

Quality in education: our goal, our students' need.

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Summary:

In this paper the presenter discusses the importance of administration, communication, and collaboration, which are involved in having quality in education. Moreover she talks about the goal as teachers which should be to fulfill the students' needs, to give a better service, feel good about the teaching practice, and be the best in the field and at the same time motivate themselves and their peers to develop professionally.

Quality in education is an essential component of the teaching and learning process; however, we sometimes loose track of what is really important; that is having the same goal our institution has, to always consider the students' needs and to enroll in a continuous cycle of teacher development. In order to follow these principles it is essential to change the culture from that of a supplier to the client one, to have an administration that involves all staff in decision making, where communication flows through the institution channels and where an atmosphere of genuine collaboration exists.

Quality is a term widely used in our days, everybody wants to achieve quality in all the things they do, and education is not an exception, there should be: quality in our teaching programs, quality in our materials and most important

quality in our teaching practice. Thus we continue to work from a point of satisfying the supplier, that is:

- Work for the boss.
- Everything is organized for the commodity of the insiders.
- Criteria of efficiency: activities and objectives in a vertical sense. To the bosses).
- Every area is considered to be a separate entity and its only interest is to get along with superiors to whom she/he reports.
- The offers are rigid.

(Ballesteros, 2005, p. 6)

Teachers should not be just persons that work and obey, they must be people who think, have a positive attitude, knowledge, abilities and skills. Teachers who consider the needs of their students and fellow colleagues, which is why we need to change to a *culture of the client*:

- I work for my client.
- Everything is organized to satisfy the clients, to fulfill their needs.
- Criteria of efficiency: activities and goals in a horizontal way (directed to the clients).
- Each area is considered to be part of a horizontal chain (supplier-client), and what is important is team work and inclusion.
- Flexible Offers.

(Ballesteros, 2005, p. 6)

There is a need to make this change because it is the natural order. The one who has a need should dictate the requirements in order for us to design our service, the programs and teaching practice should aim to satisfy the needs of the students in order to achieve quality. To begin with this change, it is imperative that the following concepts become clear to everyone: **Quality**: *satisfying the needs of the client*, then we need to accept that a **Need** *is something we lack of* and finally to have it clear that a **Client** *is someone with a need*. When these concepts are assimilated, we can start making the necessary changes in our place of work and in our teaching practice. Naturally this is not all, there are other things involved in this process that can help us obtain our much desired goal, which is quality in education.

Some other elements that intervene in this process are for example; *Management (supervisors, principals, coordinators)*, that plays an important role, that is to motivate, inform and train teachers in order for them to respond to the programs and give their best to reach their goal. As Christison & Stoller (1997, p. 129) state, "Like a good conductor the leader is skilled in motivating individual members to perform at their best and to contribute their finest effort to the undertaking of the group. The desired outcome is a harmonious, powerful performance, which educates and uplifts the community". The objective is to have leaders that contribute in the creation of a good working atmosphere where all the staff members will feel comfortable and confident to work with each other, sharing ideas, problems and creating solutions, as Everard & Morris (1996, p. 29)

say, “The key to effective management is the ability to get results from other people, through other people and in conjunction with other people”.

Communication is something else we have to consider, there is nothing more important to produce understanding and action in an organization than to have open channels and a continuous flow of communication among all the people involved. Chstision & Stoller (1997, p. 129) point out, “*Frequent contact between language program administrator and individual faculty members is beneficial in furthering mutual understanding and support*”, and this will create a comfortable atmosphere for team work. Moreover, it will enhance collaboration, nothing works better than people helping and motivating each other especially among colleagues, sharing teaching ideas, asking and giving advice on teaching-learning problems, respecting each other’s work, etc. All of this motivates teacher development and collaboration which in turn will enrich their teaching practice, the school and in consequence a satisfaction of the students’ needs.

To conclude, in order to have quality in education, which will provide an administration that motivates people, a comfortable working atmosphere, communication that flows through the whole organization and collaboration among teachers; it is crucial that we change our way of thinking, to move from the culture of the supplier to the culture of the client, where we would have people who think, who places their students’ needs as a priority, who have good attitude and perseverance, who want a satisfying profession, and who above all want to be involved in a cycle of continuous development, which at the end will

help them reach their goal as teachers: to have a good quality teaching and learning process.

References

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