
Does a School Make a Difference? Perceptions of an 'Effective School'

AYSE BAS COLLINS

Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT This article examines perceptions of an effective school considering relevant literature, teachers', administrators' and students' judgments. It discusses effectiveness as it applies to private school systems operating in Turkey. It gives abridged aspects of the current Turkish Education System: state; and private. This perception, Eastern European, Quasi-Mediterranean, draws commonalities with Western systems lying groundwork for comparisons of universal problems faced by educators. The study employed qualitative case study methods and procedures. Data were collected through interview schedules, document analysis and observation notes. Results show that the subjects perceive 'effective school' qualities as being school leadership, school culture/climate and quality human resources. Commonality can be found between the situation presented here and other developing school systems.

Introduction

Although pertinent literature presents perspectives of an effective school, a detailed explanation of underlying aspects is needed from different cultural viewpoints. Bridgehouse and Woods (1999) point out that successful schools foster a 'climate of respect, ... including respect for other cultures, languages, religions, etc.' This study lays groundwork for comparisons between cultures, yet gives views of problems faced in providing an effective school.

Glasser (1992) points out that an effective school can be seen in students' descriptive statements, such as, 'I like school' or 'I am learning things at this school that I believe are good for me.' Further, teachers make statements, such as, 'I like working' and 'I am treated like a professional'. These are distinctive signs of an 'effective school.'

Other literature points out that teachers are not the only factor that brings about quality in schools. Other factors are: the nature of the leadership;

the school culture; and supportive parents (Glasser, 1990; Mitchel & Cunnigham, 1990; Barth, 1991; McGraw et al, 1991; Spady & Marshal, 1991).

For over 25 years studies have tried to identify common school characteristics and teacher traits associated with effectiveness. The Coleman Report (1966) sets a trend for determining school influence on student achievement. Though highly argumentative, Coleman et al (1966) concluded that schools accounted for only 10% improvement in children's achievement, citing other factors such as families and peers having greater impact. They list effective school indicators as teachers' academic credentials; instructional materials; students' socioeconomic background; physical 'plant structure' and age; and school size. Supporting the Coleman Report findings, Jencks et al (1972) conclude that 'achievements are largely correlated with socio-economic background factors and schooling has little effects on their distribution.'

In direct conflict with Coleman et al and Jenks et al, many studies point out specific common characteristics that produce 'high achievers' and attribute student achievement to school effectiveness. Edmonds (1979) points to the presence of strong leadership; a climate of expectation; an orderly rigid atmosphere; communication of priority to basic learning; diversion of school energy and resources; and monitoring student (and teacher) achievement as effective school characteristics. Likewise, Austin and Reynolds (1990) report characteristics of 'effective' schools as: site management; leadership; staff stability; curriculum; instructional articulation and organization; staff development; maximized learning time; academic success recognition; parental involvement and support; collaborative planning and collegial relationships; sense of community; common goals and expectations; order and discipline. Goodlad (1982) and Purkey and Smith (1983) consider educational innovation and school organization as major factors.

Though effective schools can be achieved to an extent by 'administrative decisiveness bordering on coercion', as pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1986), coercive techniques do not nurture cooperative atmospheres and teachers/administration trust. Teachers' and administrators' cooperation for the common good is necessary for an effective school. Glasser (1992) points out that administrators who approach their job with the coercive zeal of a marine drill sergeant risk losing their effectiveness.

Different studies (Achilles & Lintz, 1986; Brookover et al, 1979; Lezotte et al, 1974; Miller et al, 1985; Mortimore et al, 1988; Weber, 1971) present consistent characteristics of effective schools such as: secure climate; achievement oriented policy; strong educational and administration leadership; defined student evaluation periods and strong basic skill objectives. Clearly, the attitude of schools, teachers and administrators, as described by Reynolds (1998) as the culture of 'Making Things Better', must be a shared belief and essential for an effective school.

Other factors bearing on the end product (achievement) are resource acquisition, school stability, organization control and team spirit (Cameron & Whetten, 1983). All studies emphasize that outstanding performance is only

achieved by organizations aiming high. This equates to 'political will of a school to achieve', as stated by Scheerens (1990), and is 'the most essential condition for actual school effectiveness.'

When considering size, the fact that a school is small and inefficient, has been considered only from a financial standpoint. Finances aside, small schools have potential for many benefits. As pointed out by Lunenburg and Ornstein (1996), small schools promote parental involvement. In small schools an inverse relationship exists, 'parental pressure is often felt on the school, teacher expectations are felt on the home.' Parental association and commitment is necessary to achieve and sustain effective schools (Cuban, 1990; Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Sammons et al, 1995; Stedman, 1988). Returning to Coleman's findings, if parents are involved, they will affect the outcome.

Conversely, an advocate of large schools, Callahan (1962) promoted the consolidation of schools to increase efficiency and provide 'comprehensive' facilities and programs. However, Lunenburg and Ornstein (1996) point out that technology now affords small schools the same benefits as large. Further, efficiency can be lost when schools become so large that students become disoriented. Ornstein (1989) concludes students in large school settings 'have difficulty interacting among themselves or feel they do not belong to the student body.' There must be an optimum school size, where needs can be balanced assuring maximum benefit for the money spent. Smallness, however, must not be discounted.

There is widespread consensus that resources, whether they are monetary or added personnel or extended plant, cannot be used as key components to achieve effective schools (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996; Scheerens, 1990). Scheerens (1990), however, note that resources may be an indicator in foreign developing countries, and Turkey is one of those. Financial factors cannot be overlooked, however, major improvements can be made with 'little or no extra money' involved. As pointed out by Lunenburg and Ornstein (1996), they only require 'changes in school climate or culture.'

Effective schools can only be realized by adherence to long-term programs dedicated to student performance increases. These gains should be uniform for the entire student body and be at sustainable levels. Only by setting such goals can a school be termed effective. Stakeholders may reward those schools for high achievement and punish others for failure in achieving goals, as Scheerens (1990) points out. Scheerens (1990) further states that stakeholders will gravitate towards those schools which produce good results. Therefore, if the state sector cannot stimulate the will to achieve, then a concerned affluent constituency will look to the private sector for delivery of quality education, thus participating in 'consumerism in education.'

Out of the graduating class of 1998-1999 academic years, 1.36 million students took university entrance examinations and, of that number, only 22.5% were accepted. Statistically, private schools are ahead of the common state schools, 62.9% to 18.4%, respectively (Statistics in National Education, 1999). Thus, does a school make a difference and how? This study was

conducted to define the concept of ‘effective school’ through the perceptions of school administrators, teachers, and students.

Turkish Education System

‘Somewhere In-between’ best describes Turkey. Not quite European and, certainly, not Asian. The Turkish way of life is drawn from each separate culture, taking what was judged best or what could be imposed on a population having pre-set sociological mores and beliefs. This climate has fostered growth of a Turkish middle class who realizes the benefits of higher education. When considering university level seats, there are limited numbers and excess numbers of students are wishing to occupy those seats. Competitive examinations determine which students attend universities.

Parents, realizing state schools provide limited education, have sought ways to provide their children with an edge, per se, when taking these examinations. Hence, the private education sector emerged to keep up with the growing need.

There is a distinct division between state and private education. As is common, state schools rely exclusively on the government as its major source of revenue. In contrast, private schools depend primarily on the parental support.

Turkish private schools (Table I) have existed since early this century, catering to foreign diplomatic corps’ children, affluent minority, ethnic and religious groups. However, in 1928 the first private schools for Turkish students were established with limited enrollment.

Type of school	Number of schools	Number of students
Turkish private schools	1195	213,906
Foreign private schools *	16	10,512
Greek	19	
Armenian	20	322
Jewish	2	
International **	4	642
Total	1256	230,023

* Open to both domestic and foreign students

** Open to only foreign students

Table I. Number of private schools in Turkey and student populations (academic year 1998-99).

Concerns regarding student ‘ability’ to meet increased academic needs prompted reversion to the state secondary school system, with the addition of a new entity called Anatolian High Schools. Entrance to these new high schools, presenting the curriculum in English and/or German, would be based on a formalized nationwide test. The Anatolian High School, by its academic nature, became prestigious in Turkey and entrance was highly competitive.

Until this time the private schools had not been in demand. However, students who were being turned away from Anatolian High Schools needed an institution to fill this demand. Private Secondary Schools met this void.

The current Turkish education system comprises 65,745 schools, 1256 private and 64,489 state. They service student populations of 230,023 and 14,668,444 students respectively (Statistics in National Education, 1999).

Prime differences exist between teachers in the state and private school systems. The state school teachers are Civil Servants and, once accepted, there is little likelihood of dismissal. Whereas, private school teachers are hired on a yearly contract requiring more credentials and a higher performance level. Furthermore, the student/teacher ratio for Anatolian/Private schools is quite different to state schools: 25/1 for A/P, and 50/1 for state schools, on average.

This study contends that private sector schools are, in essence, an effective means by which students who would otherwise be mediocre are affected and show an increase success rate in obtaining entrance into higher education.

What comprises an effective school? What are their characteristics, from a Turkish perspective? This study attempts to identify and describe those aspects as seen from the perspective of the participants: the administrators; teachers; and students.

Method

The Case

This case study was conducted in a private secondary school with a population of 1259. Class size is approximately 25 students. The medium of instruction is English. The institution has an Administrative Board consisting of the General Manager and an Educational Committee. Two Assistant General Managers, one responsible for educational issues and the other for administrative functions, and the principal are responsible to the Administrative Board. There are 106 (78 full-time and 28 part-time) teachers employed on yearly contracts.

Participants and Procedures

The study employed qualitative case study methods and procedures. Data were collected through interview schedules; document analysis; and observation notes.

The participants were the members of the administrative board (2 of 4); the principal; assistant heads (3 of 6); department heads (all 6); teachers (15 of 78 full-time teachers); students (50 of 1259); and counsellors (2). Teachers and assistant heads were chosen using stratified random sampling technique. The teacher strata included subject area, overall teaching experience, teaching experience at the school, gender and school level taught. One lowest, one middle and one highest-level assistant head were selected as representative

sampling. A systematic sampling technique was used to select students. Seven students were selected from each grade level based on class roster position.

Six interview schedules were designed to reach these subject groups. The questions posed were:

- What is your perception of 'effective school' qualities?
- To what degree do you find these qualities at your school?
- What recommendations can be made to improve the effectiveness at your school?

Though interviews were conducted and transcribed in Turkish, all other steps of data analysis (coding, categorizing, etc.) were conducted in English. By conducting the interviews in the native language the body of the conversational text was enhanced. When two or more languages are involved it has proven beneficial to make this distinctive language break. It allows the researcher to assimilate thoughts and prepare accurate translation at one, and only one, point and, thus, provide rich data in the native language.

The school conducts its own survey of effectiveness as perceived by the student body through a 14-question 'school effectiveness' form. Data derived from this form is collected, analysed and presented by two counselors. This form was reviewed for relevance. Further, the counsellors were interviewed for methodology and data usage.

Observation consisted of field notes taken during school visits. They recorded non-verbal interview events such as nervous moments, reluctance to answer questions, excitement and impressions or guesses regarding verbal comments. The notes were further supplemented with a general overview of the physical plant, layout and general atmosphere.

Data Analysis

The research data were subjected to content analysis involving screening for meaningful phenomena, assigning descriptive codes and exploring relations driving themes and descriptive data as a meaningful whole (Miles & Huberman, 1994). All steps of data analysis were performed manually without the assistance of a database. This provided the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the topic and, therefore, allowed intimate compilation of detail perhaps otherwise overlooked.

The whole data were indexed and cross-checked within six subject groups. The patterns were identified and then arranged into broader categories, thus identifying concepts and central ideas. Data were organized into three major themes, with a number of sub-themes. Based on these themes, findings were described and explanations offered providing data insight.

After interview data analysis, results were integrated with the findings of the document analysis and the observation notes.

Results

The data reveal three primary themes related to effectiveness. As Table II shows, the first theme is 'Strong Educational Policy', made up of six sub-themes. The second is 'Physical Environment and Facilities', composed of four sub-themes and, the third is 'Quality Human Resources and Interrelationships', comprised of six sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes are not meant to be exhaustive but appeared consistently from the interviews.

Strong educational policy	Physical environment and facilities	Quality human resources and interrelationships
Clear mission statement	Safe, supportive environment	Strong principalship
Consistent discipline policy	Modern classrooms	Qualified assistant/department heads
Objective student evaluation	Up-to-date facilities	Qualified teachers
Objective teacher evaluation	Extra-curricular settings	Homogenous student body (skill level and socioeconomic background)
Up-to-date curriculum		Qualified support personnel
Extra-curricular activities		Clear communication network among stakeholders

Table II. Primary themes and their decisive qualities as they relate to school effectiveness.

Strong educational policy. When considering 'Strong Educational Policy', data support six related sub-themes. The sub-themes are a clear mission statement, a consistent discipline policy, objective student and teacher evaluation, an up-to-date curriculum and extra-curricular activities. All subject groups interviewed agree that an 'effective school' must have a clear mission statement supported by strong, consistent policies emphasizing secularism, democracy, uniform discipline and evaluation procedures. The mission statement should further conform to universal beliefs and the national educational philosophy. Universal beliefs are defined, as each student is afforded equal educational opportunities in a safe and positive environment, recognizing individual differences, while using society's resources wisely. A strong educational policy is defined as an up-to-date curriculum addressing students' future needs. The policy should also build social and physical character through extra-curricular activities.

It is mentioned that 'effective schools' should present a secular system and should not support political or religious preferences. Some of the subjects point out that in the past, school administrations treated teachers according to their politics or religion. Even course books had to conform to these preferences. Now this is not the case. 'Being democratic' is defined as being open to suggestions, respectful of ideas from not only the staff, but also the students. Most teachers and administrators are not in favor of strict rules at school. However, they feel that the students misinterpret the meaning of 'democracy'. Democracy does not mean 'I have the right to express myself

without concerns for others' and students, likewise, have that same responsibility. One department head further explains that students who violate rules take the learning opportunity away from themselves and others.

Students, teachers, assistant/department heads and the principal agree that effective school policies should enforce discipline and take actions to reduce, prevent, or eliminate disciplinary problems. Students agree that schools should have a list of offences, and a disposition policy. It should be consistent, realistic and clearly communicated.

Finally, it is pointed out that an 'effective school' must have an objective evaluation system, for both students and teachers. Both groups should know the evaluation criteria. Teachers agree that evaluation of their performance is acceptable. However, they criticize the lack of evaluation purpose and criteria, methods of classroom observation, the feedback and reinforcement given. The principal points out that his policy of observation without notice keeps teachers at a constant state of 'effective' teaching. He contends that selective group feedback, rather than confrontational one-on-one feedback, is more positive.

Physical environment and facilities. 'Physical Environment and Facilities' addressed by all respondents is presented in four sub-themes. They are descriptive in terms of safe and supportive environment; modern classrooms; up-to-date facilities; and extra-curricular settings. The consensus is that 'effective schools' should provide appropriate teaching and learning environments. This environment is defined as safe, supportive and allows for individual creativity. Teachers and administrative staff indicate schools should be located outside the central city, thereby, providing non-disruptive settings. However, students do not feel that school campus should be protected from outside distraction, by means of walls and guarded gates. Teachers and administrative staff emphasize the positive effect of protected teaching atmospheres. The principal says, 'This does not mean schools should be like prisons or military institutions, guarded and closed to the outside world, but must be controlled from unwanted elements.' It is emphasized by senior students that schools should provide comfortable teaching and learning settings, so that students would refrain from truancy.

Students, teachers and administrators agree that schools should provide modern classrooms fitted with video equipment, i.e. televisions with educational channels, video players, OHPs, camcorders and recording equipment. They further state that classrooms should be well lit, heated and spacious enough to accommodate teachers and students. Students point out that they do not like sharing desks with other students and desire to have private lockers for books and personal items as seen in Western films.

All agree that schools should have updated libraries, conference and study halls, laboratories equipped with experimental materials and tools, computer rooms with internet connections and current software, dining halls and cafeterias. Teachers mention that students attending private schools have

electronic technology at home and expect the same at school. If teachers try to teach with dated methods and media, students will not find school interesting or relevant. These facilities should be easily accessible for both teachers and students.

Teachers and department/assistant heads and the principal also judge school effectiveness by the support units, such as curriculum, testing, counselling and material production. These units should have trained individuals. They also contend that an 'effective school' should provide both staff and students transport to and from school.

Finally, areas for extra curricular activities should be provided, which allow individuals to express and expand their creativity, including facilities for toning physical skills. The all-around individual's physical, mental and inner well-being should be addressed by the learning environment. One teacher states that if students cannot find a space to play football or basketball during break-time, they will 'kick the walls.'

The data show a common belief that private institutions provide better physical environments, facilities and services than state schools.

Quality human resources and interrelationships. Of all three themes, 'Quality Human Resources and Interrelationships' is mentioned more than any other aspects for achieving effectiveness. The school community must be examined to determine to what degree quality human resources play on school effectiveness. The condensation of the data yield six sub-themes: strong principalship; qualified teachers support; department/assistant heads; support staff; a homogenous student body all tied together by clear communication. The proper mix of human resources and their interrelation can be classified as having qualified students being taught by qualified teachers, being directed by qualified administrators. Any weakness in one of these areas will potentially deter from the effectiveness of the school.

The study respondents emphasize the positive power an administration can provide. They provide direction to teachers and promote an effective teaching environment. The data reveal most teachers believe the principal, department/assistant heads know the importance of their position. They should be role models in the teaching and learning context when considering their attire, behaviors and specific area knowledge. In particular, teachers feel a strong principal is a key ingredient to an effective school. They expect the principal, the department/assistant heads to have leadership qualities identified in three groups: personality traits; administrative skills; and instructional resources.

Teachers want the administrative staff to be assertive, cooperative, decisive, dependable, adaptable, socially alert, energetic, persistent, tolerant of stress, approachable, mature, understanding, responsible, ambitious and achievement oriented.

When considering administrative ability, the principal should have skills such as:

- Achieving the National Educational goals,
- Administering core and co-curricular programs based on students needs and interests,
- Encouraging continuous staff development,
- Providing school-based decision making process,
- Promoting trust and a positive climate,
- Commitment to stakeholders,
- Constructive staff supervision through observations and feedback,
- Providing school/ community public relations,
- Strong school management, and
- Effective communication.

Teachers desire the principal's involvement in school-based activities, thereby, affording them an informal access to communicate directly to him. This sort of action builds 'school spirit'.

On the whole, the teachers see the principal solely as an administrator and the department heads as instructional supervisors. The teachers believe that department heads are subject knowledgeable and create a friendly constructive climate. They help teachers prepare course syllabi, lesson plans and examination questions. Teachers, especially the non-tenured, inexperienced, rely on department heads to either know an answer to a question, or know where to find the answer. This distinct break tends to make the school effective, in that department heads provide technical depth of subject matter and the principal acts as an authoritarian figure who motivates performance. Assistant heads act only to administer and monitor on going operations. In other words, they are the principal's administrative eyes.

In addition to strong administrative staff, a quality teaching staff is vital to an 'effective school'. The school studied has a committed teaching staff with little turnover. The data show that teachers, as viewed from an administrative position, should be selected according to specified criteria to assure homogeneity. One senior teacher clarifies that an effective school is like a symphony orchestra. If the musicians are not at the same skill level, then the director will have a hard time setting the tempo and harmony. The principal must set the teaching pace and harmonize teachers. From this stand point the principal and administrative board members state that the school is very selective and provides higher compensation and better working conditions than the state school sector in order to attract only those teachers that meet quality standards.

These quality standards are based on three considerations: personal characteristics; professional skills; and interpersonal traits. Personal characteristics are defined as resourcefulness, reliability, emotional maturity, patriotism and ethics, considerateness, buoyancy, attractiveness and objectivity. Effective teacher's professional skills are grouped under the following categories: attitude towards the teaching profession; administrative

duties and extra-curricular activities; subject matter knowledge; effective teaching; and evaluation ability. Interpersonal traits can be seen in teacher's attitude towards their superiors, peers, parents and students. According to the data teachers spend considerable time with colleagues, which requires the parties to be cooperative, understanding and sincere. They also need a sense of humor. Teachers point out that interactions among colleagues are important in terms of subject matter transference and exchange of classroom experience. Sincerity between department members during material and examination preparation is emphasized. Likewise, teacher interrelation with parents is emphasized, since parents have high expectation of the private school. It is the school policy that teachers will be available for prearranged or even unannounced parental visits during office hours.

The data reveal that the student body at the school studied is homogenous in skill levels and socio-economic background due to academic testing and financial requirements imposed by the school. Therefore, performance potential should be on an equal footing across the student population. The university acceptance rate experienced by the school is 76%, which supports the contention that effective schools have a direct affect on student achievement.

Teachers state management should work 'hand-in-hand' with the staff. Management should provide working schedules that accommodate teacher's material preparation materials for different grade levels. Effective administration does not mean keeping teachers at school longer, but means providing necessary time for lesson preparation. It is also stated that management needs to satisfy its staff in terms of employment security and financial support. One teacher says, 'We should not be concerned with financial problems or contract renewal stress while teaching.'

Interrelationship of all parties is stressed as being important for an 'effective school'. Emphasis is placed on clear communication networks with consensus regarding school rules and regulations. Meetings are seen as the prime means of exchanging ideas, concerns and feedback. They are grouped into two categories: internal administrative; and external parental/student. The internal meetings begin at Administrative Board/principal level, however, little data were offered on matters at this level. However, closer relationships between the principal and higher administrators is a common desire, but may be limited by the roles that the principal and/or administrator chooses to take. Although the principal says that 'his door is always open to visitors', the teachers expect the principal to invite them in and talk freely. Were this to happen teachers would be more inclined to approach the principal. The next meeting echelon is the internal school administration where staff members meet and discuss general topics. Furthermore, the department heads conduct internal meetings addressing departmental issues and topics. Meetings are also conducted to segregate specific subject matter and/or grade level.

Department heads state that administrators should spend more time with their staff, either informally or by having more meetings. A clever

administrator takes advantage of informal talks. It is a common feeling among teachers that during staff meetings educational issues are discussed, however, communication problems seem to be neglected. Teachers advise that administrators and staff should come together and consider suggestions. Actions agreed upon should be implemented immediately and follow-ups handled after each term. Suggested items should be checked and assessed as to how many have been implemented and their effectiveness. Any items not implemented should be reviewed as to what can be done and/or why they have not been implemented.

When considering the external parent/student meeting, a distinction is made between those with the general overall student body and specific students. Parent/teacher/administrator general meetings are periodically held to make sure all stakeholders are aware of recent/upcoming events, changes in staff and/or policy. Furthermore, regular teacher/parent meetings are held to inform parents of their children's progress. Students are regularly invited to the principal's office to discuss their feelings about the school, any problems they might have and to develop a student/ principal rapport. For this reason most students give the principal high marks on open lines of communications.

The current 'school effectiveness' form, as administered to the students, is seen as ineffective due to the closed types of questions. Respondents feel that the form should be redesigned to address effectiveness issues in a definitive continuous assessment manner, including open-ended questions. It is suggested that the questionnaire should be administered to both teachers and students. Teachers contend that this will provide the administrative staff a greater understanding of their perspective.

Finally, it is recommended that an 'effective school' should have a Human Resources Department (HRD) collecting the above-mentioned functions into a 'clean, clear' package. The HRD should provide energy, time and financial support to maintain teacher's skill levels. This is currently being achieved by in-service training courses, workshops, departmental group interaction contact hours and educational publications.

In summary, of all three themes, 'Quality Human Resources and Interrelationships' is considered the most influential for achieving effectiveness. When coupled with a 'Strong Educational Policy' and adequate 'Physical Environment and Facilities' the chances of success are greatly increased. The true binding force in this lies with a strong central figure-head, the principal whose professional and personal dynamics can mold and cement each element together.

Discussion

A person looking from the top of a mountain sees a valley, and a person looking from a valley sees a mountain; two different perspectives. Students in Turkey desire a desk at which to sit by themselves, whereas, a Western student might desire a larger swimming pool or a new parking space for their

car. Perspective can be diverse, but they show a need for understanding when taking an unbiased look at educational issues facing schools worldwide.

How we choose to structure our institutions of learning can have direct affect on the learning process. To be effective, schools must be structured with well-defined policies and procedures. This will assure the school knows where it intends to go and how it intends to get there.

The physical facilities are important, to assure learning experiences are contained and directed towards end goals. Within the realm of budgetary constraints, schools should provide students with environments that are non-disruptive, and conditioned for minimum comfort level. In today's society, which shows signs of outward violent tendencies, priority must be given to facilities that assure safety of the entire school body. The curriculum must be relevant and structured, but not dry, so the learning experience is organized and maintains student interest.

By far no other aspect can play more of a role in an effective school than that of the teaching staff and administrators directing that staff. The school quality can be changed for better or worse based solely on human resources. If properly channelled, they can overcome deficiencies in the other two realms. Human Resources are the backbone of educational quality.

It can be said that quality teachers beget quality teachers and, therefore, teachers training teachers is essential for a continuing process of improvement within a school system. Glasser (1992) advocates video taping 'great teachers as they teach.' These are the role models for those that follow. Effective schools exist not just at an instance in time, but are an on-going process. As can be seen at the school studied, the departments maintain the training of non-tenured and inexperienced teachers. The interpersonal relationships are at the one-on-one level, which assures in-service training, tailored to individual needs of teachers.

Student quality can also be altered based on two general factors: the teachers that come in contact with students; and the parents which shape their home lives and values. Each child needs a feeling of 'belonging', as pointed out by Perry (1999). Both teachers as well as students need personal acceptance and inclusion, respect and encouragement for participation and a sense of being a part of the school in general'. The private school sector fosters teachers who give more of themselves to student achievement, in the way of contact time and private tutoring beyond lessons. This is partially based on performance oriented contract renewal, unlike the state school system. The quality of the teachers, however, is seen as the real source of effectiveness, not the motivator.

It cannot be overlooked that Private Schools would not exist had there not been concerned parents. Certainly, their personal involvement and financial support are key ingredients that may well lack in the state sector.

This study highlights an alternative school system, which reflects commonality to Western institutions. The underlying basis of the community is pointed out by Villiani (1999), as being a 'healthy community culture' which

reflects 'the climate of the school.' Turkey is making strides in education towards inclusion in the European Union and other Western cultures.

As pointed out at the beginning of this article, an effective school evokes positive statements from both the instructors and the students. They feel the affect of the dynamics and excitement surrounding the school when the formula 'clicks' and the mix is right. There are characteristics and methodology, which when in place, do affect student outcome. Finding that right mix, achieving a balance and a sustained educational reaction, is not possible without the commonality of purpose shared by all stakeholders. The prime motivator is the principal, for through his/her leadership the school's course and student outcome is set. Without his/her clear insight about where the school is heading, there won't be changes, only stagnation. This is a change for the sake of quality and improvement. Schools run in cycles, just like all aspects of life. Student bodies change, new teachers enter the field and senior educators retire, year after year. All too soon we find that this limited contact teaching time is too short; we cannot tarry.

The private school studied possesses many of the characteristics needed to be effective. This can only say that teachers and administrators know what is right, know what works and know the desired results. Why then is there disparity between the teachers, the administrators and even the students? Shakespeare wrote, 'To thine own self be true.' We are all caught up in the day to day activities, going through today's lesson plan, completing reports requested by the state and the owner, grading last weeks' papers, trying to balance school budgets, and an endless stream of other tasks, both school related and personal. What ever it is that holds us back from setting our first priority as the pursuit of an effective school, that is the reason for the discrepancy.

Effective schools do influence and enhance students success rate.

We all should 'like school.'

References

- Achilles, C.M. & Lintz, M.N. (1986) Evaluation of an 'Effective Schools' Intervention. Paper presented at AERA Annual Conference, San Francisco.
- Austin, G. & Reynolds, D. (1990) Managing for Improved School Effectiveness: an international survey, *School Organization*, 10(2/3), pp. 167-178.
- Barth, R. S. (1991) Restructuring Schools-some Questions for Teachers and Principals, *Phi Delta Kappan*, October, pp. 123-128.
- Bridgehouse, D. & Woods, D. (1999) *How to Improve Your School*. London: Routledge.
- Brookover, W.B., Beady, C. & Flood, P. (1979) *School Social Systems and Student Achievement: schools can make a difference*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Callahan, R. (1962) *Education and Culture of Efficiency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cameron, K.S. & Whetten, D.A. (Eds) (1983) *Organizational Effectiveness: a comparison of multiple models*. New York: Academic Press.

- Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E.Q., Hobson, C.J., McPartland, J., Mood, A.M., Weinfield, F.D., & York, R.L. (1966) *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Cuban, L. (1990) Reforming Again, Again, and Again, *Educational Researcher*, 19, pp. 3-13.
- Edmonds, R. (1979) Effective Schools for the Urban Poor, *Educational Leadership*, 37(1), pp. 15-24.
- Glasser, W. (1990) The Quality School, *Phi Delta Kappan*, February, pp. 425-436.
- Glasser, W. (1992) *The Quality School* (2nd Edn). New York: Harper Collins.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1982) A Study of Schooling. Paper presented to the Stanford Teacher Education Project, Stanford, CA, January.
- Jencks, C., Smith, M., Banne, M.J., Cohen, D., Gintis, H., Heyns, B., & Michelson, S. (1972) *Inequality: a reassessment of the effects of family and schooling in America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lezotte, L.W., Edmonds, R. & Ratner, G. (1974) *A final report: remedy for school for equitably deliver school basic skills*. Michigan: Michigan State University.
- Levine, D.U. & Lezotte, L.W. (1990) *Unusually Effective Schools: a review and analysis of research and practice*. Madison, WI: The National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development.
- Lunenburg, F.C. & Ornstein, A.C. (1996) *Educational Administration: concepts and practice*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- McGraw, B., Banks, D. & Piper, K. (1991) *Effective schools: schools that make a difference*. Hawthorne: Australian Council for Educational Research (mimeo).
- Michell, B. & Cunningham, L.L. (Eds) (1990) *Educational Leadership and Changing Contexts of Families, Communities and Schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miles, B.M. & Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: an expanded sourcebook* (2nd Edn) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, B.M. & Huberman, A.M. (1986) Rethinking the Quest for School Improvement: some findings from the DESSI study, in A. Lieberman (Ed.) *Rethinking School Improvement* (pp. 61-95). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Miller, S.K., Cohen, S.R. & Sayre, K.A. (1985) Significant Achievement Games Using Effective School Model, *Educational Leadership*, 42, pp. 28-43.
- Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D. & Ecob, R. (1988) *School Matters: the junior years*. Wells: Open Books.
- Ornstein, A.C. (1989) Private and Public School Comparisons, *Education and Urban Society*, 21, pp. 192-206.
- Perry, M.C. (1999) Proactive Thoughts on Creating Safe Schools, *The School Journal*, 9(1), pp. 9-16.
- Purkey, S.C. & Smith, M.S. (1983) Effective Schools: a review, *Elementary School Journal*, 83, pp. 427-452.
- Reynolds, D. (1998) Schooling for Literacy: a review of research on teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness and its implications for contemporary educational policies, *Educational Review*, 50, pp. 147-161.

- Sammons, P., Hillman, J. & Mortimore, P. (1995) *Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A review of school effectiveness research*. A report by the Institute of Education for the Office for Standards in Education. London: OFSET.
- Scheerens, J. (1990) School Effectiveness Research and the Development of Process Indicators of School Functioning, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 1, pp. 61-80.
- Spady, W.G. & Marshall, D. (1991) Beyond Traditional Outcome Based Education, *Educational Leadership*, May, pp. 23-26.
- Stedman, L. (1988) The Effective School Formula Still Needs Changing, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 69, pp. 439-442.
- Statistics in National Education (1999) Ankara: Government Printing Office.
- Villani, E.S. (1999) The Community Culture and School Climate, *The School Community Journal*, 9(1), pp. 103-105.
- Weber, G. (1971) *Inner-city Children Can Be Taught to Read: four successful schools*. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education.

AYSE BAS COLLINS is an Assistant Professor lecturing on Organisational Behaviour, Human Resource Management and Total Quality Management at Bilkent University and Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. She also sits on a number of committees, which address Performance Evaluation, Staff Development, Research Development and Curriculum Review. She has conducted research into Educational Administration, Curriculum Development, School Effectiveness and Performance Evaluation. She holds a postgraduate degree from Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh, an MSc from Aston University, Birmingham and a PhD from the Department of Education Sciences, Faculty of Education, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

Correspondence: Ayse Bas Collins, Hosdere Cad. Cankaya Evleri D Blok, Daire 1, Yukari Ayranci 06550, Ankara, Turkey (collins54@hotmail.com).