Proposal for the **INQAAHE Conference 2023**
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- Intended session format: Multi-speaker session
- Conference sub-theme: Digitalization of teaching and learning
                                                             without compromising quality

- The specific topic covered: The Use of Learning Analytics in HEI
- Presenter: Mag.ª Diane Freiberger MBA
- Organization of the presenter: FIBAA, Germany
- Publication in Quality in Higher Education: Yes

Abstract:

The presentation will discuss ways to assure quality in digital times. To begin with, it will briefly be illustrated how FIBAA's certification "Excellence in Digital Education" focuses on digitalisation of quality assurance. The presentation will address some of the learnings we have made in previously certified cases. One major topic in this context is the use of learning analytics. We have found that – while increasingly gaining attention – the use of learning analytics currently happens at very different levels of experience at Higher Education institutions. We will illustrate this by presenting some examples as well as findings from a recent FIBAA survey. In conclusion, we will show how the FIBAA certification can help universities to develop further in the digitalisation of quality assurance of which the use of learning analytics is one component.

Outline description:

The world of learning has experienced a number of disruptions in recent years: the digital transformation, the importance of future skills, newer learning formats like microcredentials… just to name a few. Graduates need to be equipped for employment roles where change will be the game. We are all challenged to provide effective learning formats to help them get there. At FIBAA, we are convinced that this route will be a longer-term journey. Quality Assurance plays a crucial role here, thus FIBAA has developed the certification "Excellence in Digital Education" – an innovative instrument to evaluate and assure quality of digital learning. The international certification is carried out in a peer review process. Representing a holistic approach, the underlying assessment guide consists of the following five standards: digitalisation strategy, staff, technology, didactic design and quality assurance. All these areas are considered equally important, however, in this presentation, we will focus on the fifth standard: quality assurance.

Examples for the quality assurance of digital teaching and learning first of all involve classic quality assurance mechanisms such as evaluation schemes, surveys, programme review cycles and quality analyses, executive's jour fixes, strategy meetings etc. However, digital education poses additional questions and challenges. To start with, a university may define particular quality goals for digital learning such as high user friendliness of a learning platform, technology or tools. Also, digitalisation offers a range of additional opportunities in quality assurance. At the moment, the use of learning analytics seems to be one phenomenon in this context.

Learning analytics can provide insights into learning (and teaching) processes as well as learning environments, so that they can be better understood and optimised. According to the FIBAA certification standards, the Higher Education institution should collect data from students in order to measure study progress, predict study performance and identify risks that jeopardise

study success in good time. The steps of learning analytics include measuring, collecting, analysing and documenting the data. Universities in the certification process are expected to explain what role learning analytics play in the quality assurance of teaching. In their self-assessment report, they will describe the goals, scope and processes of data collection.

The current challenge is that there is no recognised state of the art yet and the levels of experience regarding the use of learning analytics still differ significantly. So far, the course self-assessments of the universities that went through the certification process (all from the DACH-region) show the following status. University representatives first of all mention that a common definition for learning analytics is still lacking. At the same time, the purpose of the use of learning analytics, i.e. to collect data to improve learning progress and to be able to offer more personalised academic support, seems clearer. The participating universities gained data for the following areas:

- Potential problems during the learners' study progression

- Identification of difficulties in understanding

- Information on the use / acceptancy of various study materials

- Analytics on Dropouts (identifying "students at risk")

One university reported a trial period with different phases and mentioned that transparency and acceptancy on behalf of the students were crucial. They wanted to learn more about possible fears on behalf of the students. Another university profited from the analytics that were provided by the Moodle platform for each module, following a descriptive and standardised method in order to introduce learning analytics. This describes an early stage of the work with data. In most cases, the expert panelists that have reviewed the certification cases have stated that universities are on a good track regarding their plans for the use of learning analytics. What seemed missing in some cases was a clear and comprehensible concept for the use of learning analytics. Also, more attention seems to be needed regarding the interpretation of data. While the panelists appreciated that diverse learning analytics were gathered, it was noticed that the data was not yet fully analysed to be used for the further development of the teaching. Didactical added value is only gained once the interpretation of data is used as a basis for the teacher to react upon the findings in her or his teachings. The optimisation and individualisation of learning processes can be seen as examples for a well-advanced use of learning analytics.

As Quality Assurance Agency, FIBAA needs to advance its standards in the longer term in order to keep up with trends and developments in didactics and technology. It is therefore important to stay in touch with the universities in our network. We have recently shared a survey on the use of learning analytics with universities and further education institutions in our network. Our goal is to find out more about the use of learning analytics to get a still clearer picture of the challenges and opportunities entailed. The insights will be used for the further development of our certification and may refine recommendations for action for the universities in the certification process. The intentions of the author for the presentation are to share some of the findings we have made by the survey and also address some of the questions to the audience during Q&A.

To conclude, the presentation will have underlined the many aspects that need to be considered when using learning analytics. Sharing lessons learned from the quality assurance community is important to creative effective learning journeys. FIBAA believes that quality assurance of digital education needs to be approached strategically. FIBAA's "Excellence in Digital Education" can help universities to develop further in this context, as the certification looks at learning analytics from several perspectives: strategically, pedagogically and technically. Applying institutions not only gain insights during the self-assessment process but also receive valuable suggestions for further development from an expert panel as well as the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee. FIBAA has recently published the certification's assessment guide in English language as well. It will be of major interest to gain additional insights when international

universities will go through the process. The benchmarking of the certification will then show how the digitalisation of quality assurance differs at other universities around the globe.