Ongoing Discussion “Thought Piece”

Deming’s 14 Points and Adult Learning: Implications for Learning How to Learn a Quality Improvement Process

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DEMING'S FOURTEEN POINTS AND ADULT LEARNING: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING HOW TO LEARN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

The ability of a company to concentrate on quality, according to Dr. Deming (1989), requires management that has the ability to learn and the courage to change. Part of the learning that must take place is to understand Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points and the system of profound knowledge that surround them. There is a need to improve how the Fourteen Points are learned and translated into behavioral change by learners of the new approach to management. As there is a need to focus on process improvement in order to achieve higher product or service quality, so too there is a need to focus on process improvement in order to achieve higher quality in learning Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points. The aim of this paper is to address how to improve the assimilation rate of Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points with adults. To accomplish this goal, it will require connecting two schools of thought--those of adult education theory and practice and those of Dr. Deming. The concept of learning how to learn is one posited by Robert M. Smith (1982).

Learning, in an uncomplicated sense, means changing. Marcie Boucouvalus (1989, p. 184) says that with adults, learning entails acquiring the new and letting go of the old. It takes willingness and the discipline of good methodology to ensure that what is experienced by the adult learner will be translated into action that helps the organization improve. (In this paper, adult learner is synonymous with executives, managers, and supervisors.) There are many sources of variability, however, that affect an individual's learning and influence, to a large extent, the outcome of the learning experience.

It has been observed on many occasions that there is considerable variation associated with the acceptance (or agreement with) Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points by people after exposure. This observation comes with little surprise, as Dr. Deming has said that people learn in different ways and at different rates. Exposure comes in many ways--attendance at a four-day Deming seminar, reading Deming books and articles, viewing the Deming Library tapes, etc. Many factors contribute to this variability and constitute a paradigm (common or special cause variation) that can inhibit the transformation of an individual (or organization) in adopting the Fourteen Points. Furthermore, there is variability in degrees of acceptance of the Fourteen Points as noted by some individuals agreeing with some or all of the points intellectually, while at the same time rejecting a few points as impossible or impractical to implement.

The Fourteen Points are intended to be a set of actions that will guide an organization in the transformation process. If they are well understood and followed, Dr. Deming predicts that management will save jobs and the company. The question now is, how can the adult learner best learn the Fourteen Points?

NEED FOR THEORY

Learning how to learn Dr. Demings Fourteen Points requires theory because as he has said repeatedly, "knowledge without theory has no meaning". The above statement means that if there is no conceptualization on the part of a person as to why things occur, what they observe in actuality is meaningless, random behavior. Therefore, theory is needed that will guide thinking and help the learner learn. Developing this theory is based on principles inherent in the Fourteen Points and a system of profound knowledge.
The basic theory is that the learner must understand Dr. Deming’s theory first before trying to copy it. (Remember Dr. Deming’s piano building example—it looks like a piano but doesn’t sound like one when you try to play a tune.) Stated differently, we must use Dr. Deming’s theory to learn his theory. This approach will accelerate the learner’s ability to learn and provide the methodology necessary to reinforce change.

**ADULT LEARNING AS A SYSTEM**

When people are exposed to the Fourteen Points (the stimulus) in an awareness session, there is wide variability in terms of accepting the Fourteen Points. Why does this occur? Where does the variability come from? Is there only common cause variation? Is there special causes present? Does a system exist in processing incoming information? All these, and a myriad of other questions, are the basis for learning how to learn Dr. Deming’s Fourteen Points. Several theoretical frameworks exist in adult education practice that are useful to help guide learning activities around the Fourteen Points.

Malcolm Knowles (1970, p. 50) speaks of learning as an internal process largely, if not entirely, controlled by the learner and involving intellectual, emotional, and physiological functions. He describes learning psychologically as a "process of need-meeting and goal-striving by the learner".

Josephine Flaherty notes that many theorists agree that learning results in a relatively permanent change of behavior, that it takes place within the context of experience, and that ease or rate of learning depends on the ease with which new information is integrated by the learner (Kidd, 1973, p. 189). For change to occur, one must first try to understand (at the cognitive level) and then modify behavior based on feedback from trial experiences in the environment. The ease with which new information is integrated will be based on a system of rewards and punishments associated with trial behavior. To understand means to accept as truth and be able to appreciate or at least sense value in the new knowledge. If this transition has successfully occurred, then the individual can translate understanding into a change in attitude or skill (behavior). The simplistic model looks like:

![Figure 1. Learning Described As A System](image-url)
J. R. Kidd (1973, p. 183) mentions the existence of a "learning system" when attempting to describe concept formation in adult learning. This system is an accumulation of formal and informal education (experiences) that take place and tends to influence adults, collectively or holistically. He describes the presence of a learning system as a basic concept but useful because it can begin to account for the individual as a learner. The point here is that many variables, internal and external in scope, interact to affect the learning of the learner. It is not just a one-way street where the learner simply "absorbs" all external stimuli for the express purpose of changing.

Visualizing learning as a system and within the context of a system is of great interest because of the potential benefits of using two fields of study, variation and adult learning, to compliment one another. For example, visualizing a learning system, and ultimately its impact on learners, can be analyzed (for causes) for improvement using statistical concepts of common and special causes. The presence (or lack thereof) of statistical control in the learning process would be an extremely useful concept. It would help change decision making relative to adult learning situations by emphasizing process improvement as the preferred way to meet requirements rather than using, for example, capricious learning goals established by an instructor. Accordingly, using the Shewhart Cycle (plan, do, study, and act) as a method for improvement in a learning system now takes new relevance.

Pfeiffer and Jones (1980) posited the Experiential Learning Cycle as a rationale to improve adult learning. The rationale provides a framework to plan and deliver learning experiences in the context of a "system". In their model (Figure 2) they indicate a stepwise approach to accomplish effective adult learning.

Figure 2. The Experiential Learning Cycle and the Shewhart Cycle
When the Experiential Learning Cycle and Shewhart Cycle (P-D-S-A) are compared, they appear to be similar methods. One implication of this similarity in cycles is that the Experiential Learning Cycle could easily be substituted with the Shewhart Cycle as a rationale for directing the learning process of adults. With emphasis put on improving the learning process as the key to successful learning, utilizing the Shewhart Cycle (well integrated with a system of profound knowledge) would provide sound methodology to adopt when designing experiences in learning how to learn Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points.

There is another implication associated with these two cycles that is important to remember. As the learners move through each step, not every learner will react the same way as they deal with different issues indigenous to each stage.

As previously stated, Dr. Deming has pointed out that different people learn in different ways and at different rates (no two people are the same). In their attempt to explain why this variability exists, adult educationalists theorize that learning style of individuals is another important contributor.

Learning style refers to the preferred ways people "process incoming information from the environment". These personal preferences and proclivities form a sub-process of the total learning process of an individual. These differences in how a person interprets their world will dictate how each is motivated or able to synthesize data at different stages of the P-D-S-A cycle.

Kolb & Fry (1975) say that four activities exist in the Adult Learning Cycle and that people are predisposed (or biased) to feel more comfortable in certain activities more than others. As such, they identified the activities as a cyclical process that learners jump in and out of as they proceed to learn. Kolb & Fry say that for fully integrated learning to occur, the learner has to move through all the activities at some point or another.

![Figure 3. Adult Learning Cycle](attachment:adult-learning-cycle.png)
The implication of this theory and several others that explain how learners perceive, conceptualize, and categorize incoming information is that certain individuals will find the various stages of the P-D-S-A cycle more or less stimulating (i.e., rewarding or punishing) depending on their personal learning styles. For example, the concrete experient will find the "do" activity more interesting and relevant than the "generalizing" activity which will call for abstract conceptualization skills and discussions.

The point to be made is that learners will find different phases of the Shewhart Cycle more important or relevant than other phases and that these differences add to the variability in learning how to learn Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points. It would be wise to identify these preferences up-front to:

1. assist learners in understanding how their personal preferences will impact the process of learning; and

2. assign certain individuals to take on leadership roles when moving through phases of the Shewhart Cycle that match with their preferred learning style.

**ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES**

In reviewing the literature on adult education as a body of knowledge or discipline, there are principles to follow which will maximize the learning process on any subject. What are some of these principles and how are they useful? Myron Tribus (1983, p. 20) provides insight on this point when he concluded that changing culture is similar to an "exercise in adult education". The steps that he pointed out in process were:

1. Build awareness for the adult--why change?
2. If one adopts Deming's approach, what's the pay off?
3. Make training relevant to work.
4. Get everyone involved voluntarily.

For purposeful learning to take place with adults, Robert Smith (1982, p. 47) has pointed out the existence of six optimum conditions for learning. When these conditions are met, he says learning has the best chance to succeed. They are:

1. They (the learner) feel the need to learn and have input into what, why, and how they will learn. Involve the learner.

2. The content and processes of learning are perceived relevant and in accordance with past experiences. Previous experiences will play a large part in what and how new learning occurs. In fact, unlearning may have to take place before new learning can take place at all.

3. What is to be learned relates optimally to the individual's developmental changes and life tasks. For employees in a business situation, learning new methods must be synchronous with their personal stages of development and accountability within the organization.
4. The amount of autonomy exercised by the learner is congruent with that required by the mode or method used.

5. They (learners) learn in a climate that minimizes anxiety and encourages freedom to experiment. Alternative learning, for example, requires a climate of mutual trust, respect, and teamwork. These conditions are not unlike those required for high productivity in the work place.

6. Their learning styles are taken into account. People have preferred ways of processing information and prefer specific types of learning environments.

J. R. Kidd (1973, p. 119) reports that effective learning will take place under certain conditions. He points out in his theory five necessary conditions:

1. Both security and stimuli are essential.
2. The learner has two opposite needs—dependence and independence.
3. Learning depends on previous experience.
4. Learning depends upon the relevance of relationships.
5. Continued learning depends upon the achievement of satisfaction.

Accordingly, if these conditions are satisfied, the maximum development of the individuals will take place. In the complex world of working adults, these factors take on immediate importance. When faced with a theory of management, for example, that Dr. Deming proposes, changing attitudes must be accompanied with an involvement of the "self" (J. R. Kidd, 1973, p. 122).

Malcolm Knowles (1970, p. 52) also points out conditions necessary for growth and development. These conditions help to maximize the learning process and are part of a fundamental set of assumptions that guide the practice of adult education. They include:

1. The learners feel a need to learn.

2. The learning environment is characterized by physical comfort, mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences.

3. The learners perceive the goals of a learning experience to be their goals.

4. The learners accept a share of the responsibility for planning and operating a learning experience and, therefore, have a feeling of commitment toward it.

5. The learners participate actively in the learning process.

6. The learning process is related to and makes use of the experience of the learners.

7. The learners have a sense of progress toward their goals.
Other assumptions that are necessary to formulate effective adult education are that adults can learn, and learning is an internal process (not an external process). Learning is controlled by the learner, voluntarily or involuntarily, and engages the whole person's intellectual, emotional, and physiological functions. Knowles points out that when learning is not effective, it is usually based on a set of faulty assumptions. For example, one of those assumptions reflects on the effects of external sanctions. Knowles (1970, p. 50) reports that adults respond less readily to such things as grades (external reward) than to internal motivation. Knowles also says that adults will learn "no matter what" and that learning is as natural as rest or play. This leads to another set of assumptions that if adults know why they are learning, and the learners perceive the goals of a learning experience to be the same as their personal goals, the learning that takes place will be meaningful, long lasting, and lead towards true behavioral change.

SIMILARITIES IN THEORIES

In reviewing the field of adult education, there are many similarities between Deming's theory of management and the practice of adult education. The emergence of a concern for the learner is an example. Knowles (1973, p. 41) indicates that the heart of education is learning—not teaching and, therefore, the focus must shift from what the teacher does to what happens to the learners. This shift is similar to Dr. Deming's approach to quality improvement—one that puts emphasis on process improvement as the key to success in the open market and with feedback from the customer (Scherkenbach, 1988). While adult education theorists don't use the word, they are referring to quality in educational processes that Dr. Deming has, in parallel fashion, been identifying for over 40 years.

Another similarity exists when examining the effects of the educational system on learners. This system starts with enrollment in kindergarten and ends with graduation from college. Knowles (1973, p. 41) points out:

The best education—the procedures for helping people learn which are most congruent with what we now know about the learning process—takes place in the nursery school and kindergarten, and it tends to get progressively worse on climbing up the educational ladder, reaching its nadir in college. This is because the forces at work on learners from about the second grade on have very little to do with learning. Most of them have to do with achieving—passing tests, scoring high on SAT's, getting into college (or graduate school), or qualifying for a job.

He goes on to say:

However, they haven't yet made much headway in higher education, and it is my observation that theory and technology, on which most of our graduate education (including social work education) is based, are at least a generation behind what we now know about learning.
Dr. Deming and Dr. Knowles are thinking along the same lines. For example, Dr. Deming points out the negative effects of performance appraisal on an organization, and Dr. Knowles points out the negative effects of faulty educational practices on learners. (Unfortunately, the product of the U.S. educational system is the main supplier to business.) It appears that achievement-oriented measuring practices perpetuate the usage of similar measurements in business. Eventually enumerative study rather than analytical problem solving becomes the preferred mode of operation for the organization.

Other comparisons can also be made between the two schools of thought. Here is a synopsis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMPARISON OF TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT</strong></th>
<th><strong>Deming</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Education Practices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide joy in work and learning; allow pride in workmanship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td><strong>Understand variation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Joy in learning</td>
<td><strong>Innovative organization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Betterment of the individual</td>
<td><strong>To successfully predict</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Long-term change in behavior and attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Dynamic/innovative individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate</strong></td>
<td><strong>No fear</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Supportive</td>
<td><strong>Trusting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Trustful</td>
<td><strong>Growing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Collaborative</td>
<td><strong>People oriented</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Empathetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership—help people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Dependent on process</td>
<td><strong>Seek causes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Need-meeting</td>
<td><strong>P-D-S-A Cycle</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Experiential learning cycle</td>
<td><strong>Thinking statistically</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Involvement by the learner</td>
<td><strong>Process improvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Never-ending process</td>
<td><strong>Open two-way communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Multi-directional communication</td>
<td><strong>Involvement of people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrate commitment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Facilitate information flow</td>
<td><strong>Coach; not judge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Learner-centered</td>
<td><strong>Win/win for all</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Emphasis on developing people</td>
<td><strong>Educate and train</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Relevant participation in decision-making</td>
<td><strong>Process-centered</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given the similarity in approaches between the two schools of thought, how can they be used simultaneously in the learning environment to improve understanding of Deming's Fourteen Points? Robert Smith (1982, p. 142) proposes a road map for learning that leads to change. He describes it as:

Internal -------> Defense -------> Resolution of -------> Incorporation Conflict  (Denial) Conflict

In this model, the learner first experiences the need to change (is exposed to the Deming philosophy) yet wishes to remain as is. This state is characteristic of the concept of internal conflict. Next, the learner defends self against ideas and must struggle between the new and the old (habitual ways). Ultimately, to move to incorporation, the learner is aided by identification with others and accepts, understands, and assimilates the new.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR A CHANGE MODEL**

There are several goals that should be kept in mind in pursuing learning how to learn Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points. Combining the concept of using Dr. Deming's theory to learn the theory with the team approach would be a useful strategy to follow. Leadership of a learning team should follow a strategic process adopted from Carew, Carew-Parisi and Blanchard (1984) to facilitate group growth and development from low competence and high commitment towards high competence and high commitment in learning how to learn the Deming philosophy. The starting point should be to reduce internal conflict within the learner so as to allow the learner to achieve "incorporation", as Robert Smith has pointed out in his pattern for change model.

The merits of using a learning team approach are numerous. Any program design needs to:

a. use the P-D-S-A cycle to guide learning;
b. make learning personally meaningful;
c. eliminate fear;
d. increase trust among members;
e. build confidence in using the Deming methods of management;
f. develop a sense of "winning";
g. focus attention on themselves;
h. identify common and special cause variation associated with learning to improve the process;
i. focus attention on things that the team personally has control over and can impact (their own learning);
j. reduce internal conflict.

If these program goals are kept in mind as the team formulates its mission, the learning team will quickly incorporate Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points in their daily behavior.
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN (WHERE TO START)

What is needed at this point is a theory (or process model) which could help both the change agent and participants as they embark on the transformation route. As Dr. Deming has pointed out, a theory is needed first in order to sort out and explain the future. A context by which future P-D-S-A application will have meaning needs to be addressed. Below is a model that when explained to the participants and used to guide action, would begin to satisfy the "why are we doing this" issue that is always so important in changing. It would also help to explain the potential sources of variation and how they impact the statistical stability of the learning system.

LEARNING PROCESS

DEFINITION OF PROCESS: LEARNING DEMING'S 14 POINTS (ASSIMILATION OF DEMING'S PRINCIPLES BY THE TEAM)

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

INPUT → PROCESSING SYSTEM → OUTPUT → CUSTOMER

VOICE OF THE PROCESS

SOURCES OF VARIABILITY

People:
- Intellectual capabilities
- Beliefs; values
- Personal theories
- Attitudes
- Assumptions
- Past experience and knowledge
- Fear of failure
- Emotional level
- Needs and desires
- Aspirations
- Physiological state
- Learning style
- Etc.

ACTIVITIES

- Reading
- Group discussions
- Practice
- Exposure to experts
- Attendance at seminar
- Lecture, role play
- Simulation experiences
- Interaction with experts
- Etc.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- Changed knowledge
- Changed attitudes
- Changed skills
- Changed analytical framework
- Changed perspective in identifying and solving problems
- Changed self-concept
- Changed anxiety level
- Etc.

LEARNER

- Competent and confident in learning (attribute of leadership)

MATERIAL

- Content of books, articles, videos, manuals and audio tapes, etc.

METHODS

- Learner-centered
- Teacher-centered
- Diagnostic techniques
  - Needs assessments
  - Interest levels
- Evaluation
- Feedback
- Reactive vs. proactive
- Etc.

EQUIPMENT

- Audio/video machines, flip charts, simulation tools
- PA system
- Etc.

ENVIRONMENT (CLIMATE)

- Excessive internal competitiveness
- Expectations of others
- Judgemental vs. coaching
- Supportive vs. non-supportive
- Reward/punishment sanctions
- Time to complete tasks
- Results oriented
- Etc.

Figure 4. Learning Process Model
The model in Figure 4 describes the process of learning Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points. It addresses:

- potential sources of variation;
- the nature of the processing system;
- the desired outputs of knowledge and understanding; and
- what the learner expects.

In this model the learner and the customer are one in the same. The expectation of the learner is to become confident and competent in learning.

Specifically, what skills, knowledge, and attitudes should the learner possess as a result of the learning process? The following figure is a break-down of the elements of the concept of confidence and competence.

**Figure 5. Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills Requirements**

Any organization should recognize these goals of learning and encourage their accomplishment for the long-term prosperity of the organization.

**Obstacles (What's in the Way?)**

Unfortunately, encouraging learning will be proportionately offset by naturally occurring resistance in the system or organization. For example, Dr. Deming has pointed out that "fear to acquire new knowledge prevents people from learning". In this case, the individual might have to change old habits of simply collecting data for enumerative study and use new kinds of data for analytical problem solving. The latter situation has more risk associated with it than the former and, therefore, may be a less attractive alternative to the person. This result happens not because the person has an innate desire "not to learn". On the contrary, people do have an innate desire to learn (and improve). The problem is that "new information" that the person possesses may not be what management of an organization wants to hear (perhaps bad news on the actual capability of a process) and supplants innovation with fear of retribution. If this "kill the messenger" syndrome continues, it won't be long before learning, associated with process improvements, is not the preferred mode of behavior in the organization.
Other sources of fear come from anxiety that a person feels. A person who asks a lot of questions to relieve their anxiety might be labeled as a troublemaker, complainer, or malcontent and ostracized on a cue from the boss.

Some people might fear "new learning" situations because they have limited reading, writing, or mathematical skills, and admitting these to others is not a viable alternative. Therefore, resistance in learning develops not because of the lack of skill (or desire) but because the person does not want to be embarrassed. This desire to hide personal deficiencies becomes a strong motivational force not to participate when stimulated by a work environment that is radiating with mistrust and suspicion.

The learning process can also be affected by the desire of individuals to achieve a high rating. This situation is a condition created by the perpetual emphasis placed on reward/punishment systems in schools and business (annual review process). The goal in the traditional system is to get high ratings as opposed to actual improvement of self or processes. Consequently, the people in the organization tend to do such things as slant a report, focus on end results, or manage by the numbers, etc. These kinds of actions (i.e., forcing the system) create an illusion of the need for individual superiority as the main justification for action when, in fact, there is nothing but suboptimization actually occurring. The organization would do better to know what variation is saying to it and then act accordingly.

**THE FUTURE (WHAT MUST BE DONE?)**

Any organization should recognize that people have an innate desire to learn what is important to them. Dr. Deming has indicated in Points Six and Thirteen that incorporating learning systems into business is an essential element of the transformation process. He has said that an organization "needs more than good people--it needs people who are improving". Management must provide leadership in the establishment of these systems if it truly wishes to compete in a world economy.

Any learning system that is established must incorporate the principles set forth in the Fourteen Points. For example, injecting each of the Fourteen Points into the design of learning systems and continually improving the system using the Shewhart Cycle as the basis for action will help to implant the methods with learners.

Placing emphasis on self-directed inquiry in learning Dr. Deming's Fourteen Points and examining the presence of special and common cause variation as part of the learning process are solid approaches that will enhance the quality of learning. Under these circumstances, the principle of ego-involvement is fulfilled and the inhibiting effects of fear will be eliminated. The result of this concentration on improvement of the methods of learning the Fourteen Points (vis-a-vis P-D-S-A context) will encourage innovation throughout the organization.
Adult education theorists have provided a body of knowledge that is particularly useful in learning how to learn the Fourteen Points. Their theory is an integral part of a system of profound knowledge. Understanding and applying fundamental principles of the field of adult education will have a strong impact on an individual's ability to learn and grow with the Fourteen Points as a basis for change. The goals of an organization are innovation and improvement, and processes must be instituted which will optimize the learning that must occur for these goals to be realized.

The metacognitive processes used by people for learning in the future should be based on a system of profound knowledge. Incorporation of these elements into the personal process of learning will greatly enhance the adoption of the Fourteen Points by people within an organization. While learning skills such as reading and writing are important, it is critical for learners to embrace "self-regulatory skills" as the personal process for learning.

The development of "cognitive level" skills relating to the Fourteen Points and a system of profound knowledge will go a long way to implant quality learning. For example, developing questioning skills based on aspects of the Fourteen Points and the Shewhart Cycle would be helpful. This approach to development will focus attention on methods to improve the learning process as opposed to teaching by results. This practice will go a long way to remove obstacles (such as fear) in an organization that stand in the way of real improvement.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Predicting with a reasonable amount of certainty that what is experienced by people will be learned is of immediate economic importance to an organization. Improving the quality of learning is, therefore, necessary. To accomplish this requirement, an organization needs to incorporate the points listed below to enhance learning of the Fourteen Points.

♦ Learning is a process.

♦ Develop the learning process around principles of adult learning, the Fourteen Points, and a system of profound knowledge.

♦ Concentrate on continuously improving the process by which adults are learning as the main strategy to improve quality of learning. Use:
  - methods to identify common and special cause variation;
  - the Shewhart Cycle to guide continuous improvement efforts; and
  - experiential learning techniques.

♦ Learning how to learn the Fourteen Points is more than memorizing each point. The process of learning involves understanding and using the elements of a system of profound knowledge.
Joy in learning will occur when:

- individuals are exercising self-regulatory skills with what they are learning;

- the organization has supplanted the use of extrinsic motivation systems as justification for learning with a system that nurtures intrinsic motivation; and

- freedom to improve replaces fear as the primary catalyst for change.

Recognize that learners have a tolerance for learning that resembles the Taguchi Quality Loss Function concept. Essentially, this new model indicates that learners have a range of willingness and the ability to learn the Fourteen Points that is influenced from the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation systems. A target point exists which is characteristic of optimum learning. As methods and content for learning are instituted, loss in learning happens at an increasing rate along either side of the curve. The target is not necessarily fixed. Rather, it is a moving characteristic which is different for each individual or group at any point in time. To enhance process improvement efforts, management needs to continually define the target using a system of profound knowledge as a theory for change. Management needs to understand the needs, expectations, and capability to learn of people involved in the transformation process.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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BIOGRAPHY

Curt Wegner has worked extensively in the fields of human resource development, management training, organizational development and process improvement for the past 40 years. His design and delivery of programs in business, industry and healthcare have helped organizations achieve successful transformation. He has held key management positions in training and management development with major corporations and demonstrated multi-plant, international and cross-functional leadership while in these capacities.

Curt served as the corporate liaison between Dr. W. Edwards Deming and Navistar’s International Truck and Engine Corp. from 1983-1993 (Scherkenbach, Deming’s Road To Continual Improvement, 1991, p.113). He authored a white paper on the Principles of Adult Learning and the Deming Philosophy that was presented at the 1990 Deming Seminar for Educators in Newport Beach, CA.

Curt was a guest speaker and panelist at Deming four-day seminars in the 1980’s, presented to the San Diego and Minneapolis Deming User Groups in 1990-91, founded and was president of the Northern Illinois Deming User Group 1992, facilitated live satellite Deming video teleconferences, been a guest presenter in July 2005 in Toronto, Canada at the W. Edwards Deming Institute’s seminar entitled How to Create Unethical, Ineffective Organizations That Go Out of Business(Many Organizations Do It, But Do You Know How You Do It?), and conducted Deming seminars for credit at graduate schools of business and education.

Curt is on the adjunct faculty at Northern Illinois University where he teaches research design and program evaluation to graduate students. He has been a guest lecturer for graduate courses in Leadership in Adult Education at NIU throughout his professional career. Curt was a member of the Board of Directors for the National Study of Adult Learning from 1990-1992. He is an Adjunct Research Fellow for Rocky Mountain University of Health Professionals and co-authored an article appearing in the Journal of Physical Therapy Education entitled Increasing Patient Participation: The Effects of Training Physical and Occupational Therapists to Involve Geriatric Patients in the Concerns-Clarification and Goal-Setting Process.

Curt holds a doctorate in Adult Continuing Education from Northern Illinois University, was past Chair of the Lewis University Graduate School of Business MBA Extension Program Executive Advisory Board. In addition, he holds an M.S. Ed. in Industrial Training and a B.S. in Industrial Personnel Supervision.

Curt has been married to his wife, Diane, for 40 years and three grown daughters. His avocations include refereeing collegiate, high school and club soccer for the last 25 years, and coaching/playing men’s competitive 12” softball for 36 years. Curt was selected by the Illinois High School Association to referee boys and girls state soccer finals in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

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