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11/18/15

Quality Management In Education

It is the goal of the educator to provide every student with the opportunity to grow and learn in their particular field of study. This is more likely to be achieved when using quality management techniques. The goal of quality management is to identify and remove the causes of defects and minimize the variability in manufacture and business process [[i](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Sigma)]. Applying this to education could help to increase the quality of students education and decrease the amount of uneducated students that come out.

In education it can be difficult to motivate students to want to learn the material. Some will have natural interest in the course and need little to no encouragement to go the extra mile in their class. Other students may be in the class simply because it’s a required course. This makes it hard for the instructor to make the course beneficial and enjoyable for the student. Here are a couple of personal suggestions that I think could improve the quality of a course:

1. The instructor has to have a genuine love and understanding of the topic. It’s hard to convince someone that exercising is good if the convincer hates and doesn’t exercise. If the instructor doesn’t have a love and understanding of the topic, they need to change.

Example:

**Good**: Brother Tate Carter taught my Foundation Science class my second semester of college and he loved what he taught. He was enthusiastic about science and the different topics we discussed. This enthusiasm helped to bring energy and excitement into the class. I loved going to his class because of how fun he was as a teacher.

1. Bring real world purpose to the topic at hand. In my educational experience, the main reason why students don’t try in a course is because they don’t see any benefit in understanding it. By the instructor helping the students to realize the real world application of the topic, it’ll give more importance to learn it.

Example:

**Good:** My English teacher in college. Sister Stocking helped me to realize the importance of anythingshe taught in her class.

1. Make every class meeting meaningful. When my instructors make every class meeting have importance, I’m excited to attend and ready to learn. Other instructors make it mandatory to attend, but then there’s no substance or genuine reward for going except for not getting punished for not going. Most students who *pay* for college are more than willing to attend class. The enthusiasm of the professor and the amount of valuable things taught can be crucial to the learning of students.
2. Make every assignment meaningful and convey that meaning to the students. Most instructors have purpose behind every assignment. When that purpose is communicated to the students, it can help them to understand how they can benefit from understanding and doing the assignment.

Example:

**Bad:** In my English class in high school, I was forced to read Fahrenheit 451. It’s true that I could have personally thought out “How will this help me to become better?”, but there was no reason or purpose given to me on why I should read the book. I’m sure that my English teacher had a purpose, but they never communicated that to their class. The only thing that was communicated is “You have to read this book, take a test on it, and write an essay.” If I didn’t read the book, I’d fail the class and be stuck doing it again.

**Good:** In college, I took World Foundations II (because it’s required for my major). When I saw that we needed the book Fahrenheit 451, I almost cried because I hated that book. when the time came for the class to start reading the book, our professor talked to us about it in our online group meeting. Our instructor expressed his genuine love for the book. He explained why he loved it, what it taught, how it applies to us and the world around us. After the meeting, I changed from dreading the stack of paper to having some interest. While reading the book, I looked for the things that my professor talked to us about and started to find them as well. About half way through the book I realized how it related to me and the story started to have meaning to it. The reading and affiliated assignments now had meaning to them.

5. Make class meaningful. Class is a key time for student teacher interaction. Typically,

the more engaged the students are in the discussion or the activity, the better the experience. Having a goal for every class with well thought out activities is always good.

Example:

**Bad:** I’ve had teachers that run through a powerpoint that they’ve had for multiple years and they engage the class very little in discussion.

**Good**: My Intro To Programming Javascript class was phenomenal. In class, my teacher would go over the assignment that we had done before class, answer any questions we may have had, and then he’d have a challenge for our class time. He’d have us work as individuals or groups on a challenge. This challenge would practice the topics that we had learned in the assignment and review previous topics. People would help each other if they were stuck and our teacher would also walk around assisting others. Most of the time he’d reward those who were able to figure it out with a couple of extra credit points, then he’d show the class how complete the challenge. This made class time valuable, interactive, and fun.

6. Grade according to understanding: This is the hardest for me to try and define. All teachers strive to have a grading system that represents the overall efforts and understanding of the student.

Example:

**Bad:** I’ve had classes that have only two or three tests that determine whether or not the student passes the class. The instructor teaches the students that they should be reading and studying throughout the weeks to do better on the test, but students always have more classes and are forced to focus on their other courses work because it’s due. When it gets close to the big test then everyone crams for the exam. This method of grading rewards those who can remember information for a short while, take the test, and then forget it all. Grading that is purely based off of tests falls short.

**Good**: I enjoy classes that have a standard to meet, but then reward and encourage going beyond what’s required. I also like having a steady amount of work per week for classes. If I have something due during the week, I make sure to do it. I love teachers that have a grading system that has hands on projects and encourage doing more. The bonus opportunities allow for us to go beyond the assignment and get rewarded for it.

In most areas of study, there is a way to prove one’s understanding through real world application. If students can show what they know through application to existing or new material, then true understanding is demonstrated. This is tough for a point system, but not impossible. Ultimately the teacher is the one who decides the grade and decides what they think the student deserves in the course.

These are a couple of the big things that I’ve thought of during my educational experience. Teachers who are actively engaged in their teaching and trying to change things, often have a much more fulfilling class. Teachers who aren’t actively evolving their course and simply set out their assignments, are often not as effective as others who do.

Six Sigma

Six sigma is a quality control process that strives for near perfection. It is used often in large manufacturing industries to minimize the amount of defects within their products. The goal is no more than 3.4 defects for every million products which is pretty ambitious [[ii](http://www.isixsigma.com/new-to-six-sigma/getting-started/what-six-sigma/)]. Six sigma is also used in other companies to help increase the quality of their work. It is heavily statistic driven to break things down into the nitty gritty details.

There is a doctrine for six sigma that drives the process. The first is continuous effort to help processes move forward and progress. Second, processes have characteristics that are quantifiable. Third, commitment is required from everyone in the organization, especially the higher ups. Fourth, clear focus on achieving a quantifiable return (financially). Fifth, passionate strong leadership. Sixth, making decisions on good data. [[i](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Sigma)] Six sigma is all about making clear goals off of data, measuring progress, and continuous improvement.

References

i. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Sigma>

ii. <http://www.isixsigma.com/new-to-six-sigma/getting-started/what-six-sigma/>