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EDUCATION FACTS

The Future of Education

Dr. MICHAEL GEIST at the University of Ottawa made an interesting observation in the Ottawa Citizen on the future of education.

He suggested Canada is in danger of being caught in a time warp of old school traditional academia with slow utilization of new technologies that can take years to implement.

The traditional approach of fine bricks and mortar, expensive real estate and textbooks with closed research and limited access to classroom-based learning is being turned on its head by open access to internet-based courses that can simultaneously accommodate thousands of students at minimum cost.

The prolonged 100 days demonstrations by Quebec students against rising fees should serve as a warning to Universities and Colleges to keep abreast of technology gains that can dramatically change the learning landscape, increasing accessibility whilst reducing costs to students.

Dr. Geist quoted the example of Harvard and MIT Universities joining together a \$60M fund to develop free and low cost courses for internet delivery for potentially thousands of students. They join Stanford and Michigan Universities who have several low cost online courses being made available this year.

The US Government injected millions of dollars into open course materials for colleges and universities that can be freely adapted for online courses setting the scene to change the educational landscape offering in coming years. This massive investment in open source materials will provide opportunities to Canadianize this USA stream of offerings.

As Dr. Geist says, “...as for online education, there may be the occasional pilot project from Canadian Universities, but no one seems ready to confront the emerging reality of competition...”

Like the highly successful Rosetta Stone language learning course, *ArrowMight Canada* has a Canadianized home-based literacy, numeracy program using one-on-one tutorials delivered in DVDs for HD TV using colourful visuals and workbooks to accelerate the learning process.

A web-based monitoring system is in place to track learning and students' personal assessments to provide computerized graduation results for both education providers and funders.

The ArrowMight Program especially designed for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is available to address the formidable task and high costs of poor literacy in Canada; providing colleges and Aboriginal institutions an opportunity to expand in an area that has proved extremely difficult in the past with negligible improvement in literacy rates for several decades.

The home-based *ArrowMight Program* has demonstrated its ability to successfully move adults with poor skills in reading and writing to achieve both digital and Level 3 functional literacy skills part-time by completing the program in a 12 – 15 months time-frame.

Whilst several First Nations communities now wish to provide the program for their people, funding or the lack of it is the major stumbling block yet to overcome!

The current preoccupation of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments in Canada to balance books just puts on hold the urgent need to increase the skills for the jobs required to be filled as Canada's aging workforce is moving to retirement.

ArrowMight has received enthusiastic endorsements from students in BC, Manitoba and Ontario including those also from programs in Alberta and Nunavut.

Dr. Rongo H. Wetere is Managing Director of ArrowMight Canada. He has 30 years practical experience in adult education in NZ and is adamant that poor literacy skills can be addressed and show real returns that pay for their implementation costs several times over.

For further information contact ArrowMight Canada