NextEd Vision & Philosophy

Introduction
NextEd is the overarching vision and philosophy guiding various NextEd initiatives, such as NextEd-Africa, NextEd-USA etc. This document details the vision and philosophy of NextEd that pervades all of the NextEd Initiatives. While individual NextEd Initiatives may focus on some areas more than others, all of them will essentially represent the vision and philosophy of this NextEd Global Initiative.

Philosophy
The NextEd philosophy is to provide a collaborative environment where all participants collaborate on an equal footing, and contribute and benefit in a collaborative style. The wiki approach encapsulates the essence of the philosophy where no party is greater or lesser and all collaborators grow, develop and benefit from NextEd. As such the philosophy is to foster an equality of participants in the development of NextEd projects. Further to this is the need to provide a "haven" where "imperfect" learners, educators and platforms can engage in a highly effective way. This is vital especially in a world where many fear entering into virtual learning, and hope to first perfect the technology, or at least perfectly understand it. However, this is never the case as the ever shifting, evolving landscape of pedagogies, technologies and participants keeps moving and developing.

Vision
The vision of NextEd is to facilitate the development a worldwide virtual collaborative educational network for the benefit of students and faculty. Our focus on enabling **pedagogies** and facilitating **technological platforms** is underpinned by an **ubuntu** philosophy of collaboration and a functionally **scaffolded** model of engagement.

Objectives
As shown above, there are 4 key elements to the NextEd Vision. Each of these forms the basis of the NextEd Objectives.

- Virtual – The objectives here focus on the virtual space and supporting technologies that are employed to deliver NextEd learning. The overarching objective is to ensure that appropriate, generationally aligned technologies are employed to support and deliver the learning material to the students. This technology is not bound to computers and may include mobile devices or any other technology that becomes appropriate by virtue of its assimilation by the learners.
- Collaborative – This part of the vision underpins the core values of NextEd. As such the objective of NextEd is to employ technologies that foster and enhance collaborative learning. Web 2.0 and its underlying paradigm of equality of participation, empowered content creators, etc is the guiding value for all technologies and approaches adopted within the NextEd projects
- Educational – A key objective is to embrace social constructivism, constructionism and other collaborative-style pedagogies in the delivery of

learning material. Further to this is the objective of continually expanding and adopting generationally aligned pedagogies in the deployment of courses.

- Network – The final objective relates to the connection of individuals within NextEd. Ultimately the goal is enable a place for not only institutions but also individuals to connect and grow. Further to this is the objective of empowering participants to propagate their learning through to their networks, thus resulting in a viral growth in the learning and benefits.

Goals

The NextEd goals can be divided into 4 categories representing the 4 stakeholders in this process.

- Learners – The goal here is to ensure that learners are educated in innovative, collaborative, and appropriate ways. Furthermore the goal is to enable learners to develop and help others as they become content creators.
- Educators – The goal is to enable educators to develop, expand and teach in a meaningful way. Furthermore the goal is to enable educators to collaborate with others and generate meaningful research that will enable them to create and contribute to NextEd
- Industry – The goal is to encourage industry to be involved in the programs and thereby invest in education, help ensure the relevance of the educational content, and provide employment opportunities to learners.
- Government – The goal is to make government aware of the value of NextEd programs, and thereby attract funding and government support for the extension of the programs into multiple areas.

The NextEd 6C model of engagement is a cycle; or more specifically, a helix that will enable new participants and projects to be born in a supported environment and ultimately end with the spawning of new projects and participants. This process of engagement involves the following steps:

Step 1 – Come – This is the invitation process whereby communication and discussion is engaged with potentially interested parties.

Step 2 – Connect – The potential partner will receive basic training and orientation in the technology platforms and proposed educational paradigm. They will be required to involve themselves as a spectator in an existing collaboration in order to better appreciate the role of both student and faculty in NextEd collaborations.

Step 3- Consume – Should both parties agree that the platform and approach would be beneficial and workable then the new partner would then become a consumer. This means that they will be able to participate in a course with little or no contribution required from them.

Step 4 – Collaborate. The next step is for the consumer to develop into a collaborator. This means that they will not only receive but also offer to contribute to the courses they are involved in.

Step 5 – Create – At this stage the participant is enabled to create their own courses and hence is initiating the cycle with others (Come) by inviting their networks into NextEd so that their network will be able to consume the material that they are now creating.

Step 6 – Contribute – Finally the participant will be a contributor not only in terms of created courses, but in terms of the Body of Knowledge, artifacts, etc that constitute the greater NextEd project.

More Information
Should you wish to find out more please contact us at -

Craig Blewett - blewett@ukzn.ac.za or craigblewett@gmail.com
Rose Quilling - quillingr@ukzn.ac.za or rosemaryquilling@gmail.com
www.NextEd.info