

**What is quality work?** After WWII, General Mac Arthur hired W. Edwards Deming to consult with the manufacturers in Japan to help them rebuild. Deming surprised the owners by suggesting that the factory workers be given the opportunity to assess the production process. He also suggested that if workers are evaluated externally that they will not produce quality work. Japanese companies began the experiment with what has come to be called the Quality Movement and within a few years the quality of produced goods coming from Japan significantly improved. Deming believed that no one should be evaluated by another person but that each individual should self-evaluate. This is a rather challenging concept particularly in the world of grades and test scores. As an experiment, talk with your students about how well they would assess themselves on a task unrelated to the classroom. Ask them how they would rate themselves on it. Then converse about how they would rate themselves on some aspect of your course. What Deming knew and proved is that as a person recognizes that they can self-assess, they can then decide what to do to raise the quality of their work and effort. Try one task for self-assessment in your class and then ask your students what they think about it. For many students, this will be a big surprise and even scary. How do we improve quality in the classroom is very dependent on the desire of the students to do quality work. Teaching them that they have the ability to self-assess can provide a greater level of success for everyone. For more about this topic see [The Quality School](#) by William Glasser (1998, Harper).