

6.5: Continuous Improvement

1: “Continuous Improvement”

In the context of education. Education is a service. Therefore, operations management concepts apply in the education industry. Keep in mind that education is manufactured by the education system. This can create a different perspective when reviewing this process in relation to education.

Contrast this to any school- or instructional-improvement process that unfolds progressively, that does not have a fixed or predetermined end time. The concept also encompasses the general belief that improvement is not something that starts and stops, but it’s something that continues to an ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth. For example, when a school is continuously improving, it does so daily and in ways that cumulatively, over time, affect multiple dimensions of a school or school system.

Continuous improvement also reflects a tacit recognition that improving the effectiveness of schools and teaching is not only highly complex, but it is also multifaceted, as well as steep or prolonged learning curves—among other unavoidable factors—that require a sustained commitment to the execution of rapidly implemented, breakthrough changes that deliver up the desired results in a predictable fashion.

Continuous improvement also requires schools to have the on-staff knowledge, skills, and expertise needed to improve educational results and sustain improvement. Improvement depends on external organizations, consultants, contracts, and expertise, any realized improvements would probably be the result of the concept of continuous improvement is related to capacity—the abilities, skills, and expertise of school leaders, teachers, faculties, and staff. Research that helps educators develop, in real time, adaptive solutions and improvement strategies. In some cases, a continuous-improvement process is presented as a circle or ring of arrows—often called *acycle of action* or *cycle of inquiry*—since the process may follow a defined series of steps.

It has become something of a buzzword in education, and the appearance or use of the term does not necessarily mean that a school or school system, in a strict sense, an improvement process that could be accurately labeled “continuous” in the senses described above.

2: “Kaizen?”

Continuous improvement is the process of creating the quality of your process. Kaizen is one tool that is used when practicing Lean methods. This provides you with background information on the tool.

For more information on the text. You can view it online here: <http://pb.libretexts.org/b/?p=110>

3: “Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement Based on Data”

Creating a culture focused on continuous improvement within both service and manufacturing organizations. This is important because the culture of an organization is critical to the success of the continuous improvement process. If the culture does not support continuous quality improvement, then either the CQI process will fail or the organization will not be able to sustain it.

Improvement Based On Data

Exploring how nonprofits can develop a culture of improvement through the application of data.



Looking for resources on how nonprofits can use data to make better decisions that lead to greater impact. So, when [Mary K Winkler](#), one senior Research Associate at Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits & Philanthropy specializing in performance management [told me](#) this topic, I had to check it out. [Moving Beyond a Culture of Compliance to a Culture of Continuous Improvement](#) is a resource guide to help focused staff in Head Start and Early Head Start programs (1) understand how data, including data they already collect, can help them for fostering a culture of learning in their organization; and (3) increase their ability to identify and address gaps and continuously improve existing technical assistance resources through tip sheets, examples, and links to multiple resources. I was most interested in Part 2 applicable to organizations beyond those managing head start programs. This section of the report covers new ways of thinking about improvement based on feedback. It speaks to establishing culture norms among staff of curiosity, reflection, and trust. It outlines the practices to create a learning culture. Here's what I learned: **Definition: A culture of continuous improvement**

...such that the organization has created a virtuous cycle of feedback that repeatedly inspires staff to reflect on what is working and what needs improvement. The process of reflection is embedded in the organization's working style, not a random moment of inspiration after a program evaluation is completed. Questions are the best teachers and in an effort to sustain learning articulate questions and seek answers to those questions.

...they don't play the blame game if something needs to be improved. They have created a safe space for staff and program participants and others to share ideas and think creatively about solutions. Senior leaders model the skill that Edgar H. Schein calls "[Humble Inquiry](#)" – the art of asking

...the signs of a culture of continuous improvement.

have to balance compliance with creating a culture of continuous improvement, not an easy task. Not only do organizations need data learning, reflection, and action or as the report describes “systems that help us identify and solve problems proactively instead of f “[how shift from fighting fires to innovation](#).”

readiness to switch to a culture of continuous improvement, using a blog post I wrote about being [data-informed](#) for inspiration. It ganizations may be in different stages at the same time:

[nt tool](#) for evaluating an organization’s capacity to do evaluation activities. The report identifies these criteria:

ulture of Continuous Improvement

technical work and “[janitorial](#)” work are only a part of their jobs. Understanding [organizational data culture](#) or creating a culture of t topic. It’s on the agenda at [Do Good Data Conference](#) later this month (I’m co-facilitating the ending plenary). It’s also on the [Data](#) r some organizations, it is more zen – it’s about beginning it and continuing it as Laura Quinn from Idealware points out in her latest

ous improvement based on data? What does it look it? How did it get started?

em. This might be through our personal experience with K-12 or post K-12 education or our children’s experience. Using information ation system. You may choose a K-12 system, a Higher Education (community college, college, or university) program, or a technical this evaluation. Discuss how and where continuous quality improvement processes could be embedded within the system to increase

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