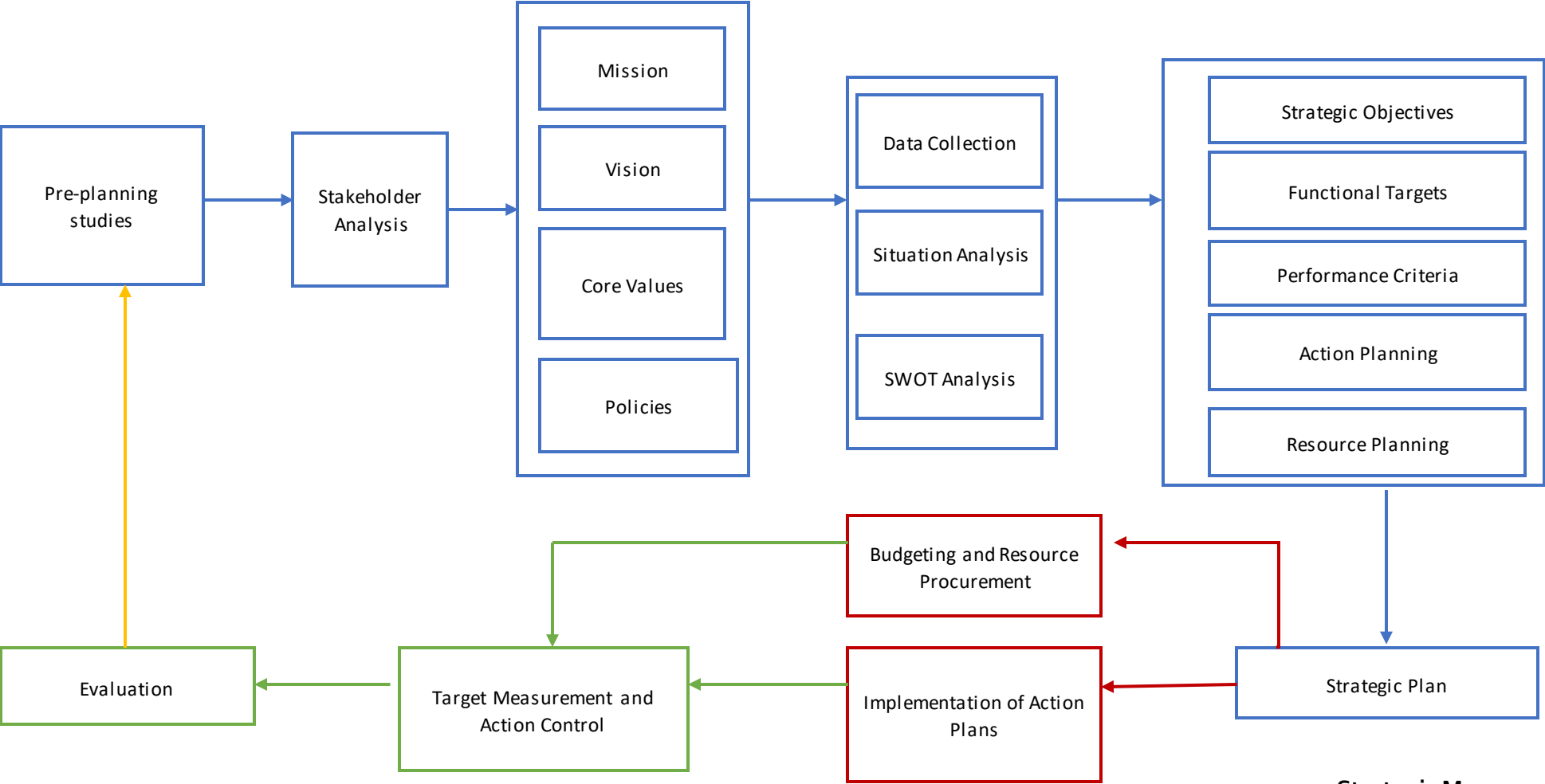What is the THEQC Information Portal?

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The Second Module on Stakeholder Participation

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The Third Module (1)


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Pre-planning studies → Stakeholder Analysis →
  [ Mission | Vision | Core Values | Policies ] →
  [ Data Collection | Situation Analysis | SWOT Analysis ] →
  [ Strategic Objectives | Functional Targets | Performance Criteria | Action Planning | Resource Planning ] →
  Strategic Plan →
  Budgeting and Resource Procurement | Implementation of Action Plans →
  Target Measurement and Action Control →
  Evaluation → (back to Pre-planning studies)

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Strategic Management Cycle

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The Third Module (2)

Another activity of this module was the definition of processes. In this activitiy, an answer was sought to the question «What are the macro and sub-processes of a HEI» based on discussions in each class.

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The Fourth Module

The fourth module consisted of videoconference titled «Leadership and Culture» and related discussions were done.

2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: The Fifth Module

The fifth module involved reviewing a simulated QA self-evaluation report of the Sun University (Güneş University), a fictional university created by THEQC, in various dimensions. 4 different activities were included in this module.

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Following issues related to internal QA processes of the Sun University were reviewed:

Stakeholder participation

Nature of the Quality Commission's activities

The competence of the University to decide on the maturity of its QA processes

**The status of taking into account the suggestions for improvement, and**

The relevance of expressing all these elements in the report

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2020 HE Quality Commissions Training Program: Effectiveness Data Collection and Analysis

A ***post-training satisfaction survey*** was given:

- The survey consisted of 17 items, 3 of which were open-ended, to determine satisfaction with the overall program and the moderator. Participants used the quantitative items in the tool with an understanding similar to the 5-point Likert type.

- They gave points between 1 and 5: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (undecided), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).
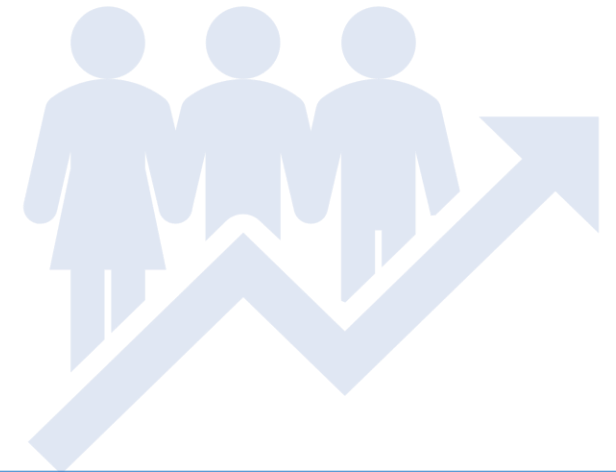
Effectiveness of the Program: Satisfaction with the Overall Program

Table 1. Satisfaction Results with the Overall Program

Item	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	Average
I found the event generally beneficial.	4,64	4,59	4,61	4,61
I think the training has achieved its goal.	4,59	4,49	4,51	4,53
The duration of the training was sufficient.	4,21	4,17	4,26	4,22
The online platform where the training took place was helpful.	4,69	4,69	4,73	4,71
The content of the training was sufficient.	4,3	4,34	4,33	4,33
The materials presented in the training were clear, understandable, and sufficient.	4,45	4,46	4,48	4,46
After the training, I feel more competent in internal quality assurance system studies.	4,34	4,37	4,35	4,35
Overall Average	4,46	4,44	4,47	4,46

Effectiveness of the Program: Satisfaction with the Moderators

Table 2. Satisfaction Results with the Moderators

Item	1st week	2nd week	3rd week	Average
The moderator carried out the process actively and effectively.	4,74	4,85	4,82	4,80
The moderator used time effectively.	4,73	4,79	4,69	4,74
The moderator provided necessary guidance when needed.	4,77	4,80	4,79	4,79
The moderator answered the questions posed to him or her.	4,82	4,83	4,82	4,82
The moderator took into account the suggestions.	4,76	4,80	4,83	4,79
The moderator used clear, understandable, and plain language.	4,83	4,85	4,82	4,84
Overall Average	4,77	4,82	4,79	4,79

Effectiveness of the Program: Positive and Negative Opinions

Positive opinions

- Competence of moderators and their communication style
- Interactive teaching methods and activities
- Possibility to work on case studies
- The importance given to group work
- Fluidity and ease of use of the distance education infrastructure and environment

Negative opinions

- The fact that one day of the training program coincides with the weekend
- Little time allocated to training (especially for new participants)
- Duration of the training period (especially for experienced participants)
- Problems of adaptation between experienced participants and new participants

Discussion

Interaction should be seen as a component that should be developed in the design of online/digital learning environments.

The program was able to effectively meet its objectives in terms of success and satisfaction. The opinions of the participants with regard to the competence of the trainers, the quality of the activities, and the usefulness of the distance education infrastructure strongly support this situation.

The results also reveal the success of the interaction and engagement components highlighted during the design and development phase of the HE Quality Commissions Training Program.

It is envisaged to create weekdays and weekends options in future training and to give participants the option to choose a date of participation.

Issues related to the coexistence of experienced and new participants: Peer learning is a highly valued element by THEQC in developing the skills of higher education quality commissions, which have members from different backgrounds and with different skills such as university executives/administrators, teachers, students.

Peer learning will be used in future training and training programs that will include activities where both experienced and new participants will be together.

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Thank you !

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