

## TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

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With changing patterns of education delivery from face to face to online, course content and organizational structures and the concept of quality has become an inherent component of the educational process for its success. Globally various bodies have been established to develop guidance for quality products and services their maintenance. The globalization of education, migration of students from one community to other, one country to another, provides adequate causes for concern to the educationists and administrators. Total quality management (TQM) in education is a timely tool, which must be in the system as soon as possible.

TQM is both a mind-set and a set of practical activities—an attitude of mind as well as a method

Of promoting continuous improvement.

### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

TQM is a practical but strategic approach to running an organization that focuses on the needs of its customers and clients. It rejects any outcome other than excellence. TQM is not a set of slogans, but a deliberate and systematic approach to achieving appropriate levels of quality in a consistent fashion that meet or exceed the needs and wants of customers. It can be thought of as a philosophy of continual improvement only achievable by and through people.

### **CHANGING CULTURES**

TQM requires a change of culture. This is notoriously difficult to bring about and takes time to implement. It requires a change of attitudes and working methods. Staff needs to understand and live the message if TQM is to make an impact. However, culture change is not only about changing behaviors. It

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also requires a change in institutional management. Two things are required for staff to produce quality. First, staff needs a suitable environment in which to work. They need the tools of the trade and they need to work with systems and procedures which are simple and which aid them in doing their jobs.

Secondly, to do a good job the staff needs encouragement and recognition of their successes and achievements. They deserve leaders who can appreciate their achievements and coach them to greater success. The motivation to do a good job comes from a leadership style and an atmosphere that heightens self-esteem and empowers the individual.

### **THE UPSIDE-DOWN ORGANIZATION**

The key to a successful TQM culture is an effective internal/external customer-supplier chain. Once the concept has been grasped, it has enormous implications for the organization and the relationships within it. The first casualty is the traditional notion of organizational status. It is the role of senior and middle management to support and empower the teaching and support staff and the learners. Control is not a feature of TQM organizations.

The upside-down organizational focus does not affect the structure of authority in the school or college, and neither does it diminish the essential leadership role of senior managers. In fact, leadership is pivotal to the success of TQM.

### **KEEPING CLOSE TO THE CUSTOMERS**

Quality is what the customer wants and not what institution decides is best for them. Without customers there is no institution.

A customer focus is, however, not by itself a sufficient condition for ensuring total quality. TQM organizations need fully worked out strategies for meeting their customers' requirements. Education faces a considerable challenge in its relationships with its external customers.

### **CUSTOMERS NEEDS**

Internal customers-academic

Students	:	Knowledge ,skills, and abilities to Pursue personal
		and professional Goals ;joy in learning
Faculty	:	Continuous personal growth, security, joy in work, information, input
Programs/ departments	:	continuous improvement, information exchange, cooperation

### **INTERNAL CUSTOMERS-ADMINISTRATIVE**

Students	:	Service provided when requested, questions answered when asked
Employees	:	continuous personal growth, security, joy in work, information ,input
Units/departments divisions	:	continuous improvement ,information exchange, cooperation and collaboration
community	:	competent workforce, leaders and followers, volunteers in community service, politically active citizens
accrediting agencies:		compliance with established criteria and standard
alumni	:	pride in having attended, continuing edu
Donors	:	awareness of both the quality and Need of the colleges/uni, approaches

Acknowledgement of Internal customers is the students, faculty, programs, and departments with in the academic programs of campus that influence a specific program.

## **TQM IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

*'Successful institutions of the future must be as responsive and fluid as the world around them.'*

*Edward Sallis*

Organizations are not static entities. They exist only so long as they fulfil a useful purpose. They and their environment are in a constant state of change and, to adopt a biological analogy, all institutions have a life cycle.

The organizational life or developmental cycle has four main stages.

These are formation, growth, maturity, and lastly a stage that can lead either to decline and decay or to renewal and revitalization. The developmental cycle is the same for educational institutions as for any other organization, especially now that education operates in a more deregulated and market environment. Each stage in the life cycle has its own special challenges, and a failure to meet them can lead to disaster.

At each stage an institution must change, adapt and develop. TQM, with its powerful ingredients of long-term strategic planning and the involvement of staff in continuous improvement, provides the means of facing up to the challenges at each stage.

## **INSTITUTIONAL LIFE-CYCLE THEORY**

The first stage in the cycle is the birth and formation of the institution. A newly established institution requires a strategy to gain recognition and acceptance. It must establish its niche in the market and find a clientele.

The new organization must build a client base and ensure that it is aware of and is in tune with consumer needs, even if it has created those needs in the first place. The foundation of a new organization is sometimes described as the entrepreneurial phase because the founders are often visionaries who, through personal effort and risk taking, ensure the institution's future.

If the new organization succeeds it passes into the growth and development

stage where it will face new and novel challenges. It has to ensure that it can continue to generate the excitement and optimism that is a strong feature of the formation stage. There is a danger that, while growth requires the establishing of rules and procedures, this can quickly degenerate into a needless bureaucracy that can stifle the original vision and mission of the organization. There is a risk at this stage that the organization will move from being marketed to being product driven. The maturity stage is potentially the most dangerous stage of an organization's development. It is the stage in which most educational institutions find themselves. Too many mature institutions cease to be proactive and instead only react to external events. They cease to innovate and attempt to mould customers into their ways of doing things. The commercial world is littered with the memories of once famous household names. The roll call of the demise of the famous names of the British motorcar industry bears witness to this.

Austin, Morris, MG, Riley, Triumph, Hillman, Sunbeam and others were all innovators in their day. The difference between them and Nissan, Honda, Toyota, BMW and Volkswagen is one of management commitment to listen to the market and to develop products that exceed the consumers' expectations. Failure to adapt can swiftly lead to decline and failure. In the new educational marketplace the same fate can befall educational institutions.

However, the maturity stage can also be one of renewal if the message of total quality is adopted and the institution develops strategies for adaptation and finds ways of keeping close to its customers. It can be a dynamic phase where the experience of the institution can be harnessed for its further development. Maintaining the dynamism and entrepreneurial flair is of major importance when there are rapid changes in the external environment. What TQM offers is the opportunity for institutions to adopt a different outlook, diametrically opposed to the traditional model. TQM organizations will have integrated quality into their structure and recognize that quality involves everyone's commitment and contribution at every level. To achieve this considerable investment needs to be made in people as they are the keys to quality, and hence to the institution's future.

If a school or college aspires to be a total quality institution it must act like one? It must innovate and drive ahead to achieve the vision contained in its mission statement. It must recognize that quality will always provide an edge in the market. Most important, it must carry the message to its staff and ensure that they are partners in the process. The quality route is by now well trodden but just as hard. The driving force has to come from the top and the process has to be constantly nurtured and reinforced. Leadership is the key, but so is listening and learning. It is often the little things that provide the evidence of quality. Institutions that make the effort to get the details right also have the right approach to the major issues. In a world where so many services look superficially similar it is attention to detail that provides the competitive edge.

### **LEAN FORM, SIMPLE STRUCTURE**

There are no correct forms of organization for TQM, although some structures are more suitable than others. Structures need to be appropriate and facilitate the TQM process. The evidence suggests that, as TQM develops, much of the hierarchy is eliminated, and flatter structures with strong cross-institutional links take their place. The more appropriate organizational forms are simple, lean, and are built around strong teamwork. The development and strengthening of teamwork, so much a feature of TQM, reduces the need for much of the middle management controlling and scheduling function. Teamwork needs to be structured within a simple but effective management system. It is important that teams understand the vision and the policies of the institution. This is one of the reasons why vision and leadership are so heavily emphasized in the TQM literature.

Organizations, from a TQM perspective, are systems designed to serve customers. In order to serve the customers all the parts and systems of the institution must dovetail. The success of any one unit of the organization affects the performance of the whole. The difference between a mature structure operating under TQM and the more usual organizational forms is that traditional organizations are structured around functions while TQM institutions are organized around processes. The idea is that the whole of a

process should be under a single and simple chain of command. For example, are all the functions associated with pupil or student support and welfare integrated and under a single source of control?

Under TQM, structure follows process, and the following are necessary features of any quality organization:—every unit, programme, and department needs to operate efficiently and effectively. Each area needs to have clear, and preferably written, quality standards within which to operate.

Every member of staff needs to understand the strategy of the institution, and its direction and mission, although they may not need to know the detailed breakdown of objectives.

There should be a lack of competition between units/programmes/departments, and an understanding of the aims and requirements of other parts of the organization. Mechanisms need to be in place to deal effectively with any boundary problems. A single command for each process—the key processes, whether they are curriculum, pastoral, or administrative—needs to be charted and organized so that each process is brought under a single chain of command. The charting process is best carried out from an analysis that starts by asking who the customers for a process are and continues by analyzing their needs and the standards they should expect. Structural reorganizations are not a requirement for TQM.

Reorganizations may be useful and necessary to the quality improvement process, but equally they can divert attention from quality improvement and lead to institutional fatigue. There are plenty of examples in education where organizational restructuring has impeded quality development. There is usually only so much energy within a system. TQM usually provides as much change as the organization can reasonably cope with. Staffs need some familiar signposts while adapting to new working methods. It is sensible to let structural change develop out of the process of improving quality, and so it is probably best to avoid organizational restructuring at the start of the TQM programme.

## REFERENCES

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