

Appendix B

Continuous Improvement Training

Training

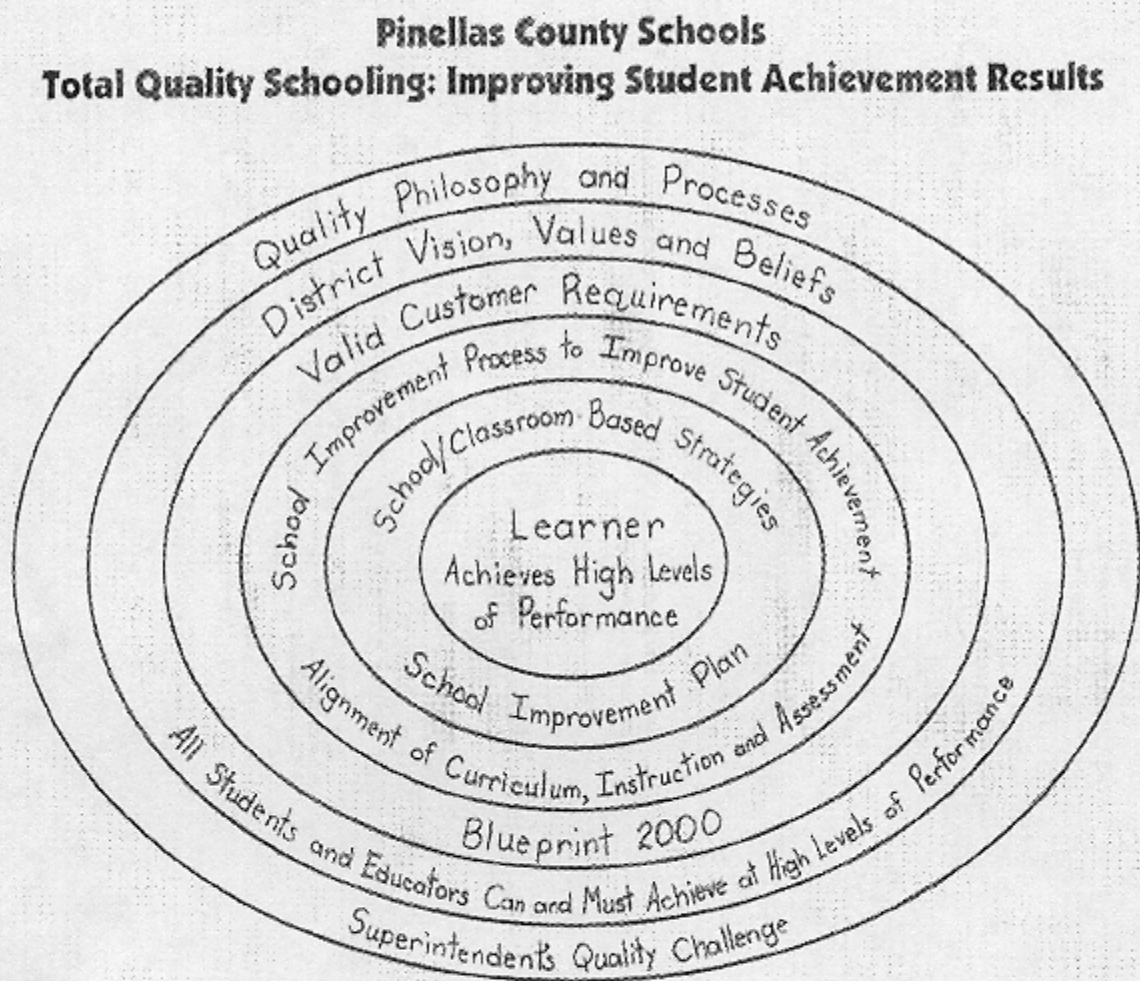
The school district had established a training schedule as part of the district's staff development academy. It is through this academy all district in-service training is provided. Two training sessions were available to all ISD 535 staff. Both sessions consisted of two consecutive, eight-hour days. The first training, or "boot camp," introduced the historical and philosophical foundations of Total Quality Management and the Total Quality Schools system, terminology, and basic quality tools. The second two-day session focused on classroom applications and the improvement planning process. ISD 535 contracted with the Pinellas County Schools, Florida Quality Academy to provide initial continuous improvement training to district administration and staff and to provide on-going consultation. Eight library media specialists participated in the continuous improvement training during the 1998 – 1999 school year bringing the total trained cadre of library media specialists to twelve. Three of the four media specialists trained during the previous summer attended the second two-day training. The remaining four media specialists participated in training during the 1999 – 2000 school year.

Boot Camp Training Components

Participants in the two-day training session, January 7-8, 1999, used three handbooks, *Transformation*, *Linkages*, and *Process Improvement Tools* developed by the Pinellas County Schools. These handbooks formed the structure for the introduction to quality schools concepts as well as the continuous improvement training.

The handbook *Transformation*, (Pinellas County Schools, 1997), overviews the experience of Pinellas County Schools in transforming to a Total Quality Schools organization. The trainer used discussion and short video presentations to help workshop participants in developing a mental model of quality schools. The *Transformation* handbook defines “Quality” as a “pragmatic system of continuous improvement” (p. 9). The visual model for Quality Schools, Figure 1, consists of six concentric rings with the learner at the center.

Figure 1. Model for Quality Schools¹



¹ From *Transformation* (p. 16) by Pinellas County Schools, 1997. Largo, FL: Quality Academy. Copyright 1997 by Quality Academy. Reproduced with permission.

Each ring represents a major concept in the Quality model. Moving outward the next ring represents “strategies to improve student performance that are aligned to school improvement objectives’ (p. 15). The third ring is “school improvement processes to improve student achievement” (p. 8). The fourth ring identifies valid customer requirements. The fifth ring represents district vision, values and beliefs that provide for a constancy of purpose. The sixth, and outer most ring, represents quality philosophy and processes creating a culture that causes alignment of systems to improve student performance (p. 15). The Quality Schools model (Figure 1) was used to introduce basic terminology and concepts of leadership, customer focus, process improvement, and the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle. Within this context, the trainer discussed the training program, Quality implementation, and restructuring plans of ISD 535.

The *Transformation* portion of the training continued with a discussion of the Deming Management Method. The trainers emphasized Deming’s Fourteen Points from *Out of the Crisis* by W. Edwards Deming, 1982. The Deming Management lesson formed the background for a discussion by the workshop participants and trainer of the eleven organizational core values adapted from Deming and translated into educational terminology and examples. The eleven organizational core values are:

1. Customer-driven quality - the foundation for a quality system. This includes both internal and external customers.
2. Leadership - demands personal commitment, active involvement, and role modeling.
3. Continual improvement - part of the daily work of schools, teams, and students.

4. Participation and development - opportunities for training, continued growth, involvement, and well-being.
5. Fast response - the timely and flexible response to simplifying and shortening the work processes and paths to achievement.
6. Design quality and prevention - building quality into processes and prevention of waste and problem solution.
7. Long-range outlook - having a future orientation with long-term commitments to students, staff, parents, and the community.
8. Management by fact - the collection of reliable information, its analysis and use for process management.
9. Partnership development - both internal and external customers working toward accomplishment of overall goals.
10. Organization responsibility and citizenship - business ethics, public health and safety, and environmental protection.
11. Results orientation - the use of a balanced composite of performance measures that communicate requirements, monitor performance, and marshal support for improvement. (Pinellas County Schools, 1997 p. 37- 40)

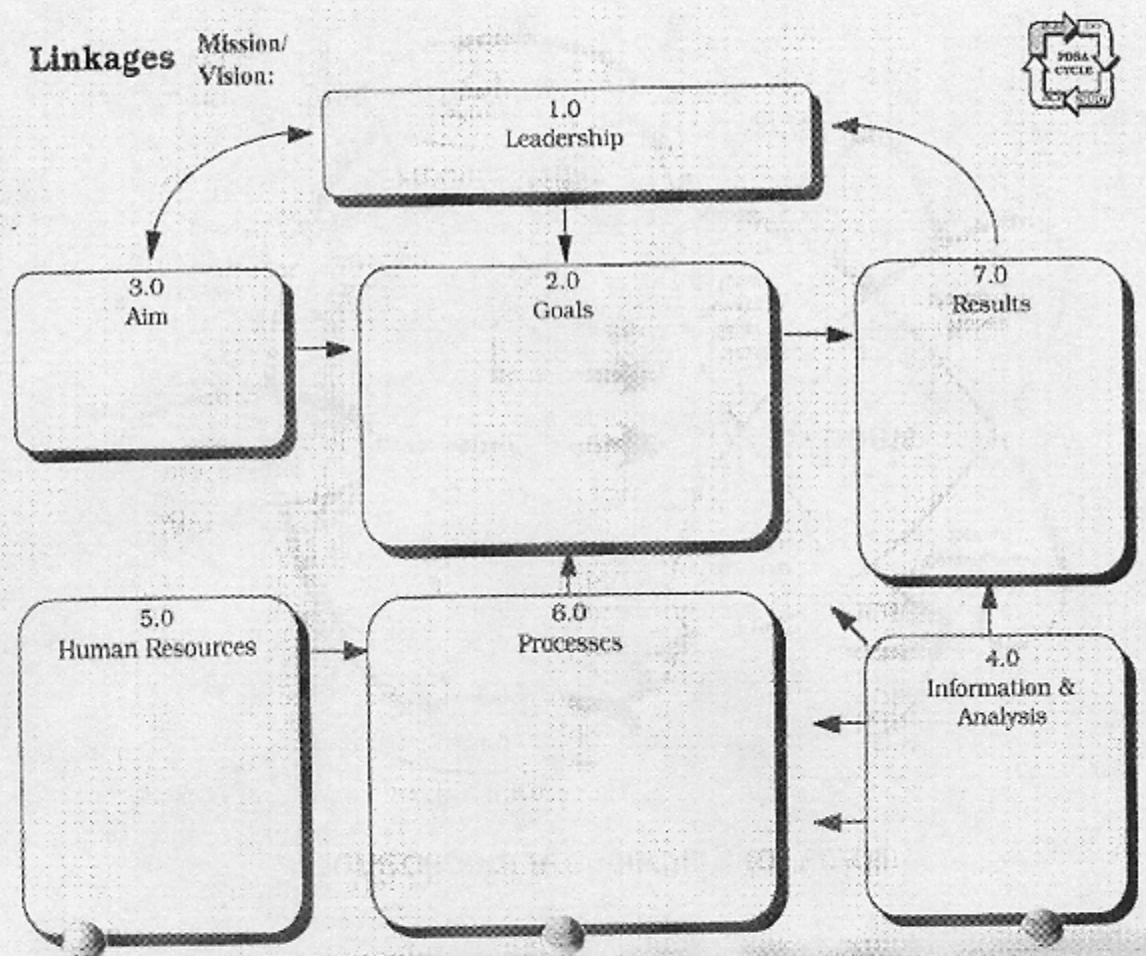
Following the foundation material in *Transformation*, the training moved into the *Linkages* handbook. *Linkages* presents an explanation of the integrated management system shown in Figure 2.

Trainers began with a discussion of alignment acts of improvement rather than random acts of improvement. Based on measurable goals that are part of school improvement plans, alignment of processes within the education environment should lead

to improvement. A random act is any activity, regardless of how enjoyable or traditional, that does not align with stated goals. Random acts are candidates for alignment or elimination. Random acts take resources away from obtaining quality performance. The library media specialists accepted this concept easily since their instruction already closely aligned to curriculum.

With the concept of random acts established, the trainer proceeded to examine of each of the seven parts of the integrated management system shown in Figure 2.

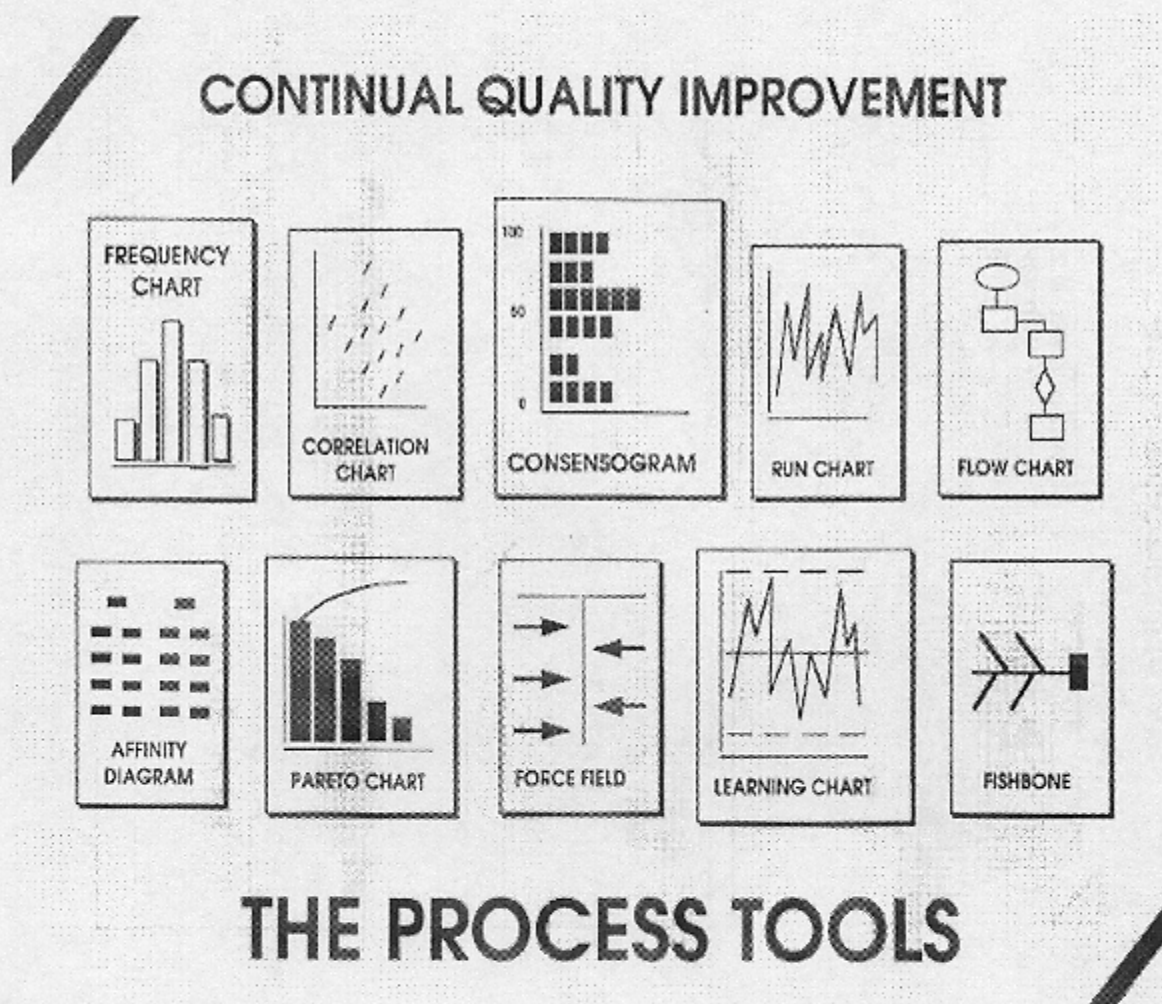
Figure 2. Seven Parts of the Integrated Management System²



²From *Linkages* (p. 38) by Pinellas County Schools, 1998. Largo, FL: Quality Academy. Copyright 1998 by Quality Academy. Reproduced with permission.

Working with the integrated management system became a required activity for all buildings and departments in ISD 535. The integrated management system clearly identifies what is desired, how it is going to be accomplished, the needed resources, who is responsible, and how the results will be measured.

The “boot camp” training ended with the introduction of ten continuous improvement process tools detailed in Figure 3. The *Process Improvement Tools* handbook presented the ten tools. Following a presentation of each tool and their basic Figure 3. Ten Process Improvement Tools³



³From *Process Improvement Tools* (p. 36) by Pinellas County Schools, 1998. Largo, FL: Quality Academy. Copyright 1998 by Quality Academy. Reproduced with permission.

use, the workshop trainer showed examples of tools use by teachers, students, and administrators in training districts. The participants were encouraged to examine and discuss samples of the tools and resource materials. A bibliography of process tool resources is available in Appendix D. The handbook also contained rubrics and flow charts to help participants begin applying the workshop concepts at their school sites. The rubrics and flow charts are available in Appendix E.

In the weeks following the training, media specialists began sharing reactions about the training and the application of continuous improvement processes within Media Services meetings. None of the media specialists expressed disappointment with the training and many began experimenting with the tools immediately. Ashley, an elementary media specialist, said “hearing real ways to use continuous improvement helped see how it works.” Jordan, another elementary media specialist indicated, “I am looking from a more global (complete) view than in the past.” Drew, a high school media specialist, echoed this when by saying, “the training provided a more well-rounded global picture of the school setting. Perhaps most importantly it has helped me ask the question, ‘how can I help the district solve problems?’” Pat said, “the most helpful part of the continuous improvement experience for me was actually hearing ‘real’ ways to use it.” Dylan said the training “made you think of ways to improve your effectiveness and focus on goals which need to be done.”

Classroom Tools Training

The second two-day training focused on classroom application, development of classroom and school improvement plans, and using system checklists based on the Baldrige Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence. These checklists are provided

in Appendix C. Three library media specialists participated with their building staff in this second training during 1998 - 1999. Their reactions were consistent; Sam, Bailey, and Tory agreed, "Training with building staff gets us all talking the same language." Sam was actively involved in the school building improvement process teams and said, "I am excited about the focus we are developing. We have always been a strong school team, we are just getting better." The library media specialists felt the training in continuous improvement was valuable and expressed excitement about trying to apply what they had learned. The materials provided in this training gave the library media specialists additional continuous improvement resources.

The training workshops generated enthusiasm within the Media Services department to begin implementation of the concepts and processes of continuous improvement. While the library media specialists worked as group to develop plans for the department, individual library media specialists worked independently at beginning continuous improvement implementation in their library media centers.