Abstract

Strategic Planning for the Advancement of the Teaching-Learning Quality in Higher Education(Ⅰ)

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This research, which is conducted for five consecutive years since 2013, attempts to seek ways to improve the quality of university education in Korea. Traditionally, the teaching-and-learning process in the classroom has been regarded as a black-box, due to little empirical research evidence and quality measures. This current annual report presents the survey's first year results, which paid special attention to strategic educational consulting for improving the quality of university education. This year, in particular, Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) held an international higher education forum in which a number of prominent keynote speakers from the US, Australia, and Japan shared expertise and experiences of their national-level survey on higher education.

The National Assessment of Student Engagement in Learning (NASEL) tool developed by KEDI between 2010 and 2012 was utilized as a major instrument of the research. A total of 28,095 undergraduate students enrolled in 4-year universities in Korea participated in the

survey. This report includes: a critical review of teaching-and-learning theories from the existing literature, new questionnaire development procedures for teaching staff, which is launched this year, and student perspectives of teaching-learning aspects in higher education, all of which helped to build a solid foundation of education improvement strategies. Lastly, a case study of comparison of two universities located in different areas is also conducted, drawing significant results and practical implications.

The following seven teaching-learning engagement benchmarks suggested in the research are as follows:

- Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)

  This category concerns about how well students develop a relationship with peers, members of teaching staff and academic officers.

- Major-Level of Satisfaction in Teaching-Learning (M-STL)

  This category looks at how students feel about their university major modules in relation with teaching aspects, course assignments and academic assessment.

- Optional-Level of Satisfaction in Teaching-Learning (O-STL)

  This category consists of questions about the satisfaction level of students taking optional modules. The questions ask the same questions as the previous category.

- Teaching-Learning Outcomes (TLO)

  This category measures outcomes that were gained from educational or non-educational activities during the time at university. These include academic capacity, social skills, self-development, and so on.

- Self-directed Learning Activity (SLA)

  This category focuses onto how well students explore, direct, evaluate their own learning activities/performance. It also asks the extent to which students are willing to co-operate with peers.

- Quality of Student Support (QSS)

  This category measures the quality of academic support that the university offers, including facilities and services available.

- Emphasis of Student Support (ESS)

  This category measures where university places emphasis on in terms of student support. The questions listed in this category cover general well-being of a student, career aspects, and academic support so on.

The major findings are as follows:

First, there were significant group differences in teaching-learning engagement levels, library/student support services use and class satisfaction. Second, non-metro, small size universities tended to have higher student-faculty interactions than their larger size counterparts in metro cities; whereas small size universities in cities showed greater teaching-learning outcomes than larger institutions in metropolitan areas. Generally, the vast majority of university students held positive attitudes towards major and optional modules provided by their university. Lastly, when it came to factors influencing the teaching-learning outcomes, there were far less school effects than those of individual students; while the university environment fostering a culture of active engagement in learning had a more positive impact on educational performance.

The following strategies below are proposed to improve the quality of higher education:

- Evidence-based measurement tools need to be developed, rather than vague assessment instruments.
- Different institutional and student characteristics need to be taken into consideration when considering the quality that the university wishes to offer.
- Academic support offices, such as Center for teaching and learning, can be of great help to shed light on improving the university education quality.
- Fostering non-curricular learning activities (e.g. clubs and societies, peer-mentoring, etc.) is required to develop greater involvement and interactions among university members.
- The data that are found in this report can be used as a basis for analysis of both

students and institutions.

- The Korean government may want to consider setting up an independent body assessing the tertiary education quality, which can closely work with universities.
- A clear vision and common mission towards which a university wants to push (e.g. research-centered, competence-oriented, etc.) must be shared by all members of the academic community.

Possible policy implications are suggested as below:

- Government support is required in order to conduct a quality, national-level survey investigating the teaching-and-learning process in higher education.
- The Korean government may support national research centers to build longitudinal data systems to be able to track university student engagement over time.
- The Korean government may want to consider setting aside financial resources devoted to higher education international comparisons and research.