

Dental Health Educators' Newsletter

DH Methods of Education, Inc.

Communicating With Our Colleagues

Competitiveness vs. Excellence:

by Alfie Kohn

"What's the matter with us?" demands Bob Herbert in his August 7 *New York Times* column. "The latest dismal news on the leadership front" proving that we've become "a nation of nitwits" comes courtesy of a report from the College Board, he says, "At a time when a college education is needed more than ever to establish and maintain a middle-class standard of living, America's young people are moving in exactly the wrong direction." "The educational capacity of our country continues to decline," Herbert quotes the report as saying, adding that this is "beyond pathetic."

Now one could take issue with this alarmist rhetoric on the grounds that our well-being (as individuals and as a society) is once again being framed in purely economic terms: The benefits of education are measured by the size of one's future paychecks. Or one could point out that, even from an economic perspective, we're blaming the victims here. There aren't nearly enough high paying jobs even for those with im-

The Education Crisis That Isn't

pressive credentials, and projections suggest that the vast majority of jobs expected to be created in the years ahead will not require a college degree. But there's a more basic problem with Herbert's column -- and with a similarly themed speech that President Obama just delivered at the University of Texas (on Monday afternoon). Its premise is dead wrong. If we want more people to attend and graduate from college than currently do so, the trend has actually been in exactly the right direction for quite some time. In the College Board report that Herbert cites, you will find a graph showing that the percentage of 25-to-34-year-olds with an associates degree or higher was 38 percent in 2000 and has edged up pretty steadily since then. As of the last year shown, 2008, it had reached 42 percent.

For the bigger picture, we need to go back farther. The most readily available figures use a slightly different metric: the proportion of adults at least 25 years old who have completed four or more years of college.

Volume 1, Issue 4
September 2010

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In 1970, only 11 percent had done so. In 1980, it was up to 17 percent. In 1990, 21 percent. In 2000, 26 percent. In 2009, 30 percent.

Now we may say, "That's still not high enough." But how in the world do these numbers support the conclusion that we're moving in "exactly the wrong direction?"

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The Sharpening Horse

Featured in the October 2010 Issue of [RDH Magazine](#)



A Fundraiser for Student members of ADHA. Contact our website for information on how your school's chapter can earn profits from *The Sharpening Horse!*

www.DHmethEd.com

You may also contact us by:

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To:

Excellence vs. Competitiveness:*continued from page 1*

The operative phrase in that question, it turns out, is "in the world." Herbert (like the College Board and the President) doesn't seem to be interested in whether we're making progress. The only question of interest is whether the U.S. is beating other countries. It turns out that people of other nationalities have the audacity to want their students, too, to get more education. And they, too, are making progress toward that goal. Like most op-ed columnists, reporters, and politicians (of both parties), Herbert actually regards this fact as bad news.

From any reasonable moral standard, we'd want kids to succeed regardless of where they call home. If progress were being made worldwide, that would be terrific news. But what kind of standard is it when the goal isn't success (for all) but merely victory (for America)? Have we really reached the point where life itself is treated like a sports match, where what matters most is whether we can pump the air with our fists and shout, "We're number one!"?

Even if we're talking only about economics, it's worth rethinking our zero-sum assumption. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* called "Competitiveness: A Dangerous Obsession," Paul Krugman showed why it's simply inaccurate to believe that other countries have to fail in order for our country to succeed. (The late economist David M. Gordon made essentially the same point in *The Atlantic*; his essay was entitled,

("Do We Need to Be No. 1?")

And when we're talking about education -- how effectively students are learning, or how long they remain in school -- the preoccupation with rankings is even less appropriate, for several reasons.

First, the two realms aren't all that closely connected, the conventional wisdom notwithstanding. Even if you're not persuaded by Krugman and Gordon, even if you always feel compelled to follow the word "global" with "competitiveness" -- as if the only way to understand interactions among nations is in purely adversarial terms -- a country's educational status doesn't drive its economic status. I don't just mean that education ought to be about more than dollars and cents. I mean that the two don't tend to track all that closely. For individual students, school achievement is only weakly related to subsequent workplace performance. And for nations, there's little correlation between average test scores and economic vigor.

The late Gerald Bracey, for example, found 38 countries whose economies had been rated on the Current Competitiveness Index calculated by the World Economic Forum and whose students' test scores had also been assessed. There was virtually no correlation between countries' scores on the two lists. And it doesn't help to stagger the two so as to compare today's students in a given country with tomorrow's economy (giving the students time to take their place in the workforce). Consider Japan's outstanding test scores in the 1980s and its dismal economic performance in the 1990s.

(You wouldn't get an argument from me if you attributed this lack of connection to the fact that standardized test results are lousy indicators of educational aptitude or achievement. But I'm not aware of any educational indicator that suggests a country's economic strength is mostly determined by the quality of its schools. Politicians and editorial writers keep assuming that connection even though social scientists keep failing to find any evidence for it.)

Second, even if test scores, or average number of years of education completed, were meaningful measures, it makes no sense to look mostly at how countries rank against one another. All of them may be shamefully low or impressively high. Or the differences among them may not be statistically significant. It's absolute attainment that matters. Relative success tells us nothing of interest -- unless, again, your goal isn't substantive excellence but the right to claim victory.

Third, there's no getting around that basic moral consideration. To say that our goal isn't for our kids to keep improving but to score better than their counterparts in other countries -- or that it isn't for more of our students to stay in school longer but to "retake the lead," as President Obama put it on Monday, alluding to a nonexistent international contest -- is to say that we want children to fare relatively poorly just because they aren't Americans.

The toxicity of a competitive worldview is such that even people who are reasonably progressive on other issues literally don't notice evidence that's staring them in the face -- in this case, showing that more and more of our population are getting college degrees with each passing year. And when we're perpetually worried about being -- and staying -- king of the mountain, we find ourselves taking a position that leads us to view progress made by young people in other countries as bad news. That's both intellectually and ethically indefensible.

Maybe Bob Herbert is right after all to ask "**What's the matter with us?**"

Alfie Kohn www.alfiekohn.org is the author of 12 books, including ***No Contest: The Case Against Competition and The Schools Our Children Deserve.***

Follow him on Twitter at @alfiekohn

Views and opinions expressed are the author's, and not those of DH Methods of Education, Inc.

The New DVD is here! 2 hours and 37 minutes long www.DHmethEd.com

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Instrument Sharpening

*Precision In Periodontal
Instrumentation (2nd edition)*



Cynthia Eron Leiseca

Ten Signs of Incompetent Managers

By Toni Bowers, PhD Head Blog Editor: blogs.techrepublic.com

August 5, 2009

I came across a great piece about traits that incompetent managers share written by Margaret Heffernan for FastCompany.com. This no nonsense piece cuts to the chase and is about as true a list as I have ever seen. Here are the traits of incompetent managers, according to Ms. Heffernan

Bias against action: There are always plenty of reasons not to take a decision, reasons to wait for more information, more options, more opinions. But real leaders display a consistent bias for action. People who don't make mistakes generally don't make anything. Legendary ad man David Ogilvy argued that a good decision today is worth far more than a perfect decision next month. Beware procrastinators.

Secrecy: "We can't tell the staff," is something I hear managers say repeatedly. They defend this position with the argument that staff will be distracted, confused or simply unable to comprehend what is happening in the business.

If you treat employees like children, they will behave that way — which means trouble. If you treat them like adults, they may just respond likewise. Very few matters in business must remain confidential and good managers can identify those easily. The lover of secrecy has trouble being honest and is afraid of letting peers have the information they need to challenge him. He would rather defend his position than advance the mission. Secrets make companies political, anxious and full of distrust.

Over-sensitivity: "I know she's always late, but if I raise the subject, she'll be hurt." An inability to be direct and honest with staff is a critical warning sign. Can your manager see a problem, address it headlong and move on? If not, problems won't get resolved, they'll grow. When managers say staff is too sensitive, they

are usually describing themselves. Wilting violets don't make great leaders. Weed them out. Interestingly, secrecy and over-sensitivity almost always travel together. They are a bias against honesty.

Love of procedure: Managers who cleave to the rule book, to points of order and who refer to colleagues by their titles have forgotten that rules and processes exist to expedite business, not ritualize it. Love of procedure often masks a fatal inability to prioritize — a tendency to polish the silver while the house is burning.

Preference for weak candidates: We interviewed three job candidates for a new position. One was clearly too junior, the other rubbed everyone up the wrong way and the third stood head and shoulders above the rest. Who did our manager want to hire? The junior. She felt threatened by the super-competent manager and hadn't the confidence to know that you must always hire people smarter than yourself.

Focus on small tasks: Another senior salesperson I hired always produced the most perfect charts, forecasts and spreadsheets. She was always on time, her data completely up-to-date. She would always volunteer for projects in which she had no core expertise — marketing plans, financial forecasts, meetings with bank managers, the office move. It was all displacement activity to hide the fact that she could not do her real job.

Allergy to deadlines: A deadline is a commitment. The manager who cannot set, and stick to deadlines, cannot honor commitments. A failure to set and meet deadlines also means that no one can ever feel a true sense of achievement. You can't celebrate milestones if there aren't any.

Inability to hire former employees: I hired a head of sales once with (apparently) a luminous reputation. But,



as we staffed up, he never attracted any candidates from his old company. He'd worked in sales for twenty years — hadn't he mentored anyone who'd want to work with him again? Every good manager has alumni, eager to join the team again; if they don't, smell a rat.

Addiction to consultants: A common — but expensive — way to put off making decisions is to hire consultants who can recommend several alternatives. While they're figuring these out, managers don't have to do anything. And when the consultant's choices are presented, the ensuing debates can often absorb hours, days, months. Meanwhile, your organization is poorer but it isn't any smarter. When the consultant leaves, he takes your money and his increased expertise out the door with him.

Long hours: In my experience, bad managers work very long hours. They think this is a brand of heroism but it is probably the single biggest hallmark of incompetence. To work effectively, you must prioritize and you must pace yourself. The manager who boasts of late nights, early mornings and no time off cannot manage himself so you'd better not let him manage anyone else.

Any one of these behaviors should sound a warning bell. More than two — sound the alarm! ♦

DVD for Advanced Instrumentation



In the Spotlight



Christine Dominick CDA, RDH, M.Ed

Christine is the former Chair of Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene, Boston, MA and creator and Director of Mt. Ida Dental Hygiene Program in Newton, MA. She has over 40 years of clinical and teaching experience. After graduating from Forsyth in 1968 she received her Bachelor of Science degree from Northeastern University in 1972 and her Masters of Adult Education from the University of New Hampshire in 1974. Her first job in education was at New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, NH.

In 1985, her family relocated to Massachusetts where she raised her family and practiced dental hygiene.

In 1997, Christine was asked to start the Dental Hygiene Program at Mt. Ida College in Newton, MA. Always up for a challenge, she accepted. In 1999, Mt. Ida College opened its doors to the first Dental Hygiene class and a 100% pass on the National Board Exam. This endeavor was an education in dealing with CODA requirements and becoming an administrator.

In 2003, Christine became the Chair of MCPHS Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene. She has stepped down from her position as chair, but is on faculty at Forsyth and responsible for special projects. She is in her 5th year as a consultant examiner for NERB. Her six years as a CODA site team visitor and completion of over eight site visits to combinations of DA & DH schools and distance education sites provided her an opportunity to learn the accrediting process well. Christine has prepared for and participated in over 5 site visits to her own schools, serves as a self-study reader for her peers. She has been the lead presenter for the *DA & DH Accreditation Workshops* in the Boston and Jacksonville camps and will lead the upcoming Accreditation Workshops in Las Vegas, NV at the fall Camp this November.

Those who have attended Christine's *Accreditation Workshops* in camps have described her as one who is calm and self assuring and extremely knowledgeable in preparing them to get the whole faculty on board with preparing their self-study documents and planning the site visit. Her methodical approach to tackling this monumental project has her course attendees raving about the confidence she gives them. Christine is very strict about the thoroughness with which compliance to standards must be demonstrated. She can answer all their questions and give solutions to problems they are having with aspects of their programs that might not be perfectly in accordance with the standards. She shares examples of self-study document styles and templates for guiding faculty in displaying their program information.

She can tell you how to correctly host the site visit and exactly what to do to make the experience positive for the site-team as well as your faculty. She is current in her research on the standards and provides an accreditation workshop that is unparalleled. And above all, she is an educator's educator. One of the caliber that all others admire. ♦

If you know of an educator you want "In the Spotlight" write to cindy@dhmethed.com

**Fall Camp, November 11-14, 2010 Las Vegas, NV
Educational Methodology Workshops
for Allied Dental Educators**



| Date | Class Schedule | Time |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Thurs. 11/11/10 | Accreditation Workshop for Dental Hygiene | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM |
| Fri. 11/12/10 | Complete Dental Assisting Preclinic Course | 8:00 AM - Noon |
| Fri. 11/12/10 | Instrument Sharpening | 1:00 - 3:00 PM |
| Sat. 11/13/10 | TalEval Computerized Grading for DA & DH This is the last time we will offer this free course | 8:00 AM - Noon |
| Sat. 11/13/10 | Complete Case Based Course | 1:00 - 5:00 PM |
| Sat. 11/13/10 | Accreditation Workshop for Dental Assisting | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM |
| Sun. 11/14/10 | Teaching Methodology for Allied Dental Educators (This workshop is no longer provided as an inservice at individual schools. It is only offered at the camps.) | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM |

Final Registration Deadline, [October 15, 2010](#)

Register on our website: www.DHmethED.com



Accreditation—Inquiring Minds Will Ask

by Cindy Biron Leiseca

This is a new column that will be included in future newsletters. It will feature specific standards in each issue and what is necessary to demonstrate compliance with them. Our consultants at DH Methods of Education Inc. who are current and former site team visitors will be serving as advisors for the column. And if need be, a call will be made to the managers at the ADACODA for further clarification.

Since we have had so many accreditation workshops at our camps, we receive many emails from faculty members from all over the country asking us for our interpretation of certain ADACODA Standards and how to demonstrate compliance with them. This column will address questions most frequently asked.

There are standards that seem to be questioned repeatedly or often misinterpreted. Standards 3-7 through 3-8 in DA, DH, and DLT are brought to mind. The standards speak to current educational methodology and qualifications for teaching. The verbiage of the standards differ slightly in each of the disciplines, since an emphasis seems to be in order for each discipline. Site teams may be responsible for visiting a school with all three disciplines simultaneously. They have a complete understanding of the standards and why there is more emphasis on certain aspects of the standards in each of the disciplines. If you haven't read the standards on educational methodology and teaching qualifications for disciplines other than your own, it is a good idea to read them for a better understanding of all aspects of educational methodology. Read the "Self-study Guides" provided by ADACODA as well, so you will have a better understanding of what demonstrates compliance with these standards.

Standards for all three disciplines state baccalaureate degrees are required for teaching didactic courses. And all state "current knowledge of specific subjects they are teaching, and if applicable, instruction in distance education techniques and delivery.

Dental Hygiene standard 3-7 states "background in educational methodology consistent with teaching assignments". Dental Assisting and Dental Laboratory Technology standards actually delineate "educational methodology that includes: theory, practice, curriculum development, educational psychology, test construction, measurement and evaluation". The latter referring to general educational methodology, the former "how to teach specific subjects". So yes, these are two separate entities, but both apply to all three disciplines. And the third separate entity is "Distance Learning", which requires training and instructional courses that vary by state.

Dental Hygiene 3-7 includes in its intent statement, "Individuals who teach and supervise in students' clinical enrichment experiences should have qualifications comparable to faculty who teach in the dental hygiene clinic and are familiar with the program's objectives, content, instructional methods and evaluation procedures." This means you need to bring in the off-campus supervisors and instructors and calibrate with them on your methods of teaching and evaluating students. They need to attend the in-services and/or attend methods courses that your faculty attends.

So what do you need to do to demonstrate compliance? **Be thorough! And.....**

All faculty members must have at least a baccalaureate degree

or proof of enrollment indicating degree completion is within the calendar year.

Current knowledge in subjects you are teaching:

Faculty curriculum vitae showing current and advanced training in their subject areas, especially—radiology, nutrition, oral pathology, dental materials, periodontology, pharmacology and the sciences that change!

Dental anatomy and histology and embryology structures do not change, but the methods for teaching and testing of these subjects do. General education methodology courses provide faculty with such methods.

In the self-study guide under 3-7 **notice:**

A Description

1. Describe the mechanism utilized to determine teaching assignments.

This is where there is room for interpretation. To some it may be interpreted as simply distributing the teaching load of all subjects, but more specifically it refers to who is most qualified to teach a specific subject. There is an expectation that those who teach specific subjects, especially nutrition, radiology, and oral pathology, have some advanced training in the subject area that gives them the credentials to teach the course. It may mean that the faculty members need to attend an advanced training (multi-day) course in radiology, or oral pathology, or nutrition.

General Education Methodology

General education methodology is a separate entity from advanced training for specific subjects and is required for all faculty teaching students on or off-campus.

This course must be current and comprehensive and your site team has been given a directive to evaluate the materials from such a course to determine if it is a current, quality course of sufficient content and length.

Be advised, there may be watered down courses of bits and pieces of methodology offered at state educational meetings. They may draw people to meetings, but may not be evidenced based (they are opinions) and such courses might not include all the topics that are consistent with a comprehensive teaching methodology course.

What topics are included in a comprehensive teaching methodology course?

- Philosophy of education
- Implementing professionalism throughout the curriculum
- Faculty attributes
- Writing goals
- Learning styles
- How to learn
- Teaching methods (How to teach) in current formats that include activities, various lecture styles, case based formats, research projects, etc.
- Technology in education
- Critical thinking teaching and testing strategies
- Objective evaluation methods for didactic and clinical courses
- Faculty calibration
- Providing student feedback
- Classroom management
- Student behavioral issues
- Assessing outcomes
- How to conduct curriculum workshops

Distance Learning—A third entity

Distance learning and online teaching require separate training sessions. Teaching centers at colleges and universities provide training that is consistent with state laws. Include a description of the training courses and material as an exhibit in your self-study document or have it available for the site team at the time of the visit.

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Accreditation—Inquiring Minds Will Ask

Do my Dental Assisting Instructors need the CDA credentials if they are graduates of an ADA Accredited Dental Assisting Program or if they are licensed Registered Dental Hygienists who teach in the Dental Hygiene program?

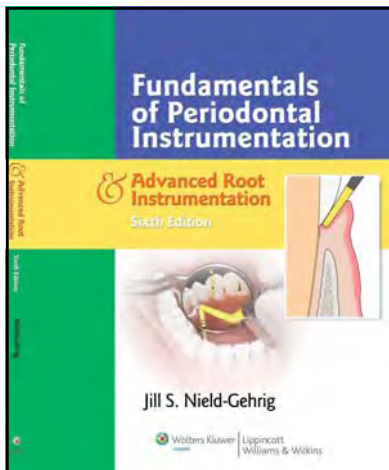
Answer: YES and YES!

Teaching qualifications specific to Dental Assisting, **Standard 3-9 Laboratory, pre-clinical and clinical faculty appointed after January 1, 2000 must be a Dental Assisting National Board “Certified Dental Assistant” (CDA).**

Only licensed dentists are exempt and not required to obtain a CDA to teach in a dental assisting program.

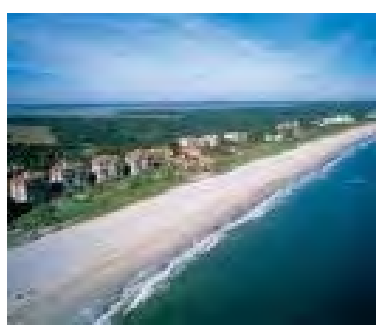
So get the word out to your faculty that CDA credentialing is mandated for all who started teaching after January 1, 2000, except dentists.

Please submit your questions about standards by email to cindy@dhmethed.com. We are unable to respond to the volume of emails and cannot provide individual replies or consulting by email or phone. Frequently asked questions will be addressed through this column only. For additional advice on accreditation please plan to attend the camp *Accreditation Workshops* led by Christine Dominick. ♦



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