

# HpO Gizmos - 5Ys

*If you know why you will figure out how.*

W. Edwards Deming

The **5 Whys [5Ys] process** comes from the post WWII tradition of Japanese business reform and in particular their term named *kaizen*. Kaizen focuses on identifying continuous small steps towards improvement rather than radical reforms. 5Ys thinking is based on the notion of digging deeply into an issue not just skimming the surface. It is a process that rather than digging "*an inch deep and a mile wide*" ask us to "*drill a mile deep and an inch wide*" to find the underlying causes, reason or purpose.

The 5Ys process is a simple **root cause analysis tool** that will help to explore a situation in depth and uncover underlying assumptions to uncover causes and/or beliefs.

## Process:

Begin by posing the issue to be discussed as a question.

After answering this question continue asking "Why?" to your successive responses at least 5 times. You will need to reframe these responses as questions to examine what sits beneath each and reflect on why that is of importance to you.

A classroom example:

1. Why do we come to school? *To learn.*
2. Why do we need to learn? *So that we can get a good job.*
3. Why do we need to do get a good job? *So we can get money and be successful.*
4. Why do we want money/success? *To be happy and do something worthwhile.*

Often the first answer may be simplistic or what the person thinks others expect them to say. Successive answers are where people begin to make meaning and connect to their deeper values and beliefs. Summarising responses builds a strong understanding of why:

*So we come to school to learn to be successful adults with a good job that will make our lives happy and worthwhile!*

## Application:

The 5Ys is a quick and useful process to build clarity in a group about the reasons or purpose for undertaking an activity or a particular course of action. Often it will surprise people when they go deeper to their beliefs and connect them to initiatives or raise discussions about the assumptions we are making by the solutions we suggest.

- Why are we using ICT / this pedagogy in our teaching and learning programs?
- Why do we withdraw students for additional assistance / behaviour management?

Modify to **5 'Whats'** with younger students or to **5 'So Whats'** to seek actions:

- Why do we need to play safely in the yard?
- Why do we need rules? [**What** do we need rules for? / **So what** rules do we need?]
- Why does war start?
- Why do you want to do \_\_\_\_\_ for work experience?

Y? Y? Y? Y? Y?