

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Dr. Flumerfelt presents Lean at Texas conference

Shannon Flumerfelt, director of Lean Thinking for Schools at the Oakland University Pawley Lean Institute, recently presented at the Leadership Fusion Summit 2010 in Houston, Texas.

This two-day regional conference is for school administrators and leaders in the Houston area school districts.

"For most of the audience, it was their first exposure to Lean Thinking for Schools," Flumerfelt said. "To me, it represents some forward thinking on their part to bring in the Pawley Institute."

Flumerfelt described the basic concepts of Lean and conducted two learning activities to help school leaders see waste during her hour and a half presentation on the first day of the conference.

Her presentation included overproduction, a common form of waste, and the mental models that are used by schools to help them see Lean thinking ideas, including the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. She also discussed pull, which aims to deliver services based on what the customer wants. For Lean Thinking for Schools, students are typically the external customers.



Dr. Shannon Flumerfelt

"We start to think: What is it that students want?" Flumerfelt said.

According to Flumerfelt, students want to learn, take relevant subjects, develop as people, and enjoy the rites of passage and social events. Flumerfelt also said that instructors should design the way they deliver instruction based on pull, which is different than the traditional school system.

"I know that one thing the audience took away from the presentation was how to use the Lean tool the 5 Whys," Flumerfelt said. "There was a lot of feedback that they enjoyed the 5 Whys."

According to Flumerfelt, the message that the Pawley Institute is trying to convey is that Lean is the gold standard for school district processes and that it's not just a trend.

"It's a long-standing, well-founded philosophy that works when done properly, so we just want schools to benefit from that," Flumerfelt said.

For more information about Lean Thinking for Schools and the Pawley Lean Institute, visit www.oakland.edu/lean.

SUMMARY

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