

## **Using Oregon Benchmarks to define new educational systems from graduating student's perspective**

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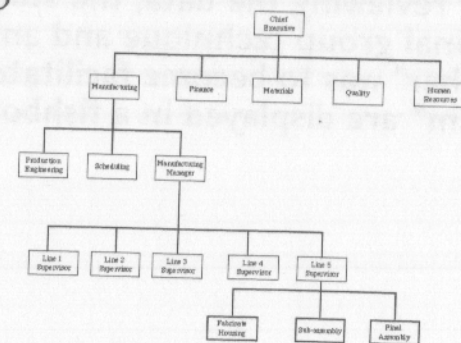
# Using Oregon Benchmarks in defining new educational systems from graduating student's perspective

*Traditional management hierarchies and functional areas are replaced by whoever has the relevant information. Influence in decision making.... depends on expertise and the power of information, not formal authority.[1]*

## Work organization strategies and Oregon's human investment policies

Oregon's human investment policy is aimed at preparing Oregon's future and existing workforce to work in **high performance work organizations**. High performance work organizations are work organizations organized under the following principles: A) the decentralization of authority and responsibility, with more authority provided directly to workers to use judgment and make decisions, B) the integration of work into whole jobs rather than discrete tasks, C) the availability of extensive channels of communication flowing up, down or across the organization and among workers, D) the achievement of higher ratios of direct to indirect labor, E) the design of the work environment to facilitate interaction among workers; and F) the integration of workers [2].

High performance work organizations differ from Taylor type work organizations in the way that they use information. In Taylor organizations strategic information is defined by top management and seldomly shared with customers or vendors[3]. Oregon's education reform is based on preparing students to work in high performance work organizations so we thought that we would share our "thinking role" as educators with them. We asked seniors at Sheldon High School in Eugene to become thinkers. We presented socio-economic Oregon Benchmark data to them and then asked them to describe a new school system.





## Oregon Benchmarks at Sheldon High School

*"The system envisioned here is focused on outcomes, customer-centered, decentralized, and accountable." pg. 3 [4]*

Oregon Benchmarks set measurable standards for charting Oregon's progress in human investment. As an outcome based system, Oregon Benchmarks can help reinvent state government. To do so, critical information will need to be "pushed down" the hierarchy and shared with customers (graduating students not going on to college, existing workers and displaced workers). Only through using relevant Oregon Benchmark measures can local communities be empowered to make decisions about service delivery mechanisms.

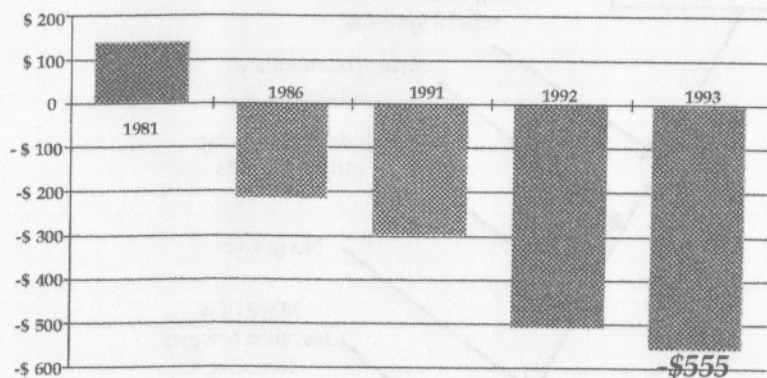
In May 1994, we shared human investment Oregon Benchmarks with three classes of graduating seniors at Sheldon High School. Once we reviewed Oregon Benchmark data we facilitated a class discussion on the features of a new education system. The purpose of the three classes was to: 1) review Lane County economic, education and human investment data with students, 2) expose the students to quality improvement tools commonly used in high performance work organizations and, 3) offer the students a new role in participating in Oregon's education reform process as "thinkers" or customers collaborating in defining the desired new educational system.

Approximately, 60 students participated in the process. About 8 - 10 students had heard of education reform, or HB 3565, or the Katz bill. The following data was presented to each of the classes.

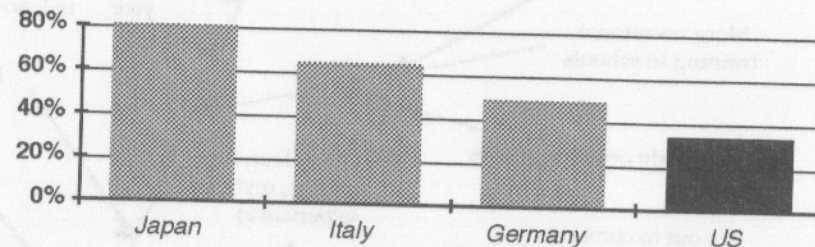
After reviewing the data, the students were asked to brainstorm the features of a new educational system. Nominal group technique and an affinity process were used to organize the student's new ideas. Our role as "teacher" was to become facilitators, and to record the student's work. The features of a "new educational system" are displayed in a fishbone or cause and effect diagram. These diagrams follow.



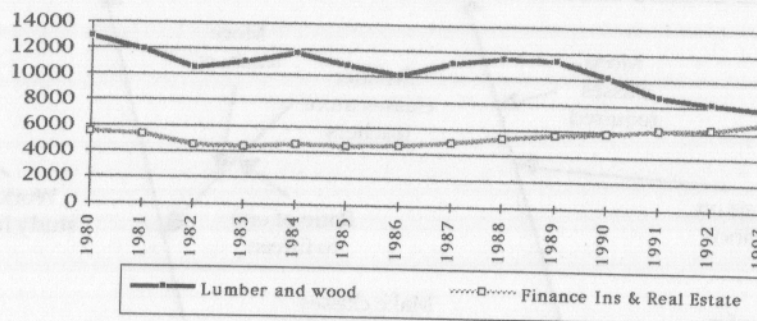
US Competitive Position (In billions)



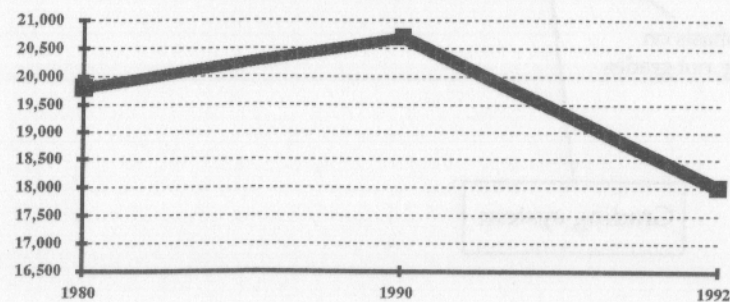
Standard of living growth since 1972 from *Rebuilding America's Workforce* (Kolberg & Smith, 1992)



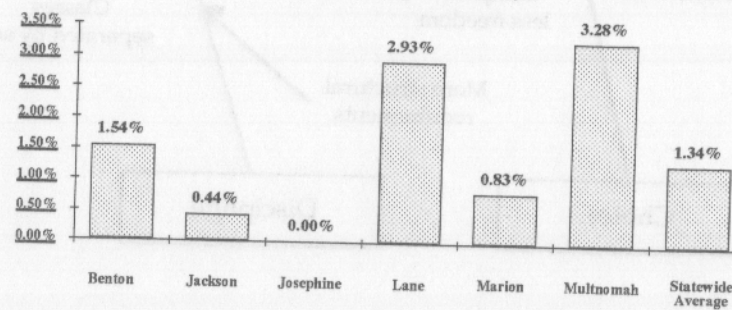
Comparison of Lane County's Timber and Financial/Real Estate Workforce

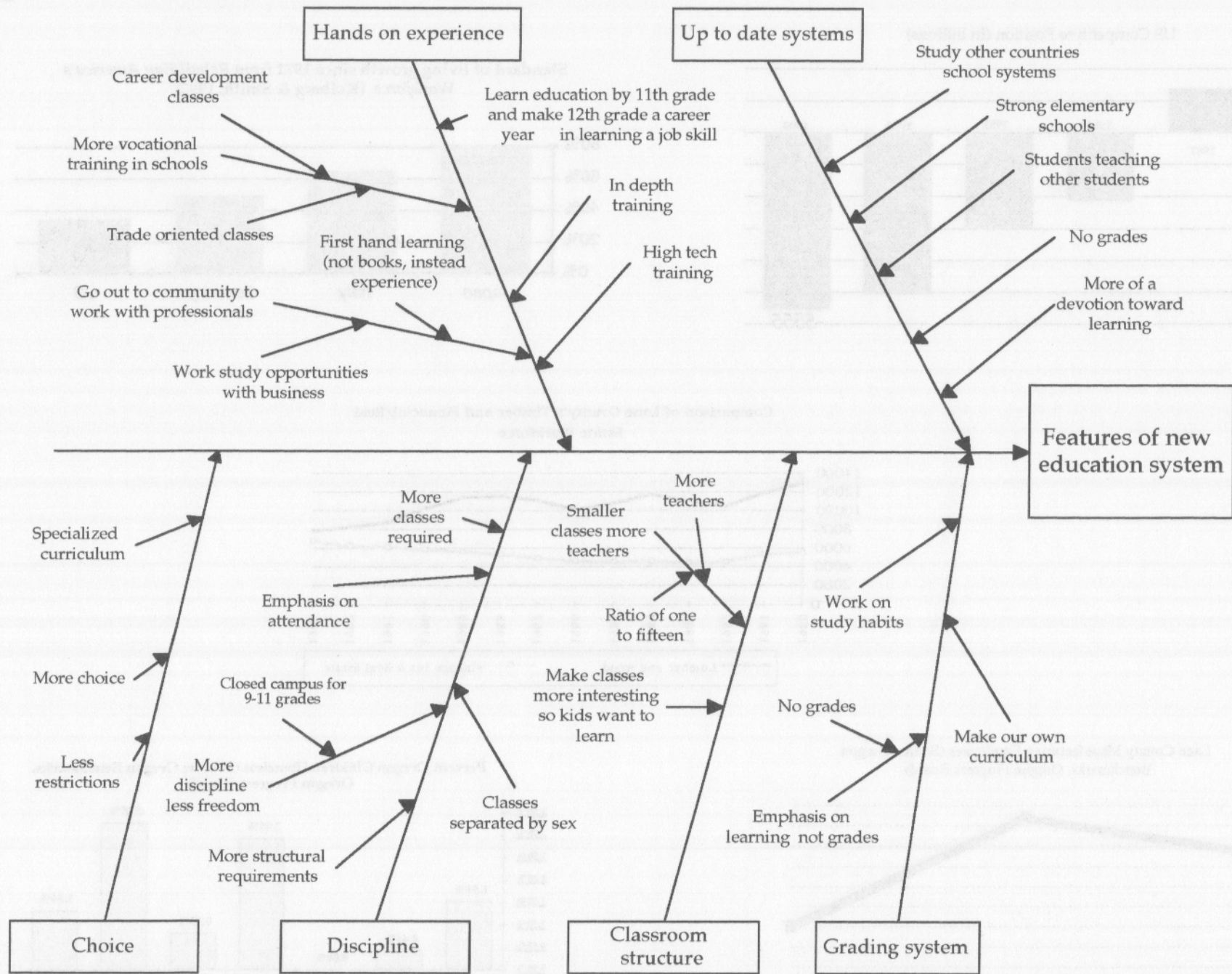


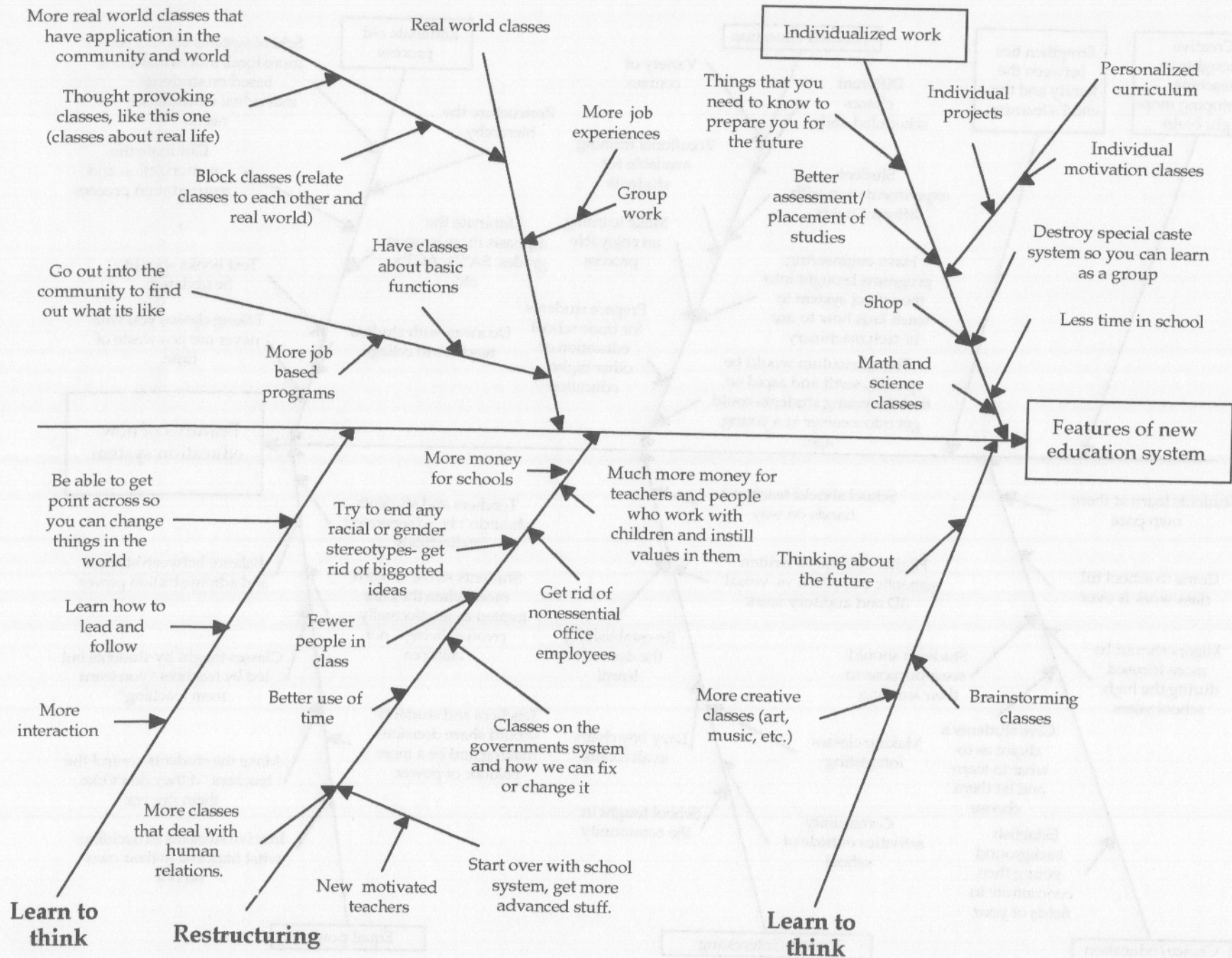
Lane County Manufacturing Employees (Source Oregon Benchmarks, Oregon Progress Board)



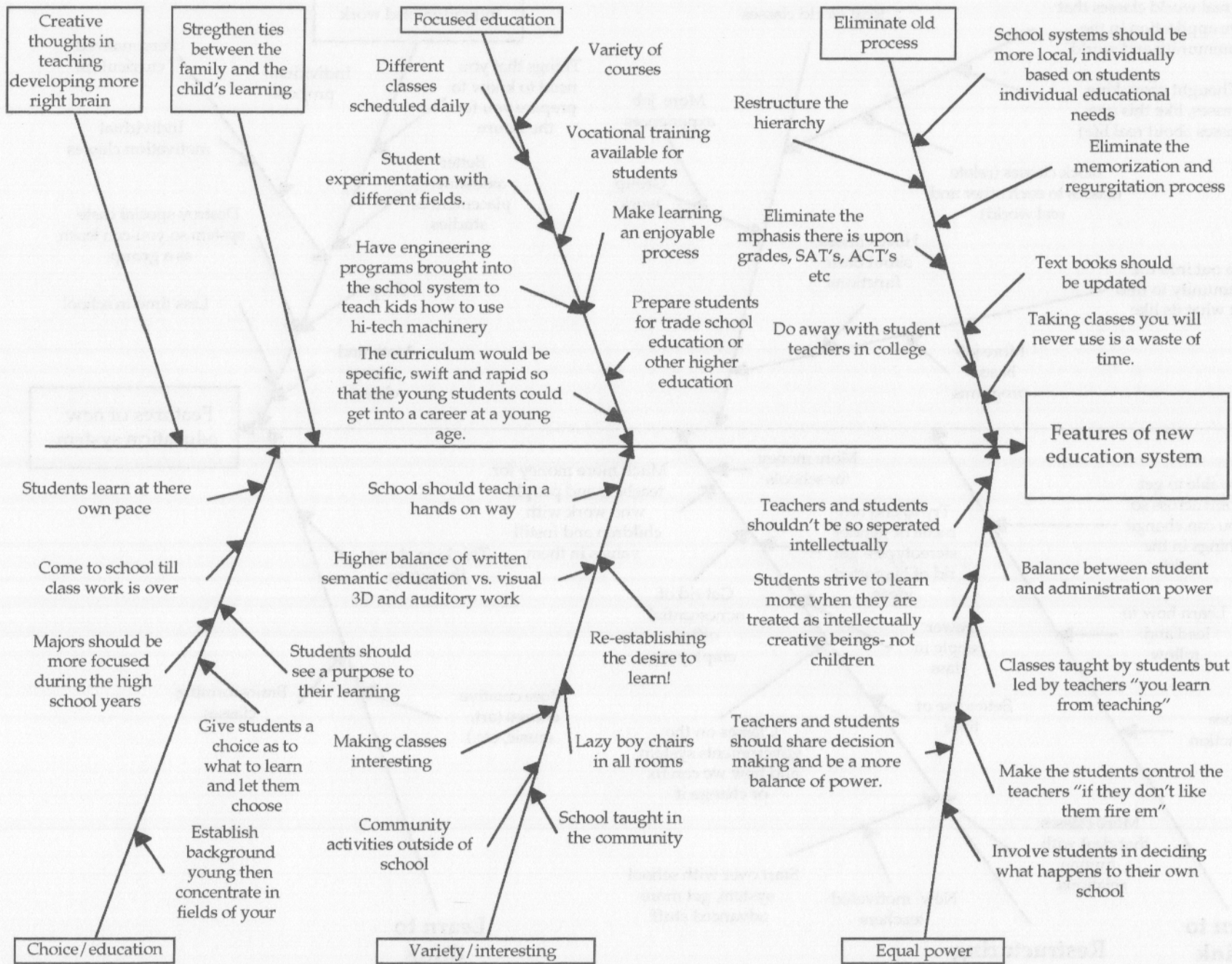
Percent Oregon Children Homeless (Source: Oregon Benchmarks, Oregon Progress Board)











## References

1. Kilmann, R.H., *A networked company that embraces the world*. Information Strategy: The Executive's Journal, 1990. (Spring, 1990): p. 23 - 26.
2. Kennedy, T. and M. Hatfield, *High Skills, Competitive Workforce Act of 1991*. 1991, United States Senate:
3. Marshall, R. and M. Tucker, *Thinking for a living*. 1992, New York, NY: BasicBooks. 283.
4. Oregon Progress Board, *The Oregon Option*. 1994, Oregon Progress Board:

