

Qualitative enhancement of curriculum through improving processes

Toorani, Heidar (Ph. D.)¹

Abstract

Curriculum planning and curriculum development is one of the most important issues in education. Therefore, it is vital to continue working on its qualitative enhancement.

This article looks at improving processes as a tool for the total quality management. Such processes are among the practical steps that results a better curricula to the benefit of a higher education system for students.

Key Words: Curriculum planning, curriculum development, qualitative enhancement, total quality management

Introduction

Applying the improvement approach and process promotion is one of the main issues in total quality management. School curriculum needs continuous quality improvement. Quality enhancement means improving functionality and the process of reducing the functionality changes or fluctuations. This is a process that results in lowering the number of shortcomings and problems, and better satiation of the service receivers needs. (Laame-ee, 2000;

1- Member of the scientific committee of the Research Institute for Curriculum Planning and Educational Innovations. Number 4, Khosro Alley, North Iran-Shahr Street, Tehran, Iran

Bazargan 1994; Zomorrodian, 1994). The continuous quality improvement will result in more flexibility and problem solving and reduction of the permanent resources needed for the relationship between expense and quality. (Detret, 1997; Anderson, 1993) Continuous Quality Improvement in the Education System requires the cooperation of all managers, teachers, specialists, experts, and students, and the students' parents. It also requires change in recognition, attitude, social and personal behavior, and the technology structure (Bostingel, 1992; Blankstein, 1994).

Process Improvement

One of the main issues in total quality management is the improvement process, which is done for the purpose of offering better services to the receivers of these services. Process improvement and promotion follows many conditions and factors. Among these are: clear and reachable goals, participation of the public, and the existence of a harmonious culture with principles of total quality management (Curley, 1995; Weller & David, 1997). For beginning the work of process improvement and promotion and as the first step, we should study a process that is neither too broad nor too limited. This is the first process that is selected and its characteristics are very important (Tribus, 1993; Sallis, 1996; Gilmore & Ammons, 1992). The process of writing study course books is a good example for understanding the improvement methods. Improvement and upgrading process through the "process promotion strategy" is a scientific method which can be found useful in practice. (Edward & Algezzine, 1995; Murgatroyd, 1992)

How to improve and promote the curriculum process

The curriculum follows the processes of preparation and compilation of the curriculum guide, preparation and approval of the curriculum content, writing of the study books, and validation.

This method includes the following stages:

1-Find a process for improving. For this case it has been stressed to first select and investigate a process that has a more familiar past record.

2-Organize a team that knows the process. These individuals should be people who would do at least one of the stages of the process and have the most amount of information about its functionality.

3-Clarify how the process works. Understanding the stages and the current function of the process is a critical issue. A logical consecutiveness and relationship for these stages should be in a clear and obvious format

4-Understand the reasons for common and specific changes of the process function. Common causes are those that are in the construction or the essence of the process and always influence the functionality of the process. In order to resolve the common causes, the construction of the process should be changed. The specific causes are those that consist of changes in a key writer and can be identified and resolved faster.

5- Select a part of the process that requires improvement. In this stage, a set of specific causes that are assessable and influential on the process functionality are selected. Their improvement takes place in order of importance, using the brain storming method.

6- Plan for improvement. For this item, what is planned for is establishing a specific period of time, what should be done in each period, and the goal to which we should arrive.

7- Do the plan. In this stage do what you had planned for in stage six.

8- Check the results. The evaluation can be done with the help of charts of the data process and data analysis as well as a test in small scale.

9- Act based on the results. If you are successful in the desired plan, make it standard. Otherwise, act for improvement of the new operation cycle.

Final Word

Preparation of curriculum guide, producing content, validation, evaluation, and distributing the curriculum are the main subjects in the curriculum process. Each of these subjects follows its own unique process. The curriculum planning requires continuous improvement and promotion while paying attention to the cultural,

social, and economical conditions of the society and new approaches and methods in education. Action for a constant and without-move process is not enough in the change of time and will not lead us to our destination. For this reason, the qualitative improvement of the curriculum with the process improvement method can lead to desirable results with lesser expenses. The expansion and creation of awareness among the experts and authors of curriculum, as well as their faith and belief in the importance of process improvement and how to do so through using the strategy of improvement process can be beneficial and influential in enriching and the curriculum and enhancing its quality.

References

- Anderson, L. (1993). Total quality management as the procedure for management of integrated academic. New York: Pergamon.
- Bazargan, Abbas. (1373/1994) Teaching with total quality. Research in Education Issues, Tehran, Iran.
- Blankstein, A. M., & Swain, H. (1994). Is TQM right for school? *Executive Education*, Vol. 16, N. 2.
- Bostingel, J. J. (1992). Schools of quality: An introduction to total quality management in education. New York: ASCD.
- Curley, J. R. (1995). The efficacy of quality improvement programs in education. ERIC Educational Abstracts.
- Detert, J. R., & Mauriel, J. (1997). Using the lessons of organizational change and previous school reforms to predict innovation outcomes: Should we expect more from TQM? Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association.
- Edwards, B., & Algezzine, B. (1995). Curriculum transformation through total quality management. *ERS-spectrum*. Vol. 13, N. 1.
- Gilmor, J. E., & Ammons, J. (1992). A proposal for the integration of total quality management into institute curriculum. *Research and Operation*. ERIC Educational Abstracts.
- Laame-ee, Abolfath (1378/1999). Concepts of Quality Management. Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education. Tehran, Iran
- Murgatroyd, S. (1992). A new frame for management schools: Total quality management. *School Organization*, Vol. 12, N. 2.
- Sallis, E. (1996). Total quality management in education. 2nd Ed. New York: Pergamon.
- Tribus, M. (1993). TQM in education: The theory and how to put into work. ERIC Educational Abstracts.
- Weller, L., & David, M. (1997). Strategic management of quality. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*. Vol. 10, N. 4.
- Zomorrodian, Asghar (1373/1994). Management of total quality (Concepts, Principles osool, and Operational Methods ravesh-haaye ejraayee). Tehran, Iran.