

BOB KRONE's QUALITY ESSAYS*

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Inland Empire
Section
The Global Voice of Quality™

"Accelerating Learning"

*"Learning is the only thing the mind never exhausts,
never fears, and never regrets. It is one thing that
will never fail us."*

Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519)

The study of the nature, origin and limits of human knowledge is Epistemology. The word is derived from the Greek *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason). Searching for knowledge is known to have occurred in pre-Socratic Greece (Socrates lived 469 – 399 BCE) and can be assumed to have been a characteristic of humans before recorded history. Knowledge has been used for both good and evil. The technology advances over the past twenty-five years have made knowledge available on an exponentially increasing curve. Ecclesiastes, one of the three "*Books of Wisdom*" of the Old Testament, attributed to David, King of Jerusalem, includes the two ideas that "*He who increases knowledge increases sorrow (or pain);*" and "*I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness*" (Ecclesiastes 2:13). For the first time in history knowledge of mass killing weapons increased in the last half of the 20th Century to the point where human extinction could occur.

Knowledge and skills learning is a universal component of every Quality Management pioneer's concepts since the movement began in the 1950s by Dr. W. Edwards Deming and Dr. Joseph Juran. Dr. Deming's 13th Principle for Transformation of Western Management was: "13. *Encourage education and self-improvement for everyone.*" (1) He amplified on that principle by writing: "*What an organization needs is not just good people; it needs people that are improving with education...Management must go through new learning.*" Dr. Juran documented "Lessons Learned" and "The Learning Curve" as basic quality tools. (2)

Now, in the 21st Century learning is one concept that has no global enemies. There are no anti-quality protest groups in the streets, no political controversy or debate over the value of quality programs, and no grass-roots societal criticisms. There is now conviction that only through quality performance, learning and education will people succeed, businesses remain viable, governments create the capacity to respond to increasing expectations of its citizens, hospitals keep up with changing health care challenges, churches sustain membership, and schools meet the needs of students to function in our era's environments characterized by novelty, uncertainty, adversity and complexity.

What's still missing that challenges quality managers? My conclusion after spending my last four decades in higher education is THE ACCELERATION OF FORMAL EDUCATION. The information explosion makes obsolete the length of time that most current formal education takes, and has taken throughout history. To keep this essay to its brief requirements I'll just initiate thinking on the subject with a few research questions given the information revolution:

1. What is the new relationship between information and learning?
2. Is current lack of youth motivation for junior high and high school due to their increased learning from social networking?
3. A university degree has always taken four years. Why should that continue?
- 4, Human global problems are increasing. Problem solving is not. How large a variable is too slow learning?
4. Who is researching the costs and benefits of accelerated learning?

*Dr. Bob Krone is an ASQ Fellow Member and Provost of the Kepler Space University (www.keplerspaceuniversity.com). His *Quality Essays* are copyrighted, published and archived by the American Society for Quality Inland Empire Section 0711, Riverside, California, U.S.A. [Http://www.asq711.org](http://www.asq711.org). Click on "Publications". Readers may reproduce them, in full, only for educational purposes. E-mail = BobKrone@aol.com. His bio is at: [Http://lifeboat.com/ex/bios.bob.krone](http://lifeboat.com/ex/bios.bob.krone)