

Total Quality Management and Invitational Theory: Common Ground

Patsy Paxton

*Vista University
Port Elizabeth Campus, South Africa*

Since the early 1980s there has been growing dissatisfaction around the world, but especially in the USA with existing school practices and procedures that have alienated schools from students and communities. This general dissatisfaction has precipitated the development of alternative education models. These models that have resulted largely from paradigm shifts in how people view the purpose and function of education.

The invitational model emerged as a reaction to existing educational practices and as an approach for altering patterns of interaction at all school levels (Purkey & Novak, 1984; Purkey & Schmidt, 1987). The invitational model examines the qualities of messages that teachers and students send, receive and act upon in the school setting. The global aim of the invitational approach is "to make school the most inviting place in town" (Purkey & Novak, 1984, p.2).

Another approach to the educational process that has emerged in current literature is Total Quality Management (TQM), developed by the American physicist and statistician, W. Edwards Deming. TQM has been applied in business and industry for several years and recently has received attention of educators.

In this article, I propose that invitational theory and Total Quality Management are not mutually exclusive approaches for education. Rather, on close examination of the two, clearly these two philosophies share many common concepts and beliefs. To understand the points of comparison of invitational education and TQM, it is necessary to know the basic assumptions of both theories.

Invitational Theory

Briefly, invitational theory advocates for personal and professional practices that transform and energize the people, places, programs, processes and policies involved in educational and other types of helping

relationships. Its goal is to establish environments that intentionally invite people to realize their full potential. Invitational education is the specific application of this theory of practice in school settings.

The invitational approach encourages empowerment, growth and development by invitations, which are defined as the process of extending positive messages to oneself and others (Combs, Avila & Purkey, 1978; Purkey, 1978). As such, it rejects the psychoanalytic belief that behavior is the result of unconscious forces, as well as the traditional behaviorist view that behavior is caused by stimulus, response, reinforcement and reward. Invitational approaches operate according to four fundamental assumptions common to helping relationships as well as the beliefs of perceptual psychology and self concept theory: trust, respect, optimism and intentionality (Purkey & Schmidt 1987). These four characteristics provide a consistent "stance" by which people create and maintain environments that encourage the optimal development of empowered individuals.

Total Quality Management

TQM is a leadership approach that conceptualizes organizations and the roles of their employees in new ways. Deming (1986) worked with post-war II Japanese industrial leaders. His aim was to boost Japan's crumbled economy by teaching the principles of quality management. "We see the result today, as the names of Japanese products have become synonymous with quality and a remarkably high degree of customer satisfaction" (Lockwood, 1992, p. 2).

The TQM process is more a philosophy than a blueprint for action. It rejects the concepts of competition, production ranking, performance evaluations, and hierarchical structures that pit management against workers. Instead, TQM promotes cooperation and a team approach that encourages employee input, a foundation for customer satisfaction, and the cautious use of statistical techniques. In this model, statistics simply provide data for decision making to promote a quality product as well as employee satisfaction.

Myron Tribus (1987), a colleague of Deming, provided a compelling argument for applying TQM principles in the school setting. In his words, "quality in education is what makes learning a pleasure and a joy" (Lockwood, 1992, p. 3). Tribus pointed out that while some measures of

student performance may increase as a result of threats and competition, these negative approaches will not produce a healthy attachment to learning. Furthermore, Tribus noted, "It takes a quality experience to create an independent learner" (Lockwood, 1992, p. 3). Independent learners in turn become motivated to steadfastly seek quality for themselves, and this process also creates increased self-esteem and confidence.

Deming (1986) listed 14 points for the effective application of TQM in businesses. Lockwood (1992) modified these original 14 points to form a framework for the application of TQM principles in schools. The following list is a facsimile of these 14 points. Quality schools:

1. aim at creating the best quality students who will take up meaningful positions in society.
2. have managers who become leaders for change.
3. abolish grading and the harmful effects of rating students.
4. provide learning experiences to create quality performance
5. minimize the total cost of education by working to improve the relationship with student sources and the quality of students coming into your system.
6. consistently strive to improve the service provided to students.
7. institute on the job training for all: teachers, administrators and students.
8. institute leadership rather than "boss management."
9. create an environment that is free from coercion and fear.
10. encourage team teaching and, by so doing, eliminate the barriers between teachers or departments.
11. eliminate competitive slogans, exhortations and pull-out programs since these breed adversarial relationships.
12. eliminate work standards (quotas) as well as adherence to the "normal curve" model.
13. change the focus in education from quantity to quality and by so doing remove barriers that deprive students, teachers and school administrators of their pride in workmanship.
14. involve everyone in transforming the school into a quality environment.

A Comparison of Invitational Theory and TQM

INVITATIONAL APPROACH

Aims at promoting individual perceptions, attitudes and behaviors the individual's self-esteem.

Aims at promoting individual perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that foster the acceptance and valuing of others.

Reflects a philosophy of engendering the self-concepts of all people.

Uses a systematic approach that aims at inviting every individual to realize the boundless potential within.

A holistic approach that focuses on everything and everyone in context.

Adheres to the fundamental principle of respect; the practice of viewing others as capable, valuable, and responsible.

Adheres to the fundamental principle of optimism; the basic belief that all children can learn and that all human

TQM APPROACH

Places students squarely at the center of, and in charge of, their own learning.

Rejects the conventional role of the teacher as the sole authority and the dispenser of knowledge.

Reflects a philosophy of empowering people.

Uses a systematic approach designed to enhance the individual's ability to learn and serve.

A holistic approach that deals with both classroom practices and school management and the roles of all the various individuals involved in the education process, from parents to school administrators.

Rejects competition, pull-out programs, standardized tests and performance evaluations as processes that alienate people from each other.

Encourages students to use their own own initiative. Believes that all children can learn provided they accept the beings possess relatively boundless potential.

Adheres to the fundamental principle of trust; a collaborative, cooperative process, where process is as important as product.

Invites students to realize their potential.

Adheres to the fundamental principle of intentionality; meaning that students learn best with policies, processes, places, and people who intentionally strive to make the learning process an invitational one.

learning material into their "quality world."

Rejects the idea of schooling based on competition and ranking. The teacher is an enabler rather than a person who "does something to someone else."

Rejects threats and coercion to achieve educational aims.

Focuses on intentionally creating an educational environment in which students feel accepted into their quality worlds.

Conclusion

There are several similarities between invitational theory and Total Quality Management. First, both are holistic approaches that deal not only with classroom practices, but also with the broader issue of school management. Each also values the essential roles of all who are involved in the education process. Student input, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement are highly valued.

Second, both theories reject school practices based on coercion, threats, competition, and ranking. Instead they stress the cooperative nature of the education process, from student group projects to team-teaching.

Both approaches emphasize a teaching and learning process in which students are continually called upon to use their initiative. As such, the teacher becomes the facilitator instead of "someone who does something to someone else" (Lockwood, 1992, p5).

Fourth, invitational and TQM approaches to education stress the inclusiveness of the education process from the very gifted student to the educationally disabled student. Essentially what this means is a rejection of exclusivity, tracking, and pull-out programs that label students.

In essence, what we see in both of these approaches is a paradigm shift in the way that people view and value the education process. Instead of seeing students as vessels into which knowledge is poured, we view

students as "customers" of the education process, participating and cooperating in their own learning.

As schools struggle with issues of student achievement and teacher accountability, educators have been more receptive to new approaches such as TQM and invitational education. According to Horine (1992), "More and more educators are embracing the principles and tools of TQM as a basis for achieving excellence in America's schools" (p. 38). Similarly, the invitational approach offers another viable alternative to traditional, outdated educational practices.

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Patsy Paxton is associate professor of teacher education at the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University in South Africa.