Research on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

Practical Exploration of the Review of CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Provider

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A national advocate and institutional voice for academic quality through accreditation, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes approximately 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations in the United States. The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) serves as a U.S.-based international forum for quality assurance and accreditation.

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Abstract: Improving education quality and quality assurance (QA) have become the most distinctive themes of higher education (HE) reform in the 21st century. Although student learning outcomes (SLOs) are the most direct evidence to HE quality and should be an indispensable element and the starting point of education evaluation, in most countries evaluations have not regarded students as the most important target in their systems. The present paper is a case study of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) International Quality Group (CIQG) Quality Platform Provider (Platform) pilot review (Review) of DeTao Advanced Class, exploring a new paradigm for quality assurance: the Platform Review of SLOs in non-traditional education providers. The characteristics of the CHEA/CIQG Platform are as follows: 1) emphasizing the result review of actual and expected outcomes; 2) the product review of student learning outcomes; 3) the process review of student learning experiences; and 4) the development review of student value-added learning.

I. Preface

Today in the 21st century, higher education (HE) in most countries in the world has entered an elite stage, quality assurance (QA) and student quality improvement have become the priority among priorities for the development of international HE. Improving education quality and assuring quality have become the most distinctive themes of the HE reform in today's world. Theoretically speaking, the assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) is the most direct evidences of HE quality and should be an indispensable element and the starting point of education evaluation. However, most HE evaluation targets in most countries are still institutions, programs, curricula or teachers, and fail to regard the students as the most important target in their evaluation systems. For example, in China, higher education institutions (HEIs) have been exploring the new modes of producing high- quality graduates for ages, but they have been focused on "teaching" from the educators' side, instead of "learning" from the students' side. Educational quality is equal to "score," "enrollment rate," "administrative performance" and so on, ignoring students' real educational needs. The traditional concept of "quality" resulted in "score first" and "standardization." The present paper is a case study of the CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) Quality Platform Provider (Platform) pilot review (Review) of DeTao Advanced Class. This paper explores the new paradigm of quality assurance: the Platform Review of SLOs to non-traditional education providers.

II. Define the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The university is not a magic box where a group of qualified graduates can spontaneously come out after a four-year study. "How can we recognize a person qualified with higher education?" "What are the expectations of SLOs?" "Are these expectations eventually able to be reached?" Since the birth of higher education, philosophers, educators, thinkers and the public have been seeking for answers and have been confused with these difficult problems. In the expressions of each country's education policies, such HE purposes as "training whole persons," "cultivating innovative talents," "developing the people with comprehensive development" and others are indicated here and there. However, these statements are too abstract to express the specific meaning of SLOs.

No doubt, the distinctive theme of HE quality assurance in the 21st century is "quality innovation." QA agencies in the whole world are actively reforming the traditional evaluation methods and exploring more direct and more effective QA

methods. In 1979, E.W. Eisner proposed "the SLOs" for the first time (Eisner, E.W., 1979). The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) gave the definition - SLOs are the students' expectations, i.e., SLOs are statements of what students should learn, know, understand and apply and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (Gullickson, Arlen R., 2003). The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) launched by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2008 is particularly notable, examining the SLOs of the bachelor degree recipients and its content to assess the students' "general skills" and "discipline-specific skills." As one of the most powerful and prominent countries in the world, the U.S.A began to pay more attention to SLO assessment and provided evidence to the public in order to show its "education quality," since the middle of the 20th century, with the promotion of accountability and the public consciousness of accreditation and recognition in higher education.

Throughout the whole development history of HE quality assurance, the evaluation cycle has been engaged in developing standards to be recognized by the public and finding out the effective and reliable methods to review SLOs. According to the statistics of Victor M.H. Borden, there are approximately 250 evaluation instruments (mostly examinations and surveys) (NILOA, 2015). Although today in the U.S.A., research on SLO assessment has greatly expanded, SLOs assessment is far away from the stage of professionalization and scientification. Many theoretical and practical topics still need to be explored. For example, *the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* and *the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)* are widely applied to review SLOs and students' personal development in the HEIs, which have had great academic and serial influence. However, criticisms have arisen: the survey statistics of learning outcomes are only derived from the students' self-assessment. How can students accurately define their SLOs and critical thinking skills? Are students able to objectively report their gains of SLOs?

And, the multiformity of different HEIs, programs, majors, students, learning experiences, learning abilities and attitudes are quite different. Therefore, it is very difficult to supply an SLO definition that it can contain everything and distinguish among all. Peter T. Ewell pointed out that understanding the definition of SLOs needs the method of concept analysis method: 1) the different levels (such as HEIs, program, student, etc.); 2) various outcomes of learning experiences (such as cognitive learning, career success, life satisfaction, etc.); and 3) different

perspectives and different observation points (such as the level after graduation and added value after entering university, etc.) (Ewell, Peter T., 2001). It is also difficult for us to give a strict distinction that can contain everything and have mutual definition. But, analysis methodology gives us the enlightenment by focusing on the core concept of SLOs, from a variety of perspectives and the relationship, we can get a comprehensive interpretation of SLOs' meaning.

The broad definition of SLOs generally refers the outcomes of "product" and achievements resulting from HE investments and activities, such as the number of graduates, social services, scientific research, learning outcomes, student employment, which is of universal applicability and importance and can "support"

> " *By measuring the students' abilities, the degree of both the students' growth and value-added outcomes can be seen.* "

or "prove" the HE output of different levels. Focusing on the narrow definition in the present paper, SLOs refers to students' comprehensive abilities achieved after completing the courses, the program and other learning activities or obtaining the degree, such as expected cognition level (knowledge and understanding), emotion (attitude and value), practical skills and acquisition ability. By measuring the students' abilities, the degree of both the students' growth and value-added outcomes can be seen. Thus we have to answer at least four questions: 1) what knowledge will the students learn? 2) what learning experiences/ professional skills have the students acquired? 3) what are the students able to do? 4) what distinguishes your students from other ones in other programs? and 5) what lifelong-learning ability have the students achieved? (黄海涛, 2011). After having solved these five problems, then the extension meaning of SLOs can be clarified.

From the perspective of organizational structure, SLO assessment can be divided into two aspects: internal assessment inside HEIs and external evaluation outside HEIs. This research focuses on the latter, i.e. focusing on the practical exploration of CHEA/CIQG Platform Review to DeTao Advanced Class. CHEA is a national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation, CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes approximately 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations (CHEA, 2015a). One of CHEA's main tasks is recognition - to recognize the qualifications and conditions of the accrediting organizations. The Platform Review of DeTao Advanced Class is a form of quality review - to review SLO basic quality of the non-traditional, innovative education providers.

III. CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Review of DeTao Advanced Class

CHEA has been concerned and committed to address student achievement since 1998. In 2012-2013, more than 23,994,000 students were enrolled in accredited institutions (CHEA, 2015b). Judith Eaton, CHEA President, stated "CHEA has engaged the issue of accreditation and student achievement in two ways. First, CHEA recognition of accrediting organizations addresses student achievement. Second, CHEA has, through a variety of publications, advisories and other efforts, encouraged and emphasized the importance of attention to student achievement in the work of accreditation" (CHEA, 2015c). In January, 2015, at the CIQG Annual Meeting, CHEA/CIQG Senior Advisor on International Affairs Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić Stamenka put forward "*the Program of Quality Platform Provider*" and one paper titled "*Higher education outside colleges and universities: how do we assure quality?*" published as a *CIQG Policy Brief* in January 2014. In August 2014, CHEA/CIQG held a Webinar titled "*Exploring External Quality Review for Non-Institutional Providers*." All these activities focused on non-traditional, innovative education providers except the HEIs.

The Platform is designed as a response to an emerging new sector of higher education, offerings from private companies and other organizations, available alongside traditional colleges and universities. The primary intent is to assure and improve quality as this sector serves more and more students. The Platform is an outcomes-based review using standards established by the Platform, a self-review by the provider and peer expert review (CHEA/CIQG, 2015a). DeTao agreed to undertake a piloting of the Platform offerings and sent in an application to CHEA/CIQG in April 2015 to become a Quality Platform Provider.

1. Introduce DeTao Advanced Class

DeTao is a private company set up in 2012 with the aim of developing innovative educational programs which go beyond conventional education approaches and do not belong to the traditional higher education system in China. The programs are designed and implemented with the guidance of world-class Masters with distinguished academic or industry backgrounds in a variety of disciplines. The educational branch of DeTao, DeTao Masters Heritage (DMH), has developed three major educational programs: *Advanced Class, Industrial Training*, and *O+O (Online and Onsite) Learning*. The Review is focused on the Advanced Class that may be used toward a degree conferred by the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts (SIVA) to selected students.

Advanced Class is aimed at providing high-quality bachelor-level educational content to Chinese universities. It provides the students a chance to receive education as if they were abroad. All the teaching teams are selected in a strict way. Advanced Class officially kicked off the recruitment from 2013. The first two majors are *Strategic Design and Innovation (SDI)*, and *Creative Animation (IACC)*. As of September 2015, the total number of enrolled students in 10 majors with 13 Masters is 457 (see table 1).

Table 1: List of Basic Information of DeTao Advanced Class

No.	Master	Major	Year of Entry	Students No.	Faculty No.
1	Hartmut Esslinger	Product Design (Strategic Design and Innovation)	2013 & 2014 & 2015	48 (20+19+9)	35
2	Dirk Wynants	Product Design (Sustainable Furniture Design)	2014 & 2015	42 (19+23)	21
3	Haim Dotan	Environment Design (Ecological Architecture Design)	2014 & 2015	48 (22+26)	21
4	Tina Hart & Kim Jarrett	Environment Design (Themed Environmental Design)	2014& 2015	51 (24+27)	20
5	Wang Min & Michel de Boer	Visual Communication Design (Branding, Identity and Public Space)	2014 & 2015	48 (22+26)	23
6	Josep Henriquez	Performance (Spanish Classical Guitar)	2014 & 2015	9 (6+3)	8
7	Robin King	Animation (Creative Animation)	2013 & 2014 & 2015	74 (29+27+18)	13
8	Roy Ascott	Art & Technology (Technoetic Arts)	2014 & 2015	40 (18+22)	10
9	Florin Baeriswyl	Cultural Industry Management (Brand Strategy and Management)	2014 & 2015	44 (20+24)	14
10	Patrick Gottelier & Jane Gottelier	Fashion & Apparel Design (Fashion· Knitwear· Sportswear Design)	2014 & 2015	53 (24+29)	20
Total	**13**	**10**	**3**	**457**	**177***

*Note: 1) Number of faculty is calculated by summing up masters, DeTao teachers, SIVA teachers and visiting experts; 2) The total number of Advanced Class faculty is calculated by summing up 10 classes, eliminating the repetition.

The overall cultivation target of Advanced Class is to help Chinese universities create highly ranked international subjects and to cultivate innovative, comprehensive graduates for all industries. The courses are designed and lead by the international top industrial masters and professors. The program is project-based and focuses on training the students' hands-on skills and project management skills. After four years, the students will receive bachelors degrees granted by the partner universities and certificates with the signature of the Masters issued by DeTao. The students gain knowledge and skill and have great potential to be the industrial elites.

2. The Quality Platform Review Preparation

With the coordination of DeTao Masters Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić and Sir John Daniel, former Chair of the CIQG Advisory Council, on 2-3 June, 2015, Judith Eaton and other experts held "*Training Workshop of DeTao Self-evaluation Using the CIQG Quality Platform Standards*" for DeTao in China. It included the following four presentations: "*Context of the workshop within DeTao's development: expected outcomes and follow-up*" by Sir John Daniel and Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, "*Global trends in quality assurance and accreditation and context of the Quality Platform*" by Judith Eaton, "*Purposes of the self-review and presentation of the four standards*" by Dorte Kristofferson, "*Purposes of the self-review and presentation of the four standards linking them to the Chinese context*" by Jianxin Zhang, as well as making SER frameworks by the four participant groups, etc. CHEA/CIQG review focuses on solving four problems: 1) why to review? (aim); 2) what to review? (content); 3) who to review? (bodies); and 4) how to review? (methods) (see fig.1).

Fig. 1: Basic Elements of CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of the SLOs

Review Contents
1. SLOs
2. Expected outcomes
3. Credit transfer
4. Transparency & comparability

Review Aim
1. Review & judge
2. Complete & develop

Pilot Review of CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Provider for Student Learning Outcomes

Review Methods
Combination of SER & actual review; quantitative & qualitative evaluation method

Review Bodies
1. Internal QA party
2. External QAA
3. Stakeholders
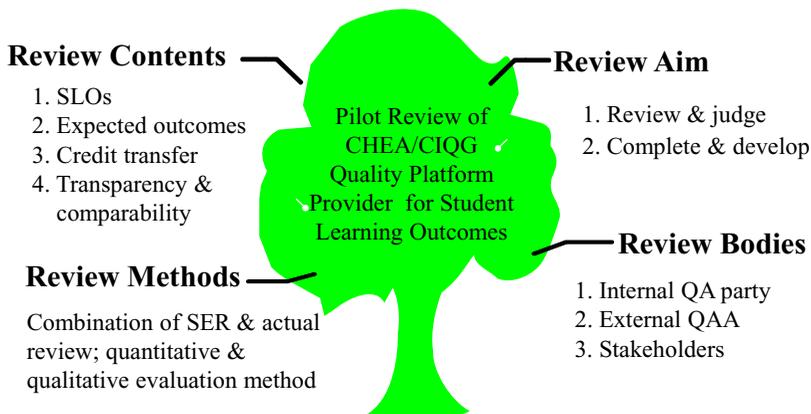
The workshop had four purposes: 1) to remind DeTao staff and Masters briefly about the basics of quality assurance; 2) to provide training on how to use the Quality Platform standards for a self-review of DeTao's educational and executive development programs; 3) to allow the CHEA team to look at DeTao's existing documentation about learning objectives for the advanced courses; and 4) to prepare for the next step, an external review, leading to acceptance of DeTao as a CHEA Quality Platform Provider (Uvalić-Trumbić, Stamenka & Daniel, Sir John, 2015). The two-day workshop achieved a satisfactory effect for both the experts and the trainees from DeTao, which can be said that it is a good case of the cooperation between internal QA and external QA.

3. The Quality Platform Review Standards

Advancing the understanding of international quality issues is essential to promote high-quality HE in today's competitive and internationalized world. CIQG meets this need "*serving as a valuable forum for colleges, universities, accrediting and quality assurance bodies and others worldwide to address issues, challenges and opportunities, all focused on academic quality*" (CIQG, 2012). Based on the above mission, CHEA/CIQG has developed four standards of the Platform Review of the SLOs (see Table 2).

> *Advancing the understanding of international quality issues is essential to promote high-quality higher education in today's competitive and internationalized world.*

The Platform is an assessment of sustainable development based on the "evidence," emphasizing "providing the evidence of SLOs," i.e., through the providers' long-term accumulation of education process and scientific collection of statistics and obvious evidences, by adopting the method of "the combination of SER and actual review as well as quantitative and qualitative evaluation," the review experts comprehensively and systematically "review and judge" the overall situation of the provider's SLOs and put forward constructive suggestions for its "future completion and development."

Table 2: The Four Standards of the Platform Review of SLOs

Four Standards	Description	Evidence
1. Learning Outcomes are Articulated and Achieved.	The provider organizes its work, determines the content of offerings and sets expectations of rigor based on anticipated and actual Outcomes for students: information about gain in skills, competencies or other attributes resulting from a learning experience.	• Expectations of SLOs have been developed and are available for all students and across all offerings. • Documentation of student learning gains, competencies and other attributes as identified is provided (omitted). • Description of the basis on which the organization judges the performance of faculty, the content of curriculum and the progress of students is provided.
2. SLOs Meet Postsecondary-level Learning Expectations.	The provider demonstrates that the articulated and achieved SLOs are consistent with expectations of student learning at degree-granting colleges and universities.	• Description of the basis used to determine whether outcomes are to be considered as postsecondary is available. This description may include, for example, comparison with offerings of other providers of postsecondary learning.
3. Curricula Provide an Opportunity for Successful Transfer of Credit.	For the provider's offerings intended to be used for credit or credentialing at a college or university, the provider: 1) Builds opportunity for student progression beyond its offerings as part of its curriculum development; 2) Organizes offerings into a coherent learning experience that can be sustained across multiple providers of higher education.	• Description and documentation is provided of opportunities for students to successfully use the offerings as part of meeting broader education goals. • Material is provided about a context for the offerings in relation to generally accepted curricular content throughout higher education.
4. Transparency is Maintained and Comparability is Established.	The provider develops and provides reliable, easily accessible and readily understandable information to the public, at least annually, about its performance: 1) An aggregate description of the SLOs that are achieved; 2) The Outcomes of comparisons of performance among similar types of non-institutional providers; 3) An aggregate description of the uses of the offerings to students, for example, advancing toward an educational goal, employment.	• Documentation of student achievement from the provider and other similar providers is available. • Information is routinely provided to students and the public about institutional performance in terms of attainment of SLOs, either individual or in the aggregate.

4. The Quality Platform Review Process

CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of SLOs consists of the following six stages: 1) review application; 2) self-review (SR) workshop; 3) SR report; 4) desk review; 5) site visit; and 6) review result (see Fig 2).

Fig. 2: Flow Chart Showing the Process of CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of the SLOs

Stage 1: Review Application

DeTao is seeking a professional quality reviewer to be reviewed. In late April 2015, DeTao submitted its application to CHEA/CIQG.

Stage 2: Self-Review (SR) Workshop

On 2-3 June, 2015, an expert group made up of Judith Eaton and other four experts held "*Training workshop of DeTao Self-evaluation using the CIQG Quality Platform Standards*" in DeTao in China in order to assist DeTao to prepare its self-review and be ready for site visit. The experts had in-depth interviews to DeTao staff and visited DeTao infrastructure such as fashion design studio, animation studio, architectural design studio, green building studio and other locations. Both the experts and DeTao staff had a clearer understanding on the review of the SLOs.

Stage 3: SR Report

From late June to mid-September, DeTao formed the self-review (SE) team and began its SR according to CHEA/CIQG review standards. The self-review report (SER) is made up of three sections: 1) provider information; 2) evidence that quality platform standards are met and 3) two annexes - examples of evidence as needed. After three months' work, DeTao submitted the SER with 26 annexes as supporting evidence.

Stage 4: Desk Review

From September to the end of October, the review panel of international experts did a thorough desk review to DeTao SER. Each of them made the individual preliminary review judgment and made a list of unknown questions according to the analysis to the SER.

Two general types of assessment methods have been adopted. One is a direct method (quantitative method, primary data): 1) demonstration of expected SLOs; 2) providing evidence of SLOs; and 3) actual samples of students work, etc. The other is an indirect method (qualitative method, supplemental data): 1) students, staff or others report their perception of how well a given learning outcome has been achieved; 2) opinions or thoughts about student learning (not based directly on student performance); and 3) gathering information through means other than actual samples of students work, such as employers surveys, quality assurance agencies' reviews, case studies of cohort groups, etc.

Stage 5: Site Visit

On 3-5 November, 2015, the site visit was carried out by a panel of international experts selected by CHEA/CIQG with the aim of making a judgment whether DeTao Advanced Class meets the Quality Platform standards. The coordinators were CHEA's President and CHEA's Senior Advisor on International Affairs, the panel leader was Dorte Kristoffersen, executive director of Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), and the experts were Axel Aerden, senior internationalization policy advisor of Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and Jianxin Zhang, chief expert of Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Centre (YHEEC) in China. Three main methods were adopted in the site visit: 1) visits to the SLO exhibition introduced by the Masters and to observe the student practice in Masters studios; 2) focus groups: the review panel held five focus groups made up of five categories of staff – a DeTao SR group members, Masters, coordinators and teachers, student representatives, educational administrators; and 3) one-to-one depth interview with cooperative party and held an Internet remote interview with the third party from the enterprise (see Table 3).

> *The aim [was] making a judgment whether DeTao Advanced Class meets the Quality Platform standards.*

Table 3: The Site Visit Program (shorten)

Time	Interviewee	Place
9:00 – 9:30	Visit student works(Masters will give introduction) Visit Master Studio on the Basement	1F & Basement
9:30 – 10:20	Interview the team leader and three members of DeTao Self-review team	7F-P1
10:30 –12:00	Interview four Masters	
13:35 –14:35	Interview seven coordinators and teachers	
14:40 –15:30	Interview one leader from SIVA (cooperative institution)	
	Interview one stakeholder (enterprise representatives)	7F-P2
15:40 –16:30	Interview eight students from four majors	
16:40 –17:30	Interview two teaching administrators	

On the basis of the desk review to DeTao SER, the site visit has three purposes: 1) to affirm the information in the self-review report that the provider meets the Quality Platform standards; 2) to obtain any needed additional information or responses to questions that have emerged from examination of the SER; and 3) to judge about whether the provider meets the standards (CIQG, 2015). The main content of the site review is carried on based on the interview outline, the questions from desk review and DeTao SER, the focus is to investigate and verify all the information involved in the SER.

Stage 6: Review Result

From early November to mid-December, 2015, the review panel and coordinators from CHEA/CIQG discussed the review results. On December 15, CHEA/CIQG submitted the review results to DeTao. "*The Quality Platform Provider Pilot Review Report on DeTao Advanced Classes*" is made up of four parts: 1) background; 2) DeTao and the Quality Platform standards; 3) other comments; and 4) two appendixes: review panel and site visit programs. In the "*DeTao Transmittal Letter Signed*," CHEA President says, "*based on the self-review documentation submitted in September 2015 and the site visit conducted in November 2015, I am pleased to inform you that the panel is recommending that DeTao Advanced Class has met all requirements and standards to become a Quality Platform Provider 2016-2019 and CHEA/CIQG has accepted this recommendation. The review panel of Chinese and international experts are most complimentary about the Advanced Classes and the fine work that you are doing. The documentation you provided was excellent and the site visit was most informative. The panel has also offered several suggestions for ongoing improvement*" (CHEA President, 2015).

The program of CHEA/CIQG Platform Review is designed with high level of professionalism, the entire review was carried out in an orderly manner. What is more, from the very beginning of the SR workshop, the experts have repeatedly stressed, review is not only the review result of judgment and recognition, but also is a process of stressing DeTao provider's summing-up, introspection, improvement and development.

IV. The Characteristics of the CHEA/CIQG Quality Platform Review of SLOs

As early as 1967, the famous American evaluation expert D. L. Stufflebeam proposed the famous "CIPP" (Context, Input, Process and Product) evaluation model. It is famous for its remarkable characteristics: product, process and feedback, etc., which have been widely used in many kinds of education evaluations. We consider CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of SLOs has adopted some characteristics of the CIPP evaluation model, and made further steps, the standards of the Platform (see Table 2 above) is made up of "OPPTTC", i.e. outcome, product, process, transformation, transparency and comparability (see Table 4).

Table 4: The "OPPTTC" of CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of SLOs

Key Element	Description of OPPTTC
Outcome	To review the matching between actual and expected outcomes, verifying the degree of consistency of SLOs' expected goals and actual goals, i.e. the educational goal-referenced outcomes
Product	To review the product of students' ability improvement and their personal development, verifying the education provider's "product" quality
Process	To review the whole process of students' learning, curriculum implementation, SLOs, verifying the changes before, during and after students' learning behaviors
Transformation	To review the transformation of student credits and sustainable development of the students' learning behaviors, verifying whether SLOs can be successfully applied in other similar providers
Transparency	To review whether the provider develops and provides reliable, easily accessible and readily understandable information to the public, verifying the process openness of the providers
Comparability	To review the comparison of the quality and importance of SLOs with other similar providers, verifying the international standards and procedures

The CHEA/CIQG Platform Review not only proves a good quality platform to a qualified provider, but also promotes the provider's sustainable development, highlighting the quality of "OPPTTC" model. The most prominent feature is the following 4 aspects: 1) the actual and expected outcomes; 2) the product of learning effect; 3) the process of learning experience; and 4) the development of value-added learning (including transformation and comparability).

1. Emphasize the Result Review of Actual and Expected Outcomes

From the perspective of the process of training talent, SLOs can be divided into two types: one is actual learning outcomes, i.e., what students have achieved in the learning process; the other is expected learning outcomes, i.e. the provider expects the students have achieved the education and curriculum goals after the learning process happens. Thus, the SLOs review contains two aspects: 1) actual outcomes of SLOs, i.e., effect outcomes, which measure and review students' practical learning outcomes to prove the quality and importance that curriculum and program have produced to the students; 2) expected outcomes, i.e., goal-referenced outcomes, which measure and judge the degree of consistency of SLOs' expected goals and actual goals after a period of learning. Comparatively, expected SLOs are worth special attention because it has the following three features: 1) to meet the enterprises' needs to graduates' knowledge and ability; 2) to meet the needs of course teaching content to students' training goals; and 3) to meet students' needs to their knowledge, skills and abilities.

The Platform has two SLOs definitions of the above two meanings: 1) the provider must supply what students know (cognition), think (attitude) and do (behavior) through actual performance or specific behavior of each student himself/herself, team or class in the process of students' training or course teaching; 2) the provider must supply evidence to accurately express SLOs in the guidance of the education teaching and curriculum goals. In the CHEA/CIQG review, the focus interview is on the combination of actual and expected outcomes, based on nine elements of a complete curriculum syllables: 1) survey report; 2) executive summary; 3) objective; 4) four-year training plan; 5) course description and assessment; 6) course outline; 7) student selection; 8) grading system; and 9) career prospects (Shanghai DeTao, 2015). The experts asked the relationship between the thirteen courses' objectives and the general objectives of DeTao education. Does the objective of each course must match DeTao mandate of "*congregating world-class masters, collecting industrial wisdom, nurturing professional elites, and fueling corporate development*"

(Shanghai DeTao, 2015)? We can say that actual SLOs are the reflection and carrier of HE quality, expected SLOs is the concrete embodiment of the educational objectives, and the SLOs is the link between education objectives and education quality.

2. Emphasize the Product Review of Student Learning Outcomes

As stated in the preface, most indicators and standards are mainly on HEIs' basic infrastructure, programs, curricula, teachers, libraries and other input items while paying little attention to the students, let alone SLOs. This is just like in kitchen the chef's qualifications (like teachers), cooking materials and utensils (like curriculum and infrastructure) are evaluated, but not actual dishes (like student)" (彭森明, 2008). To a certain extent, "learning" effect is from "teaching," but "teaching" effect is not necessarily a reflection of "learning" effect.

As a "factory" of educational output, the provider is responsible for the quality of its "products." The Platform Review of the SLOs has changed from the educational "input" to "output." For example, "*documentation of student learning gains, competencies and other attributes as identified*" and "*demonstrates that the articulated and achieved student learning outcomes...*" (CHEA/CIQG, 2015b) can be given: 1) analysis of student transcripts, teaching syllabi and curricula contents; 2) student performance, exhibitions and simulations; 3) observations of student behaviors, learning attitudes, values and experiences (including internships); 4) student self-reviews on their own skills, abilities and progress; 5) student landmark works of experiments and practices; 6) graduation theses or research projects; 7) student portfolios of learning experiences; 8) in-depth interviews among students and teachers; 9) tracking data after graduating, further studies, employment; and 10) feedbacks of alumni, enterprises and employers, etc. These methods can be used to review students' "general knowledge and skills," and also be used to review their "discipline-specific knowledge and skills" like that of OECD mentioned above. During desk review, the experts pay special attention to students "product," especially to the exhibitions showed in DeTao's SER along with the 26 appendixes. In "*the Proposal of Proposal for the Development of a Standards System for Chinese Animation Education and Training*," Master Robin King from Major Animation not only stresses the national and international industry validation of competency, but also concerns for students' core competency for animation expertise in a "performance grid" (King, Robin, 2015), which is commended by the panel expert.

For the concepts and methods of the QA development, the Platform review of SLOs was an extraordinary contribution: It has shifted from the "input evaluation" to "output evaluation," which is a revolution to QA. From the perspective of a steering baton, the SLOs assessment will shake the long-standing traditional teaching methods and promoting the shift from teacher-and-teaching-centered traditional paradigm to student-and-learning-centered modern paradigm.

3. Emphasize the Process Review of Student Learning Experiences

It can be said that the assessment is to review the specific student learning procedure of SLOs. As an operational concept, the process of SLOs is as follows: before student learning behaviors, the provider establishes the student training programs according to the expected goals of the public; during the learning experience, the teachers, administrators and other staff transmit knowledge in teaching and experimental practices and other academic activities; after the learning experience, students show the knowledge, skills and abilities that they apply some kinds of outcomes, namely "make – transmit - achieve - apply" process (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3 The Process of the SLOs before, during and after the Learning Behaviors
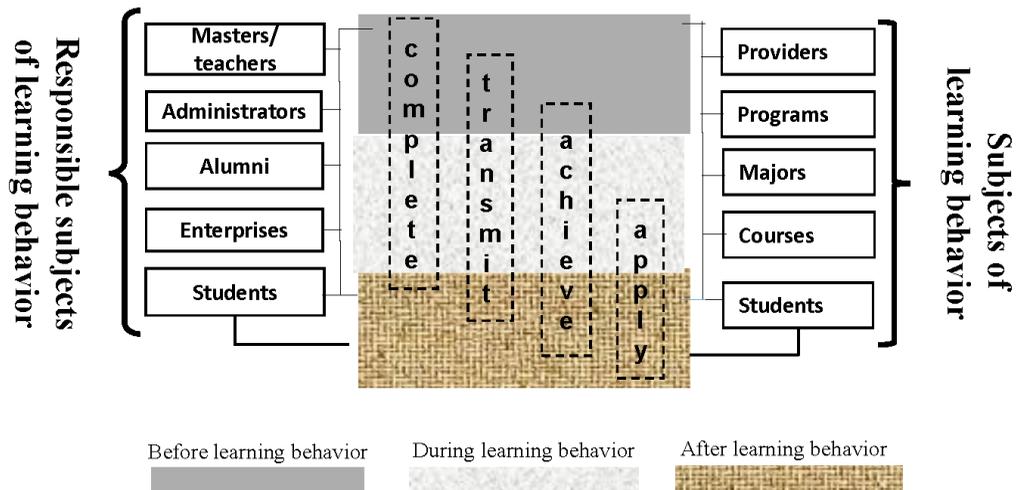
The Platform Review of SLOs stresses that SLOs' content is dynamic, including the "expectation - implementation - assessment" process of all the activities, before, during and after the student learning. The experts observed that the thirteen Advanced Classes have their own different curriculum types according to their curriculum syllabi. For example, "*Strategic Design and Innovation*" uses "project-run-through pattern," i.e., based on the project-based learning, the students synchronized to complete six main courses, and in four school years, six main courses will gradually develop and become a progressive development.

In the review feedback, the experts recommend that "*to introduce the mechanism for the students' portfolio assessment both in soft and hard copy with an emphasis on the whole student learning process*" (Review Panel, 2015). "Portfolio assessment" is a new type of qualitative assessment tool which can be used to objectively and comprehensively evaluate students. Portfolio includes the whole process of student learning: 1) evidence of the course projects, best work and progress in the school year; 2) learning outcomes of social practices and experiments and other activities outside the course; 3) evidence of student growth and change (skills, interests, attitudes); 4) comments from peers, teachers, enterprises and other stakeholders; and 5) evidence of student self-reflection, self-cognition and self-appraisal.

4. Emphasize the Development Review of Student Value-added Learning

In 1979, E.W. Eisner proposed the concept of "learning outcome" to emphasize the "added value" of student learning. Since the middle of the 1980s, Terry Taylor, Charles McClain and other experts put forward the value-added evaluation method. By analyzing students' learning process and outcomes during the university years, the added value or progress of student learning can be articulated and achieved. The added value can be regarded as the outcome of the improvement of teaching quality, the symbol of HE development (章建石, 2007). Pay attention to the value-added increment of students' "before-during-after" learning activities, i.e. by analyzing the SLOs after a certain stage of learning process, then we know what additional value have the students get. This increment can be considered as the result of the improvement of teaching quality, which is also the focus of QA evaluation.

Since DeTao has only one partner, SIVA, the experts recommended that DeTao "*strengthen cooperation with degree-granting institutions in China and overseas*

in order to ensure adequate pathways for students as well as opportunities for benchmarking with comparable institutions"(Review Panel, 2015). This is also one of the measures to ensure that SLOs have added value, which is used to express the students' development of knowledge, skills, and ability. The Platform framework emphasizes the following four aspects to added value: 1) ability of learning knowledge; 2) ability of critical thinking and innovation; 3) ability of professional skills; and 4) hands-on ability.

No doubt, sufficient value-added evidences of SLOs are the guiding ideology and logical starting point for QA. However, because there are no graduates in DeTao Advanced Class, the discussion on added value will be in the near future. However, the QA mode of the Platform review of SLOs confronting the students' value-added learning and emphasizes the outcome evidences will become the QA trend of higher education.

V. Concluding Thoughts

By the end of 2015, the CHEA/CIQG Platform Review of SLOs to innovative and non-traditional providers has been completed. The assessment of SLOs can be considered both as an end and a means. It is not a one-time event, but a dynamic on-going process, a process of systematic collection and analysis of SLOs to improve student learning. It is a conclusion, but also a beginning. There are still many problems need to be further explored: How to strengthen the alignment between the heading and the explanatory statement of the quality standards and to consider their clarity for non-native speakers? How to promote the establishment of the assessment system of the formation evaluation of the provider in order to pass the re-review after three years? How to form a suitable definition of "SLOs" fitting both the provider and the review panel?

Modern education has surpassed the traditional "autonomy" and entered a new era of "quality governance." The real meaning of the label of the Platform is the need for the sustainable concern for external and internal QAAs as well as related stakeholders to establish a more effective system for non-traditional, innovative education providers, to provide student learning experience with good quality, to provide better quality education services for the public and the cooperative HEIs. At the same time, it can help CHEA/CIQG improve review system of the Platform to service the providers with good quality and supply the international education with more QA experience.

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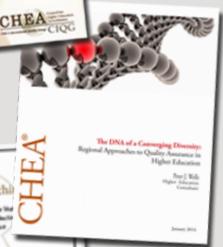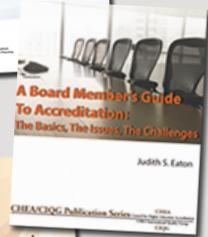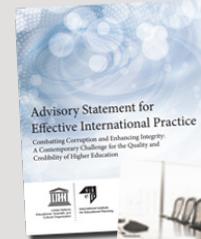
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