

Quality in distance education

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The cycle of e-learning development

1. Lone Rangers
2. central project grants
3. rapid unco-ordinated expansion
4. focus/policies/regular funding
5. quality and sustainability

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Overview

Different perspectives on quality

Quality from the learner's perspective

Quality from the provider's perspective

Quality from the 'sponsors' perspective

Why is this an issue?

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Quality from learner's perspective

Meets learners' needs:

- acceptance of qualification (brand name?) - get jobs
- clear what program gives and delivers on it
- good service: learner focused, convenient, flexible

But: students don't know what they don't know

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Quality from provider's perspective

**added value of professional DE:
high quality at reasonable cost**

- clear academic goals
- instructional design
- project management
- accurate budgeting
- evaluation and maintenance

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Quality from provider's perspective

1. Content
2. Instructional design
3. Media production
4. Delivery of teaching
5. Student administration
6. Cost-effective management

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Clear academic goals

**who is your target group? what
learning outcomes?
academic goals for agricultural,
industrial or knowledge-based
society?**

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Academic goals

- e.g. supporting goals of knowledge-based society**
- critical thinking,
 - knowledge management,
 - personal responsibility
 - collaborative learning
- + discipline-based content**

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Best practices

Vision of how to teach

Curriculum re-design to exploit benefits of technology

Instructional design

Team approach: SMEs, instructional designers, Web programmers

Project management: set resources (time, money)

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Best practices

Instructional design:

- **identify learning outcomes/competencies**
- **assign competencies to media (classroom, lab, online)**
- **control student workload**
- **activities (self-tests, discussion, web searches, group assignments)**

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Project management

establish projects

work in a team

- **professor + course developer + web designer**

schedules/budgets/product

funding linked to project management



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Course developers

- **instructional design**
- **scheduling/tracking/commissioning work**
- **managing budgets**
- **course maintenance**
- **course meetings and minutes**

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What is a course developer?

**A new knowledge worker
project manager**

instructional designer

B.Sc. in informatics

Masters of Education

**taking Ph.D., specializing in
learning objects**



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media production

**Professionals in media
production:**

- **print design**
- **A/V media**
- **web design**

**Quicker and better than students
or professors**

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Student support

**If e-learning for teaching, then
administrative services must
become web-based too**

**Administration managers must
be involved**

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Student administration

**recruitment/marketing/fund-
raising/alumni**

**admission/registration/book
sales/online fee payments**

**student records, class lists, grades
an integrated e-strategy
(www.estrategy.ubc.ca)**

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Integrating teaching and administration

the seamless Web:

- **class-lists/grades/e-mail addresses**

portals:

- **student self-management**
- **e-portfolios**

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Quality management of distance education

Priorities and new developments

Liaison with academics

Choice of platform/standards (learning objects)

HR policies (faculty/support staff)

Intellectual property

Co-ordination and communication

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Why is quality an issue in DE?

Seen by academics as second best

Attempt to control the unknown

But what about quality of face-to-face teaching?

Need to apply same quality standards to ALL teaching

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Why is quality an issue in DE?

Attempts by government for greater accountability

In the end: quality needs to be assessed by measuring what students have learned

May be many different ways to get to quality learning

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