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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) to learning and suggests where continuous quality improvement in education may lead in the future. Several issues in the application of TQM are discussed, including: the need for active participation and full support of faculty and staff, active and creative involvement of students in the educational process, faculty and administrators viewing the entire institutional system and not just their piece of the pie, the need for changes in reward systems, the need for customer (employer) satisfaction, shared governance, student diversity, and student expectations of their schools. The experience of implementing quality learning principles in a class at Rio Salado Community College in Arizona is described. Students discussed the syllabus, expressed their expectations of the instructor and the course, generated ground rules, and became familiar with tools of continuous improvement. Student responses were generally positive. Key concepts of the desired learning paradigm are discussed. The paper contends that TQM does not compete with other movements in higher education but provides a framework in which other improvement initiatives operate. It brings about systematic change which does not threaten any particular discipline nor requires faculty to discard any particular technique. (JDD)

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VIDEO OPENING: STATEMENTS BY FACULTY AS TO WHY TQM IS OKAY BUT WON'T WORK IN THE CLASSROOM.

I've been asked to talk with you about the application of quality principles to learning--what does TQM in the classroom look like. Not an easy task. And I've been asked to predict the future, to suggest where continuous quality improvement in education may be taking us and how we will react to such change. Not an easy assignment. As you can see from the opening statements by some faculty members, questions abound as to the true value of TQM or CQI in the classroom. At Rio Salado Community College, I believe we are changing the minds of some, hopefully most, of our faculty. In the few minutes allotted me here today, I hope that I may begin the discussion with you as well.

There have been many periods of change in our history - especially in the world of learning and education. And in almost every known period of major change and advancement, there were large segments of the intellectual community that said that such change should not or could not occur. They even outlawed change. They made certain types of thought a crime. But the recent unveiling of the renewed Sistine Chapel reminded me of how incredible those changes were in terms of discovery and intellectual emancipation. During that period we now call the Renaissance, change was rapid - it only took FOUR HUNDRED years.

Four hundred years to express the need and desire for change, to examine the ingredients of humanity, to express new thoughts and bring about new waves of intellectual development.

Yet today, we ask our students to change all the time. Change is a daily fact of life. And our students seem ready and able to accept such change. They have lived with change. Many computers have the ability to hold all written human knowledge and expression developed over the past NINETEEN hundred years. Many home computers would hold ALL the knowledge generated during the entire Renaissance period. Today, our children are inundated with information every day. Through a simple computer terminal, or even a cable television set, students are receiving more knowledge every year than most people received in their lifetime less than three generations ago - and the information flood is continuing.

TOOLS AND EMPHASIS FOR IMPLEMENTING A FUTURE PARADIGM IN THE CLASSROOM

Given that change is a fact of life for our students, they seem more willing to accept TQM in their daily learning practices than some faculty and administrators do. But TQM cannot be successfully implemented in the classroom without the active participation and full support of our faculty and staff. The new paradigm of learning in the classroom will include different thinking, different approaches, and different teaching styles.

But in order to actually implement new principles in classroom practice, numerous issues must be addressed and new tools utilized. One of these is often hard for higher education to accept - the concept that the customer defines quality. The observation that students often don't know what they need, but rather enter an educational institution to discover just what those needs might be, has merit. TQM, however, does not suggest that students should hold sole proprietorship over content determination

but only that they be involved as active and creative participants in the educational process.

A more subtle challenge centers on faculty identity based on discipline. This focus could be at odds with the cross-functional team approach for improving an organization.

Related to this is the impact of systems thinking. Faculty and administrators must look at the entire institutional system and not just their piece of the pie. Faculty may be used to closing the door to their classrooms. What they do and say and how they conduct their classes is known only within those walls. This is inconsistent with a quality environment. I am not suggesting that we eliminate academic freedom. However, we must all work as a team and strive for constancy of purpose. Practical examples of this are such things as common competencies and sharing data within the institution and with other institutions. Classroom instructors must communicate what they learn in the classroom with their departmental colleagues who must communicate what they learn to those in the college-wide systems. The reverse must also happen. What is learned in the college-wide systems must be communicated to departments and to classroom instructors.

The reward system in colleges and universities may also be inconsistent with continuous quality improvement. Most reward systems recognize individual achievement, not team effort, and often focus on such things as research and publication, not quality classroom teaching.

Then there is customer satisfaction. For our occupational programs at least, the employers are the final customers. Can we really guarantee our product, our student's education? And if we can't guarantee a product, then how do we measure our success?

There are numerous other issues that we could address, but now I want to take a step back from the details and look instead at TQM as a framework.

TQM AS A FRAMEWORK

Frankly, I believe we are years away from fully understanding what TQM or CQI in academia will eventually look like; however, we do know that TQM is acting like a magnet and pulling in the best parts from systems theory, humanism, industrial psychology, institutional effectiveness, organizational development theories, and statistical analysis. All of these ideas are being processed through the continuous improvement cycle and have yet to be fully transformed or digested enough to predict what the future version of college-based TQM will look like.

As administrators and faculty members you remember PERT, Zero Based Budgeting, Management By Objectives, Consciousness Raising, Human Awareness Training, and all the other wonderful methodologies, budgeting packages, and leadership ideas that have meandered through our academic communities over the past 20 years. Will TQM also pass through and be gone? Will it have any real impact on effective teaching and learning? Are the faculty members on the video right?

My premise is that TQM will make a difference in teaching and learning because it is not just another alternative, it is not an option. It doesn't compete with the other movements in higher education we value. We approach TQM as a framework in which other improvement initiatives operate. Maybe we should think of TQM as a Condominium Time Share where some people come to ski some parts of the year, others come to hike, or just relax. Some are there for a week, two weeks, months, or even permanently. But the point is that people, or methodologies and ideas, can all feel at home there.

TQM is the framework within which everything we have been doing in higher education over the years can fit and make sense.

(CUDE)

For example, like AAHE in combining conferences on assessment and quality, we have found the approaches to Student Outcomes Assessment fit well into the framework of TQM.

And collaborative learning is in total harmony with the TQM emphasis on teams. And you don't have to give up your dedication to shared governance as TQM takes shared governance to its ultimate implementation through the involvement of all employees. And classroom research is at home in a TQM environment where continuous feedback is sought. And accreditation self studies become easier thanks to the TQM focus on planning and data collection. And I could go on relating TQM to matriculation, technology, portfolio, SCANS and other initiatives, but I think you see that TQM is at once global and all-encompassing, as well as local and personal. It brings about systematic change which does not have to threaten any particular discipline, nor does it require you or your faculty to discard any particular technique. Total Quality Management in the educational community is NOT an alternative--it is a new framework--a receptacle for all that we have been doing and developing. And that makes it different.

THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK

So let's look for a moment at the current framework and the challenges to it. Many people say that our nation's colleges and universities are in trouble--and that means that our nation's future is in jeopardy. Higher education seems to be willing to accept an extraordinarily high percentage of failure among our students--students who drop out, drift away, fall by the wayside and never graduate.

It used to be that we could justify that failure rate with the explanations that students were not properly prepared in the high schools;

students change their minds; college standards must be maintained; or reduced budgets don't allow us to provide the support services needed. But no matter what excuses we use, the public continues to be skeptical that higher education is willing to change and can change.

In 1899, Mr. Charles Duell, the Director of the United States Patent Office, said "Everything that could be invented has been invented." They didn't believe him then and we don't believe the skeptics now. We know we haven't done everything we can do in higher education to be more effective. We haven't tried every technique available.

As you know first hand, our students are no longer predominantly young, white, male, full-time students who live on campus. Today there are more women than men in higher education. 43% of today's students are over the age of 25. People of color make up an increasing percentage of our student bodies. There are just about as many part-time students as there are full-time students.

And given this diversity, we know that we must amend our methods of delivering education, we must shift our paradigms.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS OF COLLEGE

In the October issue of Change Magazine, Arthur Levine says that the most profound change in higher education today is the expectations students have of their schools. Based on his and other recent research, Levine says,

"In the years ahead, the pressure on higher education, which will come from government and reduced resources, will be for colleges to become more boutique-like."

Arthur Levine

He goes on to say that college is not the most important of life's activities for most students anymore. Work and family often overshadow it. Students want education to be nearby and to operate at convenient

hours--preferably around the clock. All they want from higher education is simple procedures, good services, quality courses, and low costs--with course quality ranked as the highest priority and price, procedures, and service ranking lower.

They want a stripped down version of college without student affairs, extracurricular activities, residence life, varsity sports, or the hundreds of other specialty areas that colleges and universities have created.

In other words, in higher education they want WalMart so they get quality products at the best prices in their neighborhood.

PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY LEARNING

At Rio Salado Community College we started to address these changing expectations by asking ourselves how the principles of quality which produce continuous improvement in the administrative processes of the college could be applied to our main reason for existence--effective teaching and learning. This faculty-led review resulted in our five Principles for Quality Learning. But before I share those, a little background.

Our efforts in "TQM in The Classroom" were never really just in the classroom. We started with an accreditation requirement, that we develop a plan for assessing and increasing student achievement.

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We used the Plan-Do-Check-Act Model as the conceptual framework for our plan, and TQM tools to brainstorm goals for quality learning. The Student Achievement Committee uses TQM data collection tools and processes to analyze grade and retention data across the college.

Next, faculty, administrators, and staff brainstormed and developed a list of college-wide "Expectations of Quality Instructors" and shared these with our 400 adjunct faculty. Feedback from these same faculty enabled

us to develop "Expectations of a Quality College." Most intriguing were the conversations that we had, and are continuing to have. We spent a great deal of time discussing the old paradigms in which the college operated, trying to envision and work toward the new paradigms. Often we had heated discussions that we called 'new conversations in old paradigms' as we found ourselves starting to look at our system and processes in different ways.

FIRST CLASS SESSION

Our focus this year has been TQM in the classroom and nearly one-third of our 400 adjunct faculty report that they have implemented various TQM-based tools and principles. It works generally like this--and I speak from personal knowledge having taught a class myself this year so that I could see first hand if this stuff really works--and it does. At the beginning of a new class, an instructor distributes a class syllabus containing the instructors' expectations for the students. Items include course objectives, homework policy, grading criteria, timelines, and class participation guidelines. These expectations are very clear and specific. After discussing the syllabus, students are then given an opportunity to express their expectations for the instructor and the course. For many students this is the first time they have ever been asked what expectations they have. They write pages!

The first class is also a great time to discuss the teaching/learning relationship and explore the principles of quality learning, developed by our faculty based on the work of Deming, Juran, and Crosby. Let's take a look now at these principles and let you hear from students how these principles in practice have impacted them.

Video - 3.25 minutes - Voice over reads each principles followed by student comments.

1. Quality Learning is defined as the continuous process of meeting or exceeding the standards of the teacher, the discipline, and the educational institution (grading criteria, competency based curriculum, syllabus, etc.) balanced with the expectations of the students (the learning environment, teaching methods, grading, testing, and personal and professional growth).
2. Quality Learning is everyone's responsibility; therefore the teachers and the students form teams to make decisions with a focus on measuring and increasing the student's achievement of the competencies.
3. Students want to be involved, are knowledgeable about their own learning, and are able to make decisions that increase the quality of their own learning.
4. Through the use of a structured problem-solving process, teachers and students improve the critical processes of Quality Learning.
5. An attitude of continuous improvement and a climate of trust promote increased student achievement.

Discussing these principles the first night of class encourages a free exchange of ideas and sets the stage for open discussions. Students are asked to consider what each principle means to them personally and how they can work with the instructor to ensure that the principles are followed.

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"Ground Rules" is another tool that is introduced the first night. A "Draft" version is distributed as a starting point for the group. It contains such items as:

This is an environment of continuous improvement.
It is OK to make mistakes.
Everyone participates, no one dominates.
Be an active and objective listener.
Make our needs and expectations clear.
Our goal is student achievement.
Have fun!

Discussion is held on each item and agreement is reached on whether to keep it as is, modify it, or leave it out. In this way each group develops its own customized version. Ground Rules are posted throughout the course and can be modified at any time. It is important that they become a 'living document' for the group.

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The tools of continuous improvement are utilized in a variety of ways in the classroom. For example, brainstorming techniques are used to develop the initial thoughts for an essay involving critical thinking.

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The Affinity Diagram, in particular, can enable students to look at many ideas at once and engage in conversations that give them great insight. In this example, students are brainstorming all the factors in the homework process and then organizing those factors into natural groupings.

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The Cause and Effect Diagram or Fishbone can be used to identify the possible causes of such things as World War I or the Women's Movement. In this example, they are identifying the causes of students failing to follow directions. Data collection tools such as (slide) Check Sheets can be employed to track such things as how long it takes students to complete assignments. Numerous classroom assessment techniques can be used by

both students and teachers to gather immediate feedback on the learning process.

It is valuable to show students that learning is a process and as such can be improved. A sample of a class process improvement project is: (Slide)

> "To improve the process of studying for tests so that time spent studying decreases and test scores increase".

All process improvement activities begin with a standard statement: "Improve the process of... so that... ." This allows more consistent discussion and improvement across the college.

After a project is identified, the class goes through the (slide) Plan Do Check Act cycle to identify possible causes, collect data, analyze the data, develop a possible change or improvement and implement the change. Data is collected again to determine the effectiveness of the change and the students determine how to integrate this new information into their existing learning processes.

Two other tools used in classes are the Issue Bin and Plus/Delta. The Issue Bin is a useful tool to help the class stay on track. When topics or questions come up that are important, but not related to the topic at hand, they are placed in the Issue Bin. At the end of class, the group decides what action will be taken on each item in the Issue Bin.
Slide

The Plus/Delta is used as an evaluation tool at the close of each class session. The instructor and the students list the things that went well, and they want to keep, on the plus side, and things that need to be changed on the delta side. Students, usually eager to give the instructor feedback on how the class went, make an important contribution to improvement. However, of equal importance is the opportunity for students to evaluate their own behavior for the class session and be aware of areas that may need improvement.

STUDENT'S RESPONSES TO TQM IN INSTRUCTION

Students definitely feel a change in the climate of the classroom when the teacher introduces TQM principles, tools, and process improvement. They like the emphasis on teams for improving processes, whether these teams work during, before, or after classes. It is interesting to note that often the teacher's role is simply that of a member of the team when the focus is on process improvement. Student comments indicate they like having more responsibility, because it gives them more power and control and ultimately increases their own learning.

The use of TQM tools for content analysis and process improvement generates many good discussions, gives variety to the classroom activities and provides opportunity for physical movement. The biggest advantage of the use of TQM tools, however, is that productive conversations can come to closure with everyone feeling that something was accomplished. The structure of the tools, having a beginning, a middle and an end, enables this productivity to happen. It is particularly interesting to watch students initiate the use of the tools. While the initial teaching of the tool does take additional time, this will be alleviated when the skill is integrated into the system. And not having the same discussion "regurgitated" over and over again, because there wasn't a sense of closure, saves time overall.

In depth TQM implementation in instruction focuses on process improvement - improving a teaching or learning process with our students during the semester we are teaching them. It is also important that communication of this improvement must take place across the system, so that the teachers in subsequent classes know about and can build on the work that has already been done.

A NEW PARADIGM

So where do we go from here? So what does this mean? What does all this change portend? What it means is that it's time for a new paradigm - a new pattern for learning, a new model for education. And maybe even that term is wrong. Maybe its not time for a NEW paradigm, just time for the NEXT paradigm. Because in today's and tomorrow's worlds, change will be the only constant we can deal with. Our students will change careers many times in their lifetime. They will certainly change jobs regularly. They will change direction constantly. And to keep up with those demands on their lives, we have to change the way we provide knowledge. The NEW paradigm is one in which our colleges and universities become learning, not teaching, institutions. One in which the mission of our schools is student learning - where the most important people in our colleges and universities are the learners - not the researchers, the writers, the administrators or even the faculty.

Under this new paradigm, we will be focused on learning environments, specified learning outcomes, pre- and post-assessments, and institutional assessment of student knowledge and skills. A degree from our institutions will be able to be guaranteed in terms of knowledge and skills much the way Chrysler can guarantee its vehicles main parts for the next ten years. The way we drive may change, more potholes may develop, faster highways may emerge, but our students will be able to adapt to the rougher road and the more intense demands because of the knowledge and skills and techniques they learned at our institutions.

KEY CONCEPTS OF THE DESIRED LEARNING PARADIGM

In the Maricopa Community Colleges, we have been fortunate to participate in the three-year Pew Higher Education Roundtable discussion

series on restructuring higher education. The goal of this project is to seek solutions or "best practices" at institutions committed to restructuring higher education in order to quicken the pace of change.

Through this extensive process, we have reached at least tentative agreement on key concepts of the desired learning paradigm for our colleges. During this process, the participants tried to picture themselves somewhere along a continuum between the traditional and desired or new learning paradigms.

We identified four key components of the new learning paradigm.

The traditional learning paradigm is most concerned with individual courses, the content of those courses, and individual grades. Quantity becomes a major measuring device - number of students, number of hours, number of faculty, number of volumes in the library. Learning is competitive. The Bell curve helps determine grades. We disagree.

Therefore, the first component of the new learning paradigm is:
(Slide)

Learning is a process which is lifelong for everyone and should be measured in a consistent, ongoing manner focused on improvement.

This means that the curriculum can be flexible and responsive. Experimentation is rewarded. A learner's individual needs are met. The entire institution is the learning environment, not just the classroom. Learning is connected from class to class and experience to experience. The larger community is involved. Results are measurable and achievement-focused. Student performance is outcome-based. And the purpose of such measurement is not to find defects, but to encourage improvement. And the student becomes the center of learning.

This leads to the second component of the new learning paradigm:
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Everyone is an active learner and teacher through collaboration, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.

Let's face it. In the past most of our traditional learning approaches were based on the Henry Ford model of production-line work - in other words, almost all students are treated the same, or, if differences are built into the system, those differences come in the exterior appearance of the product and not in the internal components or structure of the product. The traditional system is often more responsive to faculty and administrators than to students. We create the system and the student fits into it. Each actor in this system is a single individual operating in a singular environment without regard for the larger environment of family, work, or different learning styles.

In the new learning paradigm, everyone must be responsible for personal learning and change and we must be responsible for sharing with each other. Shared responsibility - the student, the university, the faculty and staff, the larger community - all share responsibility for lifelong learning. Collaboration and partnership become key components. Diversity is a strength.

So our third component of the new learning paradigm is:
(Slide)

The learning process includes the larger community through the development of alliances, relationships and opportunities for mutual benefit.

Higher education just is not aligned, in most cases, with K-12 education. There is limited involvement on the part of employers or the community. Learning occurs ON CAMPUS. Supposedly, something magical happens when the student sets foot on the hallowed campus grounds. The new learning paradigm would have the larger community directly involved in the learning process, with close collaboration between K through 12 education and higher education. In the new learning paradigm our colleges and universities would be just one small part of the overall learning dynamic and not, as is often the case now, the supposed center of the learning universe.

And, the last component:

(Slide)

Learning occurs in a flexible and appropriate environment.

Learning CANNOT be restricted to classrooms or buildings on campus. Traditionally the faculty member is in the front of the classroom lecturing. Class time equals class credit. The classroom is still rigid with limited use of technology. For more than 200 years, chalkboards, pencils and sheets of paper have been the tools of education. While mankind advanced from wooden wheels to the space shuttle, classroom learning moved from pocket knives to electric pencil sharpeners.

In the new learning paradigm, technology enhances the teaching and learning processes and is an integrated part of the learning process. Different learning systems must be encouraged to facilitate the best learning possible for every student - nights, weekends, early morning - television, audio, computer. In this paradigm many basic things change including working hours of faculty and administrators, classroom locations, and the need for faculty to be more than just an expert in one narrow field of study.

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

But let me stop here and address another concern for the future. When GM wants to build a new car, they design it on the computer, test it for wind, mileage, strength, comfort, and colors - BEFORE they ever build a prototype. Tall buildings are tested for resistance to wind and earthquakes, houses are tested for comfort and ease of movement. Why, in Japan, you can even walk through a kitchen and change the cabinet colors without ever building a thing.

This is called virtual reality. Its not limited by space or by time or by any of the other physical limitations which restrict us. You've all heard of Virtual Reality as a game, a freaky computer headset that lets you lose all

your inhibitions. But we believe it is more than that and actually has a place in our not too distant future.

This summer, one of our Faculty Chairs, thanks to funding from AAHE's Academic Quality Consortium, will be developing an application for a software package that will build numerous "systems" of classroom teaching. Each system of teaching will be interactive with the others, so that if a faculty member wants to "see" what might happen to the rest of the teaching system if a change is made here or there, he or she would input that change and the computer would diagram the impact that the specific change would have on the rest of the teaching system. Imagine that. Seeing what might happen to teaching and learning in a classroom BEFORE it actually happens. We're very excited about this and we believe it is close to being a working prototype.

But there is more. Some of you may recall the IBM million dollar competition to support bringing total quality management into educational institutions. In our application, which was not funded, we proposed developing a model TQM classroom of the future - a "Virtual organization that could be accessed by computer link for learning and demonstration purposes from any site. An individual or an entire class could "enter" the virtual classroom at any time and move to almost any point along the teaching/learning continuum." This technology would be totally free from time or place or instructor constraints and would automatically adapt to the person or persons entering the classroom setting.

I know this sounds far fetched, but 40 years ago, Sputnik had not been dreamed of, yet today the space shuttle is an everyday occurrence. Jules Verne saw things no one dared believe, like trips to the moon and submarines. We believe that the software that we develop this summer will be the first step to a virtual reality classroom that is not limited by many of the constraints we face today - no classrooms, no buildings, no working hours, and total access.

The new paradigm is upon us. In higher education today, we face the real peril of inaction. Our competition is no longer the other university or the other college. According to the Pew Higher Education Roundtable, "The changes most important to higher education are those that are external to it", namely, "a rising anxiety about jobs and careers among Americans of all ages, the emergence of a technology that promises to create both new forms and new suppliers of postsecondary education, and a seemingly irresistible impulse on the part of policy makers and public agencies to rely on markets and market-like mechanisms to define the public good." We must recognize these changes and we must act accordingly.

More than a thousand years ago, a philosopher said, "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it."

JOIN THE NEW PARADIGM

I ask you to join me in moving into a new paradigm in education. TQM focuses on the entire system and looks at each individual part, in whatever detail, as a part of the whole. It is a holistic approach to educational management. TQM is concerned with bringing all the parts of the learning community into the same context and providing a level playing field for understanding and improving those various parts.

Einstein said that "God resides in the details" and for the future of our colleges and universities, we should pay him heed. And it is concentration on the details of our educational processes through TQM that will provide the clues for new paradigms to meet the needs of our changing communities and our expanding student population.

Quality in the Classroom truly follows the Renaissance patterns of thought and learning - the approach of statement and reflection, statement and reflection. Now we just call it the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

CONCLUSION

Archimedes said "Give me a lever long enough...and single-handed I can move the world." At Rio Salado Community College, we believe that TQM is the lever needed to move our educational world. There is no longer any excuse for paralysis and stagnation. TQM, in administration AND in the classroom, does work. When Quality Expert Myron Tribus was at our college a year ago, he said that his aim was to introduce tens of thousands of American elementary and high school students to TQM principles as applied to education and then to watch the revolution that these students will create in those colleges and universities they go to in the future. If my institution - and yours - are ready for them, the result will look something like this...

VIDEO: SCREEN BEGINS WITH ONE STUDENT MAKING ONE COMMENT ABOUT THE VALUE OF TQM, THEN GOES TO LAURA HELMINSKI MAKING ONE STATEMENT ABOUT THE VALUE OF TQM. THEN ERUPTS INTO LOUDER MUSIC IN BACKGROUND WITH THE FOLLOWING QUOTES COMING ON SCREEN STAYING FOR A FEW SECONDS AND THEN WHIRLING OFF AND BEING REPLACED BY ANOTHER QUOTE.

"Quality in education is what makes learning a pleasure and a joy."
Myron Tribus

"If you don't believe in quality, you'll never produce it."

TQM

The New Paradigm in Education and you will create it.