

July 28, 2022

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May - June Reader Feedback



Thank you for taking hard things and reframing them to be so inspirational.



Excellent article. Your article on scaffolding is fantastic.



True to form, you are turning your own challenges into a positive message for others. Your current newsletter presents one of the most powerful messages I have ever read!



Framing scaffolding learning theory as relevant to multiple realms of human learning and levels of learning (personal to societal, micro to mega)! Your newsletters always nourish our 'better selves'.

What Can Fresh Lettuce On Fine China Teach Us About Quality?

Greetings *|FNAME|*,

Earlier this month I took some time in-between chemo recovery to look through some of my most prized belongings. In case you didn't know it, I love fine china!

First off, I appreciate the precious sentimental value of generational history that accompanies these heirloom pieces. Some of them have survived wars and economic disasters... not to mention numerous family moves from one place to another. And then there is the delicate, refined beauty of full matching sets at holiday dinners or gatherings for tea that make me smile. But one of the things I admire most is the craftsmanship.



Some of the china I have was made by hand long ago, the products of masters and their apprentices, before the advent of the assembly line. Other sets were made through a combination of handcraft and simple machining, repeated again and again.

Most goods made today come from machines and repetitive process. There are dramatic cost savings in mass manufacture because of efficiency, producing greater uniformity that delivers higher volume at a lower price. This approach requires tight quality control, where the actual outcomes must adhere closely to the expected ones. Think of microchips that power today's computer devices, and of other complicated things like engines. Now imagine a series of recently manufactured 18-wheeler trucks being manufactured to slightly different specifications, each with some degree of difference between the raw materials. With no set of checklists and an uncoded institutional memory, the possibility of brakes failing, gears locking, or any number of mechanical failures is high, with life and death implications.



Granted, a semi-truck is much more complex than a set of **Flow Blue** dinnerware. But the same consideration of quality and process carries through to simpler things like foods, which if handled wrong, could be equally life-threatening. What if a simple ingredient like eggs aren't stored at a safe temperature, or even cross-contaminate other ingredients like a head of lettuce? Lots of sick people. Therefore, leadership of organizations like GE, AT&T, Volvo Trucks, and countless others recognize that limiting variability and maximizing quality is necessary. Because lots of sick people is bad business.



Here is one more example even closer to home right now. Each time I check-in at my doctor's office, I put on a simple wrist band. It's deceptively simple, because it holds critical importance to my:

- **Bloodwork** - Phlebotomist scans that wrist band and compares the result to blood draw tube printouts.
- **Medications** - Nurse scans the wrist band to verify name, birthdate and the amounts of Acetaminophen, Benedryl and Steroid to administer.
- **Chemotherapy** - Oncologist scans the wrist band to verify it matches the chemo drug 1, chemo drug 2 and immunotherapy drug.

Verification is done by two people for each of the three infusion times, because Cancer is quite literally a life and death matter. This happens every single week for me and others battling a condition like this. Each of the processes has a quality protocol attached to it, all designed to ensure no mistakes are made for a patient. And the protocols are based on best practices, which vary little from clinic to clinic.



For most organizations, quality isn't literally about life and death. Quality instead means delivering exceptional products and services to customers consistently. When companies implement a quality management system (QMS) they reduce variability by conforming processes to a set of standards provided by a reputable organization like the [American National Standards Institute](#) (ANSI) or the [International Standards Organization](#) (ISO). Then as the company grows, with more contractors, employees, and a greater number of clients, the risk of delivering poor or uneven quality remains low.

The changes that Covid wrought across industries shut down [hundreds of thousands of U.S. companies](#) for good because they weren't prepared for changes to their way of doing business. As you consider how your company maintains quality during a crisis, ask yourself questions like these:

- Do your customers think you frequently deliver the bare minimum, but they stick with you because of price?
- Do you consistently give them what they are anticipating or expecting, or do you surprise them sometimes?
- Does your product or service exceed client or customer expectations in a positive way that is well known?
- Are customer experiences consistent, regardless of where they are located, or is there change from place to place?

If you are a business, a nonprofit, or even a government agency, your outputs are judged by others based on quality. If your products and services match what customers are looking for, and you meet or surpass the expectation each and every time, it likely means your organization's QMS is running well. It also means that you probably have an organization well-aligned to results. Lastly, it could mean that you are growing - maybe even flourishing - because people can count on you.

So does your organization measure-up on quality? Does the lettuce stay safe and is the china wearing well with age? If not, the process of developing a well-crafted QMS might initially seem tedious, but it will help product/service costs stay low, keep quality high, and gain nimbleness to scale upward or downward, based on market conditions. It's a much better option than just closing down shop when something important changes.

Faithfully Yours,



Sue
Sue

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Decomposing Skills - A Necessary Instructional Design Task

By: Dr. Sue Ebbers



In instructional design, decomposing a skill is the activity of 1) first identifying the end goal of a learning event in terms of what the learner should see and be able to do as the result of the learning events and activities, and next, 2) breaking down the component skills into smaller and smaller increments of skill and attendant knowledge. The latter decomposition effort continues until the skills are at such a rudimentary level that it would be pragmatically wasted effort to continue a further. This engagement in decomposing a skill typically begins with a needs assessment/analysis, when performance...

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