



Making Connections #2

Point 2: Adopt the New Philosophy

With the passing of time, using the word “new” to address concepts taught over 40 years ago seems out-of-date. Yet, for many educators this is new information. It is not what they have experienced or been taught. Choosing Excellence™, the blending of the Glasser Quality School and Baldrige Quality Models, along with the use of Quality Tools, practices and strategies, is totally consistent with Dr. Deming’s theories.

An excerpt from The School for Quality Learning: Managing the School and Classroom the Deming Way (pp. 20-21)

Quality must become the new mission. Quality means giving the customer what the customer has the right to expect. Business can no longer afford to tolerate mistakes, defects, poor workmanship, bad materials, selling service, and poorly trained employees. Defects are costly; consumers end up paying for delays and mistakes. The cost of living depends inversely on the goods and services that a given sum of money will buy. Reliable products and services reduce costs, whereas defective products and services increase them. Likewise, the education system cannot continue to tolerate student dropouts, failure, and underachievement, nor can it tolerate inappropriate curriculum and ineffective teaching methods. Defective products in education usually end up in welfare lines, in prisons, or hopelessly involved in the cultures of crime or poverty. Again, the public pays for these defects.

Schools need a new orientation within which defects are unacceptable. The school must become a place where quality is expected from every student, where every student learns and no student fails. When the school adopts the new philosophy of quality, it will provide what its clientele have the right to expect: quality learning. It is easy to accept a variety of excuses for student failure - for example, “The student is from a dysfunctional family” or “The student is living in poverty.” Such statements are often accepted as reasons for the student’s inevitable failure in the educational system. What chance does a student have in life if failure is viewed as an inevitable part of the system? Schools must find ways for all students to succeed. Schools must acknowledge that each student is different and that every student can experience quality learning.

Tropic Isles Elementary in North Fort Myers, FL has been an “A” school for 11 consecutive years and during NCLB, as a Title I school, made AYP with ALL subgroups for five straight years. Yet when the school began their quality journey they were a “C” school. Many of the teachers held the attitude that “We are doing pretty well for the kind of kids that we have.” When Don Bryant became the Principal he asked, “What difference does it make – what kind of kids we have? Can’t all students learn?” Using data-driven instruction, coupled with a strong leadership that believed in success, Tropic Isles went on to become a model school!

In an invited article for Catalyst for Change, Hoglund (1994) offers the simplest most direct questions to focus on Point #2: Adopt the New Philosophy.

1. *Is what we are doing good for the learner?*
2. *Are we offering every learner an opportunity for quality learning?*
3. *Are we working hard to ensure that every learner grasps the opportunity?*

Quality Tools and Strategies that apply to the Philosophy.

- ✓ Choice Theory®
- ✓ Vision Statements
- ✓ Mission Statements
- ✓ Core Values
- ✓ Connecting Habits
- ✓ Questioning Process
- ✓ Issue Bin
- ✓ Consensograms
- ✓ Data Walls
- ✓ Data Folders
- ✓ Data Chats
- ✓ Student, Parent and Staff surveys

Dr. Deming taught that it was management's responsibility to work "on the system" to improve processes and outcomes. All of the above are continuous improvement strategies that directly address the question, "Is it good for the student?" All of the aforementioned tools and strategies help students understand their progress and accept responsibility for their learning.

Crawford, Bodine & **Hoglund** (1993) *The School for Quality Learning*. Urbana, IL: Research Press.

Hoglund, Robert (2000) Administration and Management. *Journal of Reality Therapy*. Spring.

Hoglund, Robert (1991) *Made in Japan: Deming's Management Principles*. *Journal of Reality Therapy*, Spring.

Hoglund, Robert (1994) *It's Time for Genuine Reform: A Call for Quality*. *Catalyst for Change*. Winter.