

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AT THE “MOVEMENT OF TQM in TURKEY”

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Özet

Toplam kalite uygulayan kurumlar ve bireyler için bir yaşam tarzı, bir felsefe, bir tutku ve gurur. Önemli olan kalitenin içerdiği bu mesajı eğitimde kalite için eğitim kurumlarına, yani okullara nasıl taşıyacağımız veya bu duyguyu orada nasıl yaratabileceğimiz. Bu arada doğal olarak "Kalite Liderliği"nin önemini yadsımamak gerekiyor. Okulda veya sınıfta kalite dediğimiz zaman en önemli konu kalite nosyonunu sınıfa, öğrenciye taşıyacak olan öğretmenin bu konuda tam olarak yetkilendirilmesi (empowered) ve öğrencilerinin öğrenme süreçlerini kolaylaştırmak için gereken tüm olanakların ona tanınması.

Türkiye'de eğitimde kalite fikri son yıllarda son derece güncel hale geldi. Coğu kurum ve bireyler, TKY kavramı ve terminolojisi içindeki yapıyı eğitim kurumlarına nasıl uyarlarız çalışması içinde. Bazıları ise bu çabaları İSO belgeleri ile kanıtlama yarışında. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki kalite çalışmalarına biraz da olsa ışık tutabilmek ve öğretmenin bu konudaki önemini vurgulayabilmektir

ABSTRACT

Total quality (TQ) is a passion and a way of life for those organizations that live its message. The problem is how to generate the passion and the pride required to create quality in education. The significance of leadership for undertaking the transformation to TQ should not be underestimated. A key aspect of the leadership role in education is to empower teachers to give them the maximum opportunity to improve the learning of their students.

In Turkey, quality in education has gained importance recently. Many educators and educational leaders are trying to find out the meaning of TQM in education and the contributions of this new philosophy and its applications both to industrial and educational organizations. Some schools have indulged in the quality efforts and a few has already had the ISO 9000 documents to prove their great change. This study aims at giving a general idea about the quality efforts at some of the educational institutions in Turkey and also the role of the teachers within this wonderful movement!

Introduction

Every country expects its schools to do more for students now than in the past. Ambitious educational outcomes are sought for all students, not just for a

narrow elite. Many factors affect student outcomes such as their attitudes and abilities, the articulation of policy, curriculum, assessment, parental involvement, facilities, etc., but

TEACHERS are the key connection between society's expectations and what students learn. Teachers' continuing opportunities to develop professionally will influence their own practice and, indirectly, the achievement of their students (OECD, 1998).

It seems that through some modifications in the educational system we have been trying to make progress, but doesn't it seem to have been taking place in the "wrong jungle"? You teach, you try, test scores go up, but Ali can't read and Ayşe still can't make simple calculations while buying eggs. When we have no clear idea of where we are going, we are likely to make progress in the wrong direction. There is no clear vision of the destination. We must define what is important to achieve at our schools and in our classrooms.

Everyone is an expert when it comes to education. After all, everyone has gone to school. However, "Consensus on what should be taught and how it should be taught is not easy to achieve! ". Today we are on the edge of a new century. The scientists say that: "The 21st Century will be remembered as the "Century of Quality". When we think about application of TQM for School Education to improve its quality, there are some approaches applying TQM in education. One of them is "to use TQM in Education". It is obvious that the use of TQM will take place in the classroom and the teacher will be responsible for it. In the following section, the meaning of TQM in education and the teacher's role will be clarified.

What is the Meaning of "Quality" and "TQM"?

Quality is a part of definition in that Total Quality Management (TQM) can be said to be the culmination of a hierarchy of quality definitions:

Quality – is to continuously satisfy customers' expectations and needs,
Total Quality – is to achieve quality at low cost
Total Quality management (TQM) – is to achieve Total Quality through everybody's participation.

TQM is not just a technology; it is a philosophy and a methodology that assists institutions to manage change, and to set their own agendas for dealing with the new external pressures. It is an attitude-a different way of looking at the school environment. TQM requires the creation and maintenance of a supportive, open, learning-centered environment. In this environment, each student is acknowledged as an important individual who has social, emotional, and intellectual needs. Education is personalized according to individual learning styles, and students are afforded the opportunity to benefit from acting in a leadership role as well as meeting the challenge of working in a cooperative role. It is not just for the best and the brightest. It works equally well with average students (Köksal, 1998).

"The quality Journey" believes in tearing down outdated management pyramids, arguing instead for the need to build a whole new management pyramid, with a foundation and 4 sides (see the Pyramid figure). TQM is characterized by the following 5 principles:

1. Management's Commitment (Leadership),
2. Focus on the customer,
3. Focus on the facts,
4. Continuous improvement,
5. Everybody's participation. (Dahlgaard, Kristensen and Kanji, 1995:73).

In adapting quality movement, originally developed for business enterprises, it is important to keep in mind certain differences between education and business:

- The school is not a factory. The student is not a product. The EDUCATION of the STUDENT is the PRODUCT.
- Successful completion of the product requires the student to participate as a worker, co-managing the learning process.
- In education there are many customers. They are:
 1. The students, themselves because they must live with the product for the rest of their lives,
 2. Their parents because they must live with the product and they pay for it,
 3. Future employers who will have to pay to obtain the benefits of the student's education,
 4. Society in general, as represented by governmental agencies, which pay a large fraction of the cost of education, desires, therefore, that the student as an adult becomes a contributing member of society.

Teachers are on the front lines!

Teachers are on the front lines. If you, as a teacher, are considering implementing “quality” in your classroom, you should

remember that your actions will impact students, parents, other teachers, administration, and the public. Not everyone will be understanding about your goals. Neither will everyone want to listen to you or support you. It is essential that you know and can articulate the reasons you are implementing **QUALITY**. To do this requires;

- Taking responsibility, charting your own course.
- Not feeling helpless and inadequate by focusing on the things we can change and powerfully influencing our environment.
- Taking control and visualizing the ideal classroom- its physical aspects, your role, the role of the students, and the outcomes for the students.

Hilliard (1991:31) says; “Teachers are mediators who provide or fail to provide the essential experiences that permit students to release their awesome potential”. With all the demands made upon us as teachers, it is easy to lose sight of what's really important. We all know that meeting the challenge of preparing our youth to succeed in tomorrow's world is a very important but also a very risky business. It requires different ways of thinking and acting by both teachers and students. It requires courage. Teachers are expected never to fail. We as teachers have limited control over time, curriculum, resources, and learning styles, on the other hand; we can control the physical layout of our classrooms, the attitudes that we both model and encourage, and the methods we use.

How Can We Create Quality in Our Classrooms?

For creating the quality in the classroom, the following items are considered to be important:

1. Personal Attitude of the Teacher:

Verbalizing the intent to become more of a coach or facilitator is the first step, and one of the easier ones. Breaking old habits is the more difficult part. Videotaping or observation by a peer is helpful to analyze our role in the classroom. After such an assessment, a teacher will have an idea how much s/he dominated and directed students activity. The personal attitude of the teacher manifests itself in the following ways (Arcaro, 1995:41):

Classroom Atmosphere

- The classroom is a safe place, both physically and emotionally
- Students assume ownership for behavior and learning
- Students participate in making rules
- Students develop personal goals and evaluate progress
- Respect and trust are the foundations for all interactions

Teaching methods

- Process and product have equal weight
- Positive interdependence is encouraged through teaming activities
- Assignments and activities are structured to meet individual needs and learning styles
- Expectations for all students are high

Communication

- All communication emphasizes personal growth and strengths rather than weaknesses and shortcomings
- Feedback is immediate, clear and specific
- Honest expression of ideas and opinions is encouraged
- The purpose of listening is to understand

Flexibility, openness, and creativity are hallmarks of the TQM teacher. As Piaget said; *“The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done—men who are creative, inventive and discoverers. The second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and not accept everything they are offered.”*

2. Essential Knowledge:

Teaching has come to encompass so much. No matter what you teach at any level to any kind of students, ask yourself: “What do I really want my students to know and be able to do when they leave my class? ”. Your answer gives the difference between covering the material and real learning. Focusing on essential knowledge does not eliminate memorizing facts; factual knowledge provides a foundation for further learning. Essential knowledge has been accumulated over time; it connects to the present and applies to the future.

3. Lesson Planning:

Planning is an essential part of life. In getting to quality, you must ask yourself some questions as follows:

- ◆ What is your starting point?
- ◆ What is your destination?

- ◆ What is important to you in getting there?
- ◆ Do you want to arrive there quickly?
- ◆ Why do you want to go there?

The expectations you have for your students determine in large part how well they succeed. Quality means continuous improvement and planning is essential for this to happen.

4. Learning styles:

Recently much research has been done to identify and describe learning styles in an effort to better understand and facilitate individual learning. Through TQM, each student becomes aware of his or her preferred learning styles. Good lesson plans incorporate ways for students to explore their learning styles and to experiment with different ways to express themselves.

5. Teaming (Cooperative Learning):

Teaming or Cooperative Learning is an important strategy in TQM. Teaming is characterized by focus on a task, reliance on each other, learning to accept differences, and a certain amount of noise. Setting up teaming activities requires a good planning to ensure positive interdependence among the students. The role of the teacher is to be a coach rather than an active player. A warning: Be careful with the students who should not be teamed together. Otherwise, the classroom will not be a safe place for every individual.

Setting up Teaming Activities:

- ✓ Choose an appropriate task.
- ✓ Start with small teams (2-3 students) and build toward larger teams.
- ✓ Design the task so that there are at least the same number of roles to be played as there are students on the team.
- ✓ Assign roles to the team members to establish positive interdependence.
- ✓ Identify, define and model the specific cooperative behaviors that you want to see the students use.
- ✓ With input from the students, establish clear criteria for team and individual success.
- ✓ Estimate the time required to do the task and then to make it shorter.
- ✓ Try to keep competitiveness out of a cooperative team effort.
- ✓ After the task is finished, make time for whole class sharing.
- ✓ Emphasize equal distribution of the “work”; it is unacceptable for one member of the team to do the whole thing.
- ✓ Give a grade for team process as well as for individual achievement.

6. Conflict Resolution:

In the TQM classroom, conflict is a natural occurrence. Students learn to deal with conflict constructively, to identify the problem, to focus on the issue instead of the person, and to create win-win solutions. Conflict in schools takes various forms as follows;

- ✓ Students don't get along with each other and/or with teachers.
- ✓ Students don't do the assigned work.
- ✓ They don't work well together.
- ✓ They don't want to follow classroom procedures.

- ✓ They are disruptive.
Prevention of conflict can be achieved through:

- Building a working, trusting relationship
- Facing the problem, not the people
- Dealing with people as human beings and with the problem based on its merits
- Negotiation, conciliation, mediation, fact-finding, arbitration are other formal ways to resolve conflict.

7. Problem-Solving Steps:

In the TQM classroom, problem solving by the students is a common occurrence. Learning and using a formal process for problem solving enables the students to become more effective and better problem solvers. The following steps can be taught to and used by students at all levels and of all abilities:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Generate alternatives.
3. Implement the recommended plan of action.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.
5. Redesign, continue, or discontinue.

8. Debriefing and Documentation:

In order to learn from events and to transfer that learning to other situations, there must be a process. That process is debriefing. The debriefing is an informal discussion period where the responses are recorded for analysis. The focus is always how to improve. We can ask these questions:

- a). What went really well during this activity?
- b). How do you know?
- c). Why did it happen that way?

d). What didn't go very well during this activity?

e). How do you know?

f). What would you do differently in the future?

g). What resolutions can we make based on this activity?

Some teachers prefer to take informal notes, others prefer a checklist and still others prefer a combination. Documentation also allows the teacher to identify problem areas. As students become familiar with this process of documentation and debriefing, they should participate in self-evaluation during an activity.

9. Reflection:

Documentation and continuous improvement require the process of reflection. You may use the journal to record successes and failures. The importance of reflecting on what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how you are doing it cannot be underestimated.

10. Parental Involvement:

TQM welcomes the involvement of parents in the classroom and on problem-solving teams, as equal partners in the educational process. In the quality paradigm, parents are both suppliers (of students) and customers (as members of society). TQM can have far-reaching effects on students and their parents. The problem-solving approach equally emphasizes providing optimum learning opportunities and student responsibility.

11. Collegiality:

While the importance of involving students and their parents in the educational process cannot be underestimated, it is equally important to establish and maintain collegial relationships with other teachers and

administrators. Collegiality makes us better teachers.

The Teacher's Central position

How is a language teacher to cope with all this? Thirty years ago, using the audio-lingual method, her role was sometimes caricatured as that of a "combination drill sergeant and orchestra conductor" (Silberstein,1987:32)- a relatively easy role to play, since most activities were well programmed. Today, however, she is a "facilitator" of learning, and her classroom may well bear more resemblance to a jam session than to a Beethoven concert. Today's language teacher must manipulate much more information in several different areas of knowledge. In addition to this, she some personal skills should be required by the teachers:

- Be able to communicate: talk and listen.
- Be persuasive.
- Be assertive, but not aggressive.
- Be able to build teams.
- Be able to lead and motivate with understanding of intrinsic psychological needs of students.
- Be able to understand and apply basic statistical techniques.
- Be enthusiastic about the application of TQM to learning.
- Be always willing to innovate, and learn, from and with her students.
- Be resilient, tactful and self-motivated.
- Be a team player but lead by example, always (Greenwood and Gaunt,1994:153).

Conclusion

While the challenges facing teachers will become greater, so too

should the opportunities for professional development as the concept of lifelong learning gains greater currency and as new technologies open up more and more exciting possibilities for learning. Good teachers are good learners and the ultimate test of the success or failure of policies for in-service training and professional development of teachers will be their effects on learning outcomes for students.

TQM is not a panacea; it is not a magic wand, which once acquired banishes problems from the classroom. TQM requires time and effort. Once TQM is a part of the classroom culture, however, the problems seem more manageable; more students take greater responsibility for their learning. Old habits diehard. Remember to begin with the end in mind. Establish your vision of the ideal classroom. Create your mission statement, which is your map. Expect roadblocks, delays, and detours. Stop and reflect. Enjoy the experience. Light a candle instead of continuing to curse the darkness.

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