

Total Quality Management – A Must in Education

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Introduction

Professor W. Edwards Deming (1986) introduced the concept of total quality in the 1950s, which, now is applied to almost every organization up to a certain level. The term stresses on the importance of shifting the focus of the organization towards a superior quality of products and services.

Total Quality Management (TQM) gained importance in the educational field due to the need for constant improvement, integration of various systems and to sustain the progress in the world market.

TQM approach in education involves not only achieving high quality but also influencing all segments of the educational process: organization, interpersonal relationships, material and human resources, etc. Implementing the TQM approach helps quality to become total (integral).

The introduction of total quality management requires a number of changes in educational institutes. The main changes have to occur in the attitudes and activities of the management, in the institute and supervising of the educational process, evaluation of its results, culture of communication, school atmosphere, and area of interpersonal relations.

The total quality management model includes the following: process planning, process management, constant improvement, overall involvement and emphasis on the user. Total quality management is an effective management technique that requires the full involvement of all employees on all organizational levels, thus denoting the organizational culture. TQM represents way of life of the institute, which introduces continuous improvement of business on all levels and activities, creating the right environment through collaborative work, trust and respect. It approaches the procedures in a systematic, steady and organized way.

TQM is all about quality management of the users, leadership and management loyalty, constant improvement, quick response, actions based on evidences, the participation of employees in the TQM culture. The success of total qualitymanagement depends on its eight components: ethics, integrity, trust, education, teamwork, leadership, recognizability and communication. Jon Choppin(1995)states that TQM provides a direction and a framework for morality in business in his article

Philosophy of Total Quality Management

No two businesses use TQM in exactly the same way, still its theory rests on two basic principles. The first and most important is that customers are vital for the operation of the organization. Without customers, there is no growth of business, and without business, there is no organization. Consequently, it should be the main aim of any group to keep customers satisfied by providing them with quality products (Deming 1986).

These ideas are not foreign to most of the organizations; what makes TQM unique is its call for restructuring of management methods to create that quality. TQM supporters urge organizations to turn nearsighted, top-down management “on its head” by involving both customers and employees in decision-making process. The second principle being that the management needs to listen to nontraditional sources of information in order to institute quality. It is based on the belief that people want to do quality work and that they would do it if managers would listen to them and create

a workplace based on their ideas.

Managers, in the TQM view, must become leaders who not only work in the system but also on the system. An institute will see endless improvement in products only when managers realize all systems consist of interdependent parts and work to aim all those parts toward a vision of quality. This type of leadership is desired to ensure that product quality improves “constantly and forever” and truly satisfies the customers.

Importance of Quality in Education

Defining quality in education is a massive challenge since it deals with the most sensitive creation on earth –the human being. Education has no finished product, nor even the graduates. They are on the way “to be”. Education only charges the human propensities to evolve and unfold it till the last breath, an activity that covers the human journey from ‘womb to tomb’. Human beings continue to learn, and evolve, ‘to be’ Mukhopadhyay (2006). Education is goal-oriented. Accordingly, quality of education has been seen with reference to excellence in education, value addition in education Feigenbaum (1983), fitness of educational outcome and experience for use Juran and Gryna (1988), conformance of educational output to planned goals, specifications and requirements Crosby (1979), defect avoidance in education process Crosby (1979) and meeting or exceeding customer’s expectation of education Parasuraman (1985).

Commitment to quality makes student proud to learn and work hard for improvement. Quality improvement is a continuous process. Quality of education leads to a prospective future. Hence, insight on quality indices and virtual implementation need to be given top priority and due attention should be paid to the category in the wide range of educational strata e.g. school, university, educational administration, and staff.

It’s observed that yet the concept of TQM has not reached many secondary schools. Hence various significant processes do not have quality assurance and hence the outcomes do not have a quality seal. This could be because of many reasons like

- Difficulties to gage a complex range of performance indicators – Program Specification, Process performance, Process outputs and Quality of Graduates.
- The compromise between creativity and rigidity in teaching and students’ assessment.
- Consistent teamwork and synergy amongst academic staff of different panels and faculties with the program specification.

Thus keeping in mind all the parameters, one should evaluate different processes of the schools with respect to TQM and check their performance.

Conceptual Framework:

Changes in global educational landscape have forced the institutions of higher learning to revolutionize its operations. The essentials of the conversion are the stringent requirements of the work force environment and increase in the supply of the quality work force across continents and countries. The competitive business environment has driven the stakeholders of educational sector to demand for more reliable, creative, and multi-skilled & knowledge work force. These have stipulated

the higher education institutions to be more concerned about quality educational system.

In today's competitive globalization era, the significance of teaching and learning becomes even more noteworthy, given the daunting challenges and shortcomings in other aspects of higher learning education such as limited material and human resources, demands from the stakeholders, globalization, issues of governance and management, etc. The constrictions of resources and other impediments are likely to continue for some time to come. Problems in higher education at a national level are intimately linked with overall global conditions. This is not only due to migration and movement of students and faculty but also because of the impact of economic globalization. These parameters have created new challenges.

TQM is a philosophy and system for continuously improving the services and/or products offered to stakeholders. Now that the technologies of transport and communication have replaced national economic systems with a global economy, nations and institutes that do not practice TQM can become globally non-competitive rather quickly. This non-competitiveness can be avoided if citizens are helped to become TQM practitioners. Therefore, the prospective benefits of TQM in a school or college are very clear:

1. TQM can help a school or college provide better service to its primary customers--students and employers.
2. The continuous improvement focus of TQM is a fundamental way of fulfilling the accountability requirements common to educational reform.
3. Operating a no-fear TQM system with a focus on continuous growth and improvement offers more excitement and challenge to students and teachers than a "good-enough" learning environment can provide.

In TQM, school or college, improvement teams and individuals are endlessly working on improving service to customers. The concept of a service being "good enough" is considered inadequate. The basic requirements for an institution to be an efficient and competitive are:

- **Knowledge and Commitment for Everyone:** The talents of a student will not be developed to their fullest potential unless EVERY member of a teaching-learning partnership promotes the highest possible quality at each step in the development process.
- **A Clear Mission:** Managing continuous movement towards progressively higher quality standards depends on defining those standards. If a TQM committee is formed in a school, it should determine the answer to this question--Does the school have a perfect, customer-focused mission statement and a functioning process for divisions and/or departments translating this statement into exit outcomes for graduates?
- **A Systems Planning Approach:** Traditional education has become excessively classified. Teacher X provides an English course; science teacher Y might focus heavily on a student's knowledge of scientific principles without paying much attention to developing that student's ability to use English principles in writing a technical report. Consequently, the student begins to view English as a "course" instead of as skills to be USED. If high levels of student skill are to be developed, there must be high levels of system-

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wide and cross-department PLANNING for instructional improvement in schools and colleges.

- **Teaming Replacing Hierarchy:** The hierarchical structured organizations of yesterday are still dominant in too many institutes. Such organizations tend to promote individual effort "good enough" to satisfy a supervisor who sometimes knows less about how to achieve quality than those who supervise. Cross-department teams can and do promote stronger improvement if they are:

- a. Given a clear mission and strong authority
- b. Supported rather than hampered by supervisors.

Support is a major element in the success or failure of TQM. If managers, supervisors, and department chairpersons support task improvement teams, it helps generate more motivation and improvement than can otherwise be achieved.

- **Enabling and Empowerment Replacing Fear:** If volunteer members of empowered improvement teams are given opportunities to become experts or to use experts' advice, it promotes excitement and dedication. Teams function best if team members are given the background and authority to make informed decisions.
- **Focus on Mastery Learning:** In traditional classrooms, teachers often follow the succession of:

Plan Teach----->Test.

The normal curve results as testimony to the fact that many students fail to learn at the highest possible level in this system.

The TQM alternative is:

1 Plan--> 2 Teach (DO) --> 3 Check--> 4 Revised Teaching (ACT) --> 5 Test.

In the "check" step, formative testing is used to determine learning, which some students have neglected. Then non-mastered material is again taught in some different way or style. After checking the progress, teaching can be repeated more than once. Those students who have mastered the matter can undertake peer teaching and help those who have not attained mastery.

This system of mastery learning can help in much more complete learning for most students. This will result in positive movement of the "normal" curve. This development in learning is a basic purpose of TQM in the classroom.

- **Management by Measurement:** The whart Cycle, is a basic part of a TQM process. This management by data rather than by opinion allows objective pursuit of the two basic purposes of TQM in education:
 - a. Improved learning--The institutes need to find new ways to teach in a manner that will help students learn better and faster.
 - b. Improved cost effectiveness-- The institutes through implementation of TQM can cut down on unnecessary cost, which are been incurred otherwise.
- **Development of Student TQM Skills:** In addition to using TQM to improve learning in general, every school should specifically equip its students to

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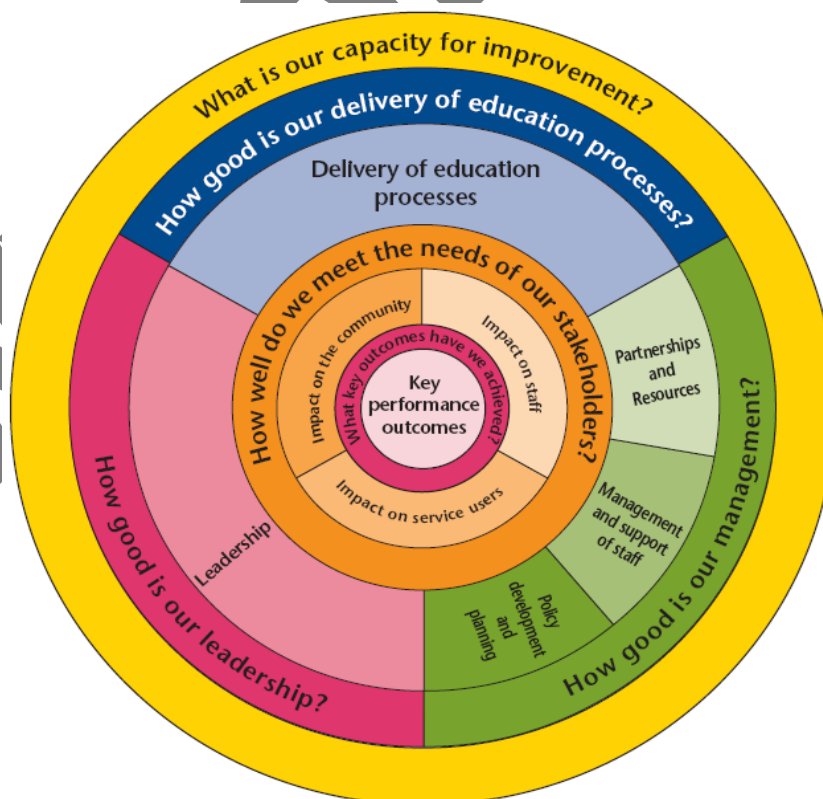
understand and use TQM. This is a basic measure of schools contributing to readiness for work in the global economy. Whether a school staff should incorporate learning TQM into existing courses or to provide it as a separate course need to be decided, as it is important that students DO and not just study TQM. An excellent way to have students follow TQM is to establish a system in which student assessment portfolios are dynamic records of constant improvement in which the students can take great pride.

- **A Humanistic and a Brain Compatible Focus:** In the Learning Environment Dr. William Glasser (1998) has specified one of the best translations of TQM principles into suggestions for a very productive learning environment. Working with people is much more complex than manufacturing widgets. An excellent blueprint for TQM in classrooms in the context of deep sensitivity to human relationships can be developed. The most productive areas in which a school improvement team can work is in helping all staff members to use the model which has more brain-friendly techniques of teaching.
- **A Transformation Plan:** Schools should form a TQM steering committee that--

(1) Develops a plan for backing up the staff in TQM implementation and

(2) Builds a positive relationship between committee and the traditional supervisors.

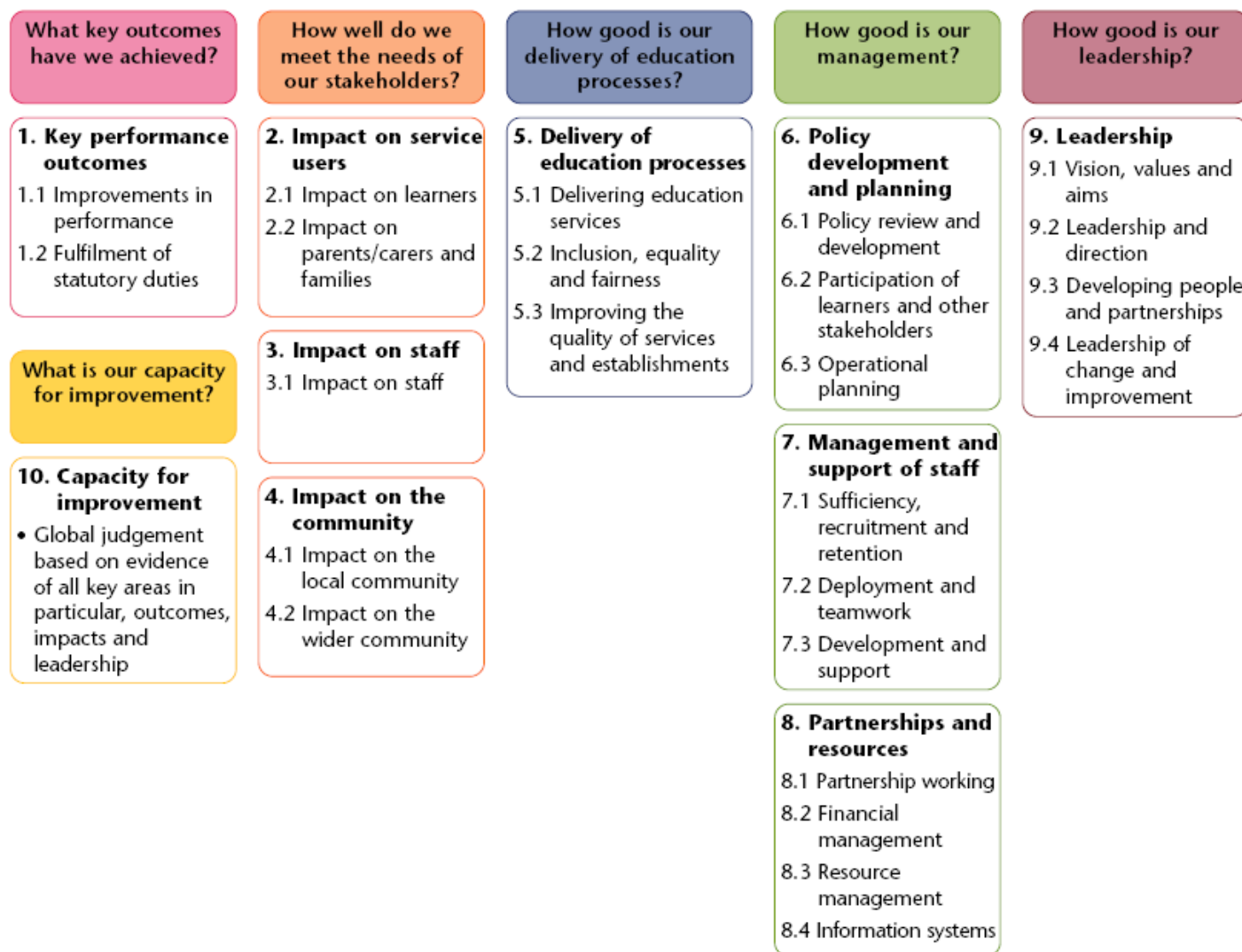
The basic questions that each institute needs to keep in mind while checking its quality standards are:



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Source: Quality Management In Education 2 – Self-Evaluation For Quality Improvement
 THE OVERARCHING QMIE2 FRAMEWORK

The various Quality indicators that need to be utilized to evaluate the performance of total quality management in education institutes are decided taking into account various questions raised in the above figure. The institutes need to realize that if they want to compete with the global education institutes they must keep these parameters in mind, which will help them, attain quality into their system which is provided in the figure below.



Source: Quality Management In Education 2 – Self-Evaluation For Quality Improvement.
 THE QMIE2 FRAMEWORK

Conclusion

If the concept and process of TQM are religiously implemented in schools, then the country's education institutes will show positive results

- The education sector will attain a global ranking and also help face competition.
- The students who are presently migrating for educational purpose to different countries will reduce and this will result in reduction of brain drain.

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- Education is considered as the backbone of the country's growth, thus by implementing TQM in all the education institutes it will help in attaining economic growth and development.

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