

26.5.2026

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**Title**

Guiding and modelling quality improvement in higher education institutions / Daniel Little

**Publication year**

2015

**Source/Footnote**

In: Quality in higher education. - 21 (2015) 3, S. 312 - 327

**Inventory number**

39242

**Abstract**

The article considers the process of creating quality improvement in higher education institutions from the point of view of current organisational theory and social-science modelling techniques. The author considers the higher education institution as a functioning complex of rules, norms and other organisational features and reviews the social mechanisms and processes through which agencies can stimulate quality improvement. The article provides a few examples of how these social processes might be modelled using social simulation techniques, including agent-based models, discrete event simulation and other modelling techniques developed for representing complex social processes of coordination and cooperation. A better representation of universities as complexes of organisations will support more effective quality improvement by higher education leaders and external agencies. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)