

F u t u r E d

Policy Lessons from Canada's e-Learning Quality Initiative

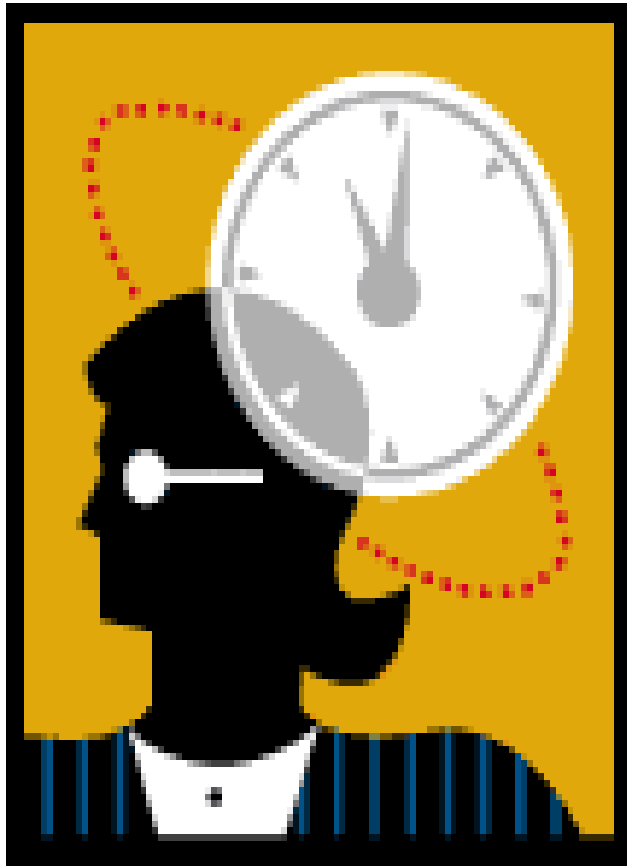
Presented by:

Dr. Kathryn Chang Barker

FuturEd Inc. and

QualitE-Learning Assurance Inc.

Overview



- **Introduction**
 - CanREGs (what, who, when)
 - Policy environment (why)
- **Quality initiative**
 - Process (choices)
 - Content (standards)
- **Lessons learned**
 - Paradoxes
 - Challenges
 - Opportunities

What?

Canadian Recommended E-learning Guidelines (CanREGs)

- **quality standards**
- **copyright FuturEd and CACE 2002**
- **available at / from**
www.eQcheck.com



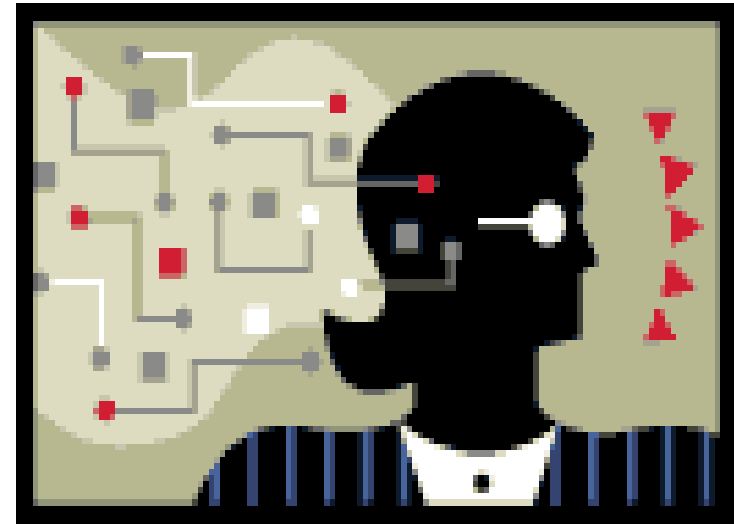
Who?

- **Sponsors:**
 - Office of Learning Technologies (HRDC)
 - Canadian Association for Community Education
- **Partners:**
 - Canadian Association for Distance Education
 - AMTEC
 - Tele-Learning Research Network
 - Commonwealth of Learning
 - LICEF TeleUniversite
 - SchoolNet
 - CanLearn Interactive
 - Alberta Online Learning
- **FuturEd Inc.**



FuturEd Research

- **Study of Canada's virtual secondary schools**
- **Study of e-learning in International Education**
- **Creation of quality standards for consumers and producers**
- **Evaluation of several e-learning projects including Open Learning Agency**
- **Applications of e-learning in adult, workplace and family literacy**



Why?

- **On-line learning options**
 - **Increasing numbers and variety**
 - **Variable quality**
 - **Various costs**
- **Education/training consumers**
 - **Making (informed) choices**
 - **Making investments**
 - **Expecting ROI**

Providers of e-learning products and services:

- **planning and evaluation**
- **demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency**
- **capitalize on competitive advantage**

How?

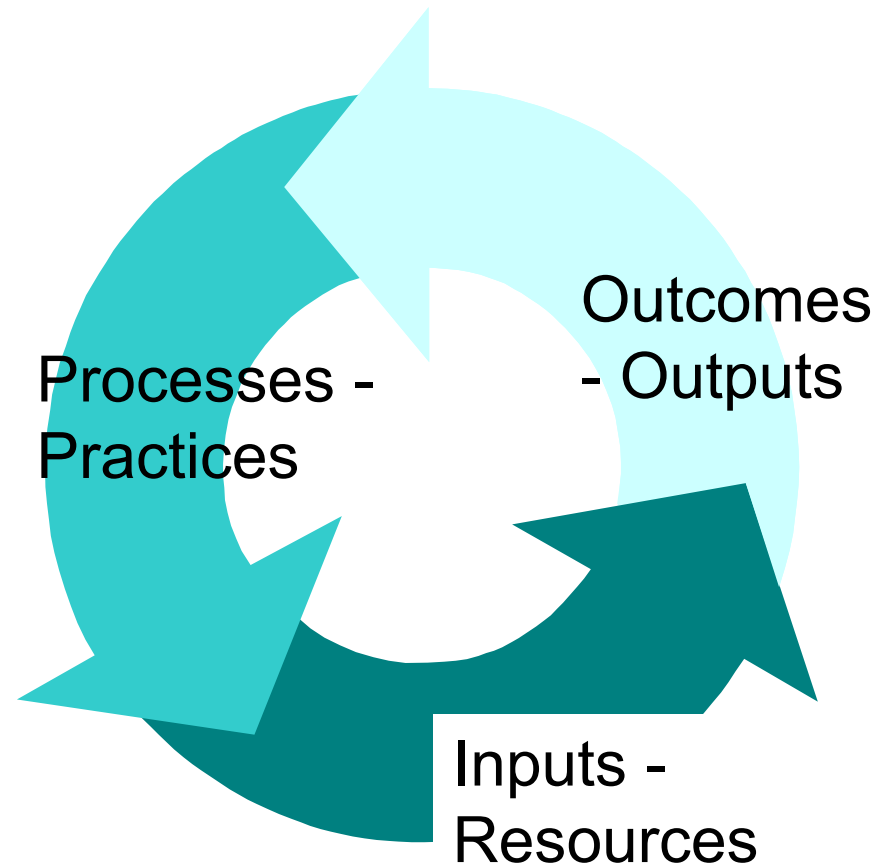
- **Phase 1: Lit review and synthesis**
- **Phase 2: Building partnerships**
- **Phase 3: National consultation**
 - **CanREGs**
 - **Consumer's Guide**
- **Phase 4: Dissemination**
 - **Transformation tools**
 - **On paper and on-line**
- **Phase 5: Implementation**
 - ***eQcheck certification mark***

FuturEd Transformation Tools



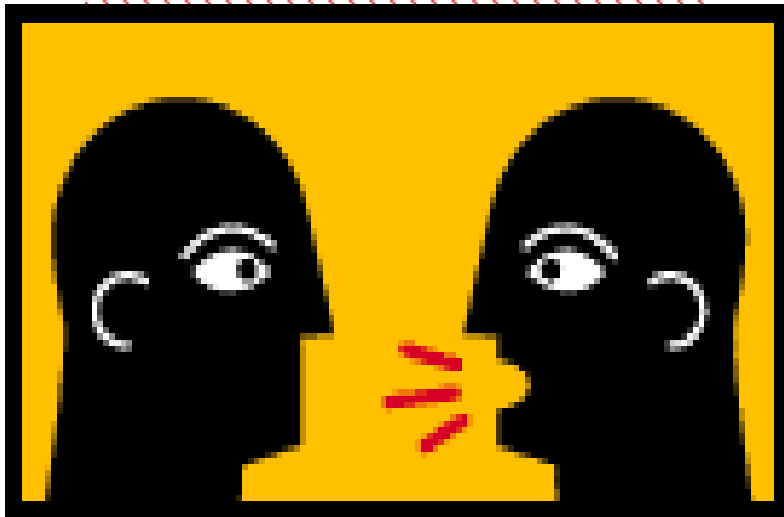
Key Features

- **consensus-based**
- **comprehensive**
- **consumer oriented**
- **recommended-only**
- **futuristic**
- **distinctively Canadian**
- **adaptable**



Setting the Stage

Policy Imperatives from the Research



Accommodating demand – due to the success of e-learning

Courseware needs - the critical success factor

Personnel issues – biggest challenge

Quality questions – for development and evaluation



Demand Issues

- 1. Should demand be accommodated? Can demand be accommodated?**
- 2. What is the role of e-learning in provision of education? The appropriate role of technology?**
- 3. How are c-schooling and e-schooling the same? Different?**
- 4. What are the real costs? Benefits/returns?**
- 5. Is integration of c- and e-schooling the answer? What is the appropriate balance between e- and c-courses?**



Courseware Questions

1. What are the elements of good courseware? What criteria will you use to assess quality?
2. Should you purchase or develop? Which is more cost-effective?
3. Who should be developing courseware -- teachers or professional designers? Copyright?
4. Can or should all courses / subjects be taught on-line? Nature of good e-subjects?
5. Does courseware maximize e-learning or simply replicate conventional teaching? Best features of on-line learning?



Personnel Questions

- 1. How does the role of teacher change in the e-learning environment? Contracted differently than c-teachers?**
- 2. What is the ideal staffing complement for an e-school? Roles? Who best can fill them?**
- 3. How are e-teachers evaluated? What criteria?**
- 4. How does teacher productivity compare between e-schools and c-schools? How is it measured? How is it rewarded or compensated?**
- 5. Should teachers be creating courseware?**



Quality Questions

- 1. Who defines “quality”? Who should?**
- 2. What level of quality: comparability? acceptability? excellence?**
- 3. Who assesses and certifies quality? Who should? How?**
- 4. What happens if quality standards are not met?**
- 5. What is the cost of quality assurance? To whom?**
- 6. What are the benefits? To whom?**
- 7. Should quality requirements be legislated? How?**

Canada's Quality Initiative

1998: Why Canada?

- distance education
- “Information Highway”



Considerations and choices:

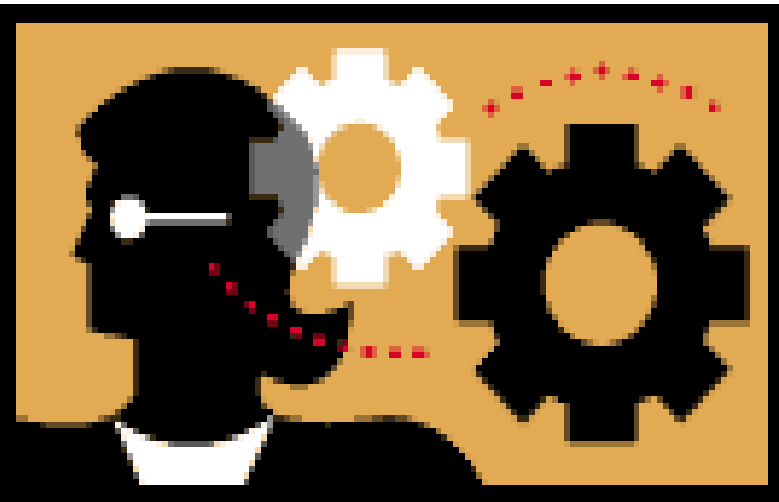
- quality mechanisms?
- perspective?
- balance?
- basis?
- decision-making?
- processes?
- input mechanisms?

Quality of Outcomes and Outputs

- ✓ overall academic achievement
- ✓ change in content knowledge and learning skills
- ✓ overall social achievement and change in citizenship-related KSA
- ✓ increase in individual self-confidence and personal strengths
- ✓ preparation for work in the future
- ✓ system effectiveness and efficiency (ROI)



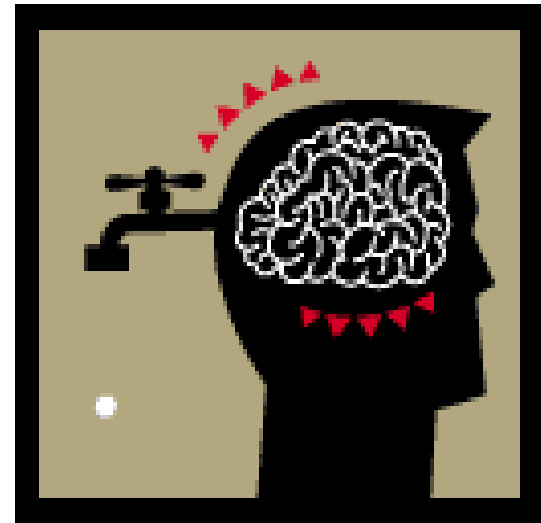
Satisfaction with Processes and Practices



- ✓ **student management**
- ✓ **learning management**
- ✓ **use of technologies**
- ✓ **communications**
- ✓ **leadership / administration**

Adequacy of Inputs and Resources

- ✓ **intended learning outcomes**
- ✓ **learning materials**
- ✓ **appropriate technologies**
- ✓ **appropriate and necessary personnel**
- ✓ **the learning environment, e.g., safety, resources, access to library**
- ✓ **funding and plans**

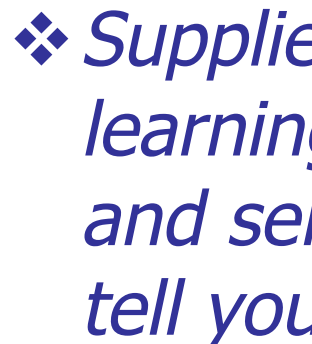


Consumer's Guide to e-Learning

- Questions to ask
- System of elimination
- At www.FuturEd.com



Process.. (15 areas)

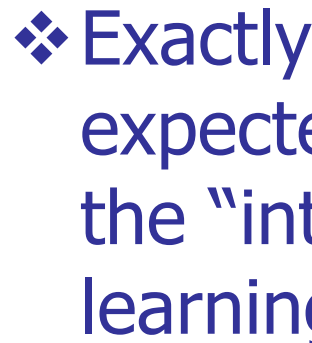


❖ *Suppliers of all e-learning products and services should tell you, IN WRITING:*

❖ *Ponder these questions. If your answer is NO to any category of question, consider moving on to another e-learning option.*

Will tell you...

Ask this...

- 
- ❖ Exactly what you are expected to learn – the “intended learning outcomes” – and entry level knowledge or skills necessary for your success

- ❖ *Is this what I want or need to learn?
Do I have the entry requirements so that I stand a reasonable chance at success?*

Lessons Learned

- **Process OK**
- **Content OK**
- **No opposition**
- **How to implement?**



Differentiate products and services

May be...

- a module or lesson
- an entire course
- an entire program
- the basis of an agency

Can be...

- credit or non-credit
- free or expensive
- public or private sector



Avoid Confusion

- **E-learning**
 - learner focused
- **E-learning industry**
 - content
 - design and production
 - delivery and management of learning
 - management of students and programs
- **Quality standards**
 - consumer-based
- **Industry standards, e.g.,**
 - technical platforms
 - interoperability
 - RLOs

Recognize the Quality Paradox

Providers must assure quality but they can't provide quality assurance.

Quality assurance must be:

1. objective
2. professional
3. credible
4. recognized
5. iterative
6. continuous

It takes a team:

1. **both perspectives**
 - consumer: **what is desirable**
 - producer: **what is possible**
2. **variety of expertise required**
 - **evaluation / research**
 - **teaching and learning**
 - **technology**

Consider the Regional Paradox

- e-learning provision is global
- learning recognition is local

quality standards for “recognition”?

1. emerging e-learning policy is changing the nature of geographic education “regions” in Canada
2. “distinctively Canadian”
 - what makes you unique?
3. e-learning industry is shaping e-regions by:
 - content and skill level
 - demand and resources
 - ICT accessibility
 - training / education
 - public and private

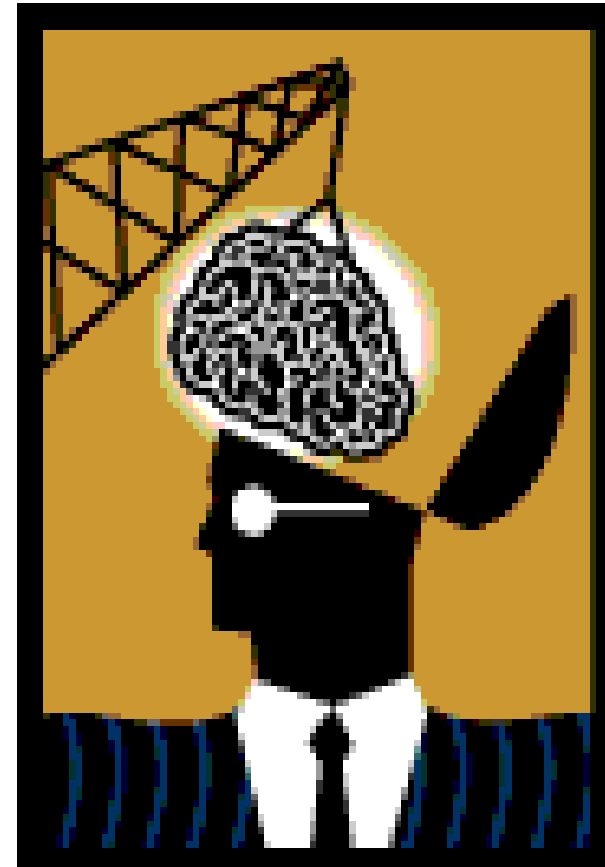
Make Policies for the Future

1. Recognize the power
2. Incorporate the promise
3. Allow for a different future

Create policies that accommodate change and innovation rather than perpetuate the status quo

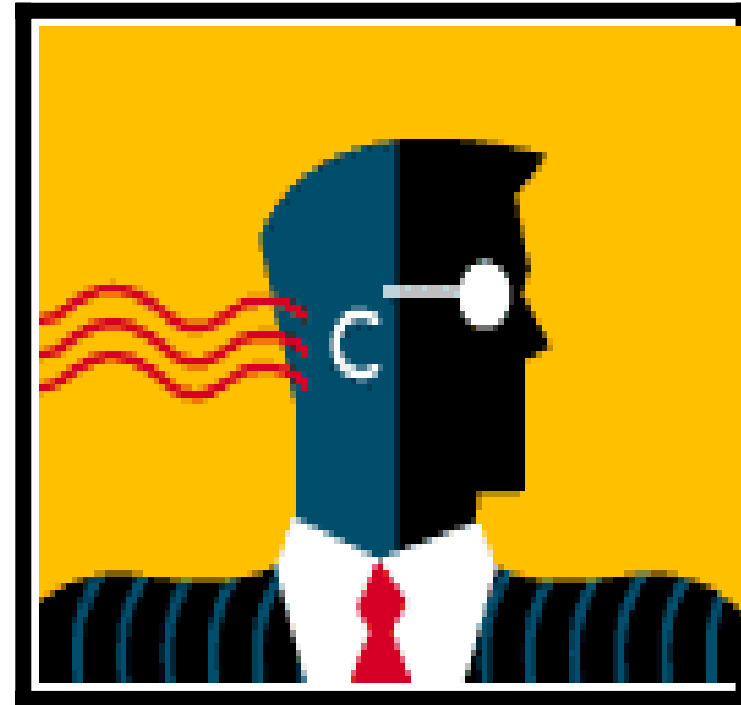
The Power of e-Learning

- **Modularized content and delivery**
- **Interdisciplinary content**
- **Special needs**
- **Digital learning portfolios**
- **Authentic assessment**
- **Research-based development**

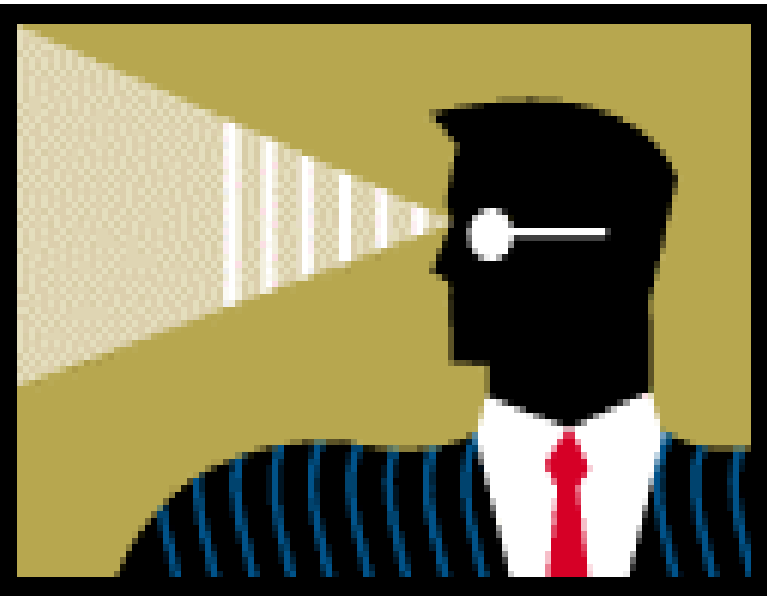


The Promise of e-Learning

- Choice
- **Personalized learning**
- Problem / project based learning
- **Reciprocal teaching**
- Optimum learning environments
- **Change oriented**



The Future of e-Learning



- **Learning-centered schooling**
- **Proficiency based**
- **Seamless “education”**
- **New edu-employment**
- **Age-irrelevant learning**
- **Convergence with media**
- **Recognition of all learning**
- **Sustainable systems**

Summary: e-Learning Policy Imperatives

- 1. Address the policy issues head on**
- 2. Build in the innovations inherent in e-learning**
- 3. Plan for quality and demonstrate accountability**





For more information,
contact:

FuturEd Inc.

*...helping change learning systems
for the future*

101 - 1001 West Broadway, pod 190

Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4

phone: 250-539-2139

e-mail: kbarker@FuturEd.com

website: www.FuturEd.com