



Tomorrow's Online Teachers

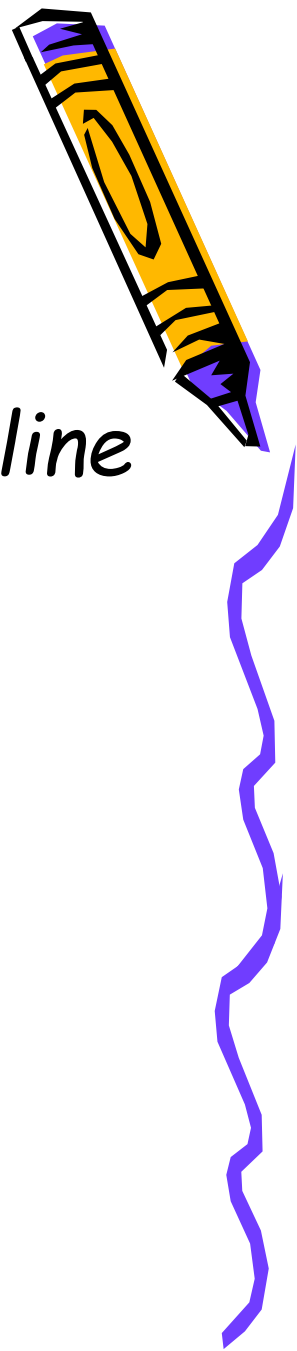
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National Research Council Canada

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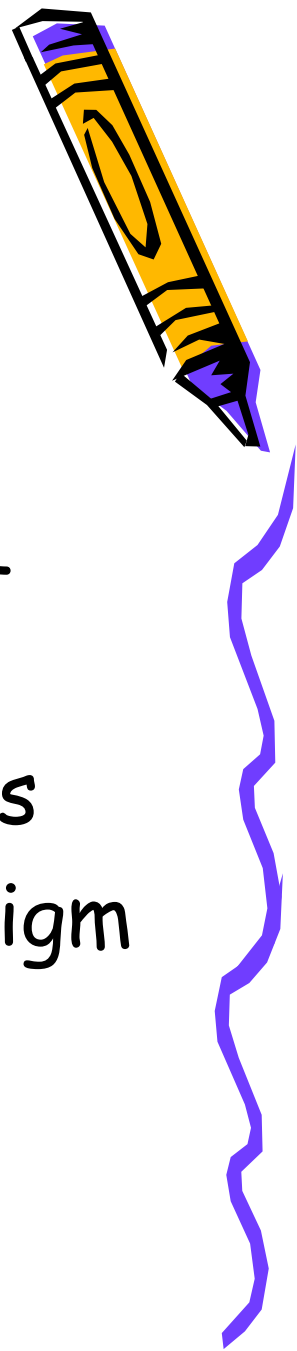
Tomorrow Through the Past



- In 1998 I wrote *The Future of Online Learning* <http://www.downes.ca/future/>
- These predictions are mostly on target, but we are only part way through the curve



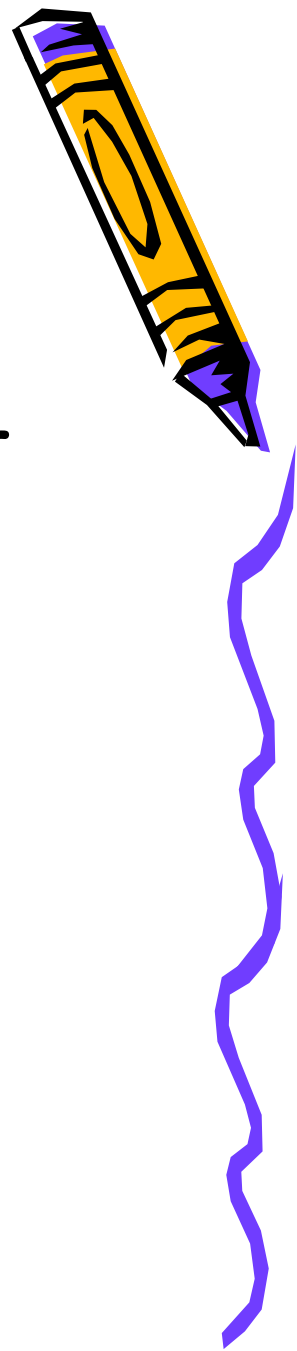
Tomorrow's Technology Today



- Bandwidth - broadband spreading
- Computing - gigahertz processing - 64 bit within two years
- Specialized appliances - palms, cars
- OS - stalled in the Windows paradigm



The New Ed Technology Is (Almost) Here



- Wireless - here, needs deployment
- PADS? Tablets... same thing...
- Simulations (yes) and learning environments (no... but...)
- Multimedia - Flash MX a huge leap
- Virtual Reality - tomorrow, still



Yesterday's Big (New) Thing: Learning Objects



- I Predicted modularity - the idea of course selection being replaced by course construction

<http://www.downes.ca/future/modularity.htm>

- I also described how XML would be used to create module metadata, which would be used by intelligent search agents



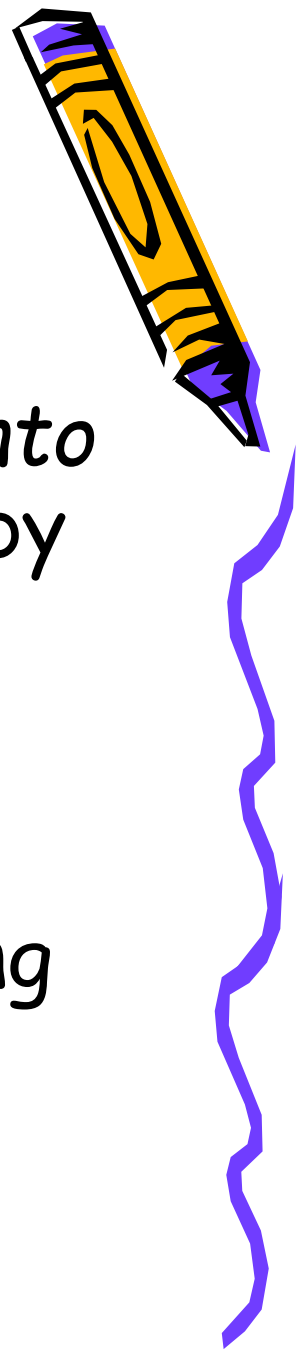
Today's Big (Old) Thing: Learning Objects



- Much disillusionment:
 - The reusability paradox (Wiley)
<http://www.downes.ca/cgi-bin/website/find.cgi?string=author~David%20Wiley>
 - The sterility of SCORM (Friesen)
<http://www.downes.ca/cgi-bin/website/find.cgi?string=author~Norm%20Friesen>
- I argue: we (ahem, they) got the model wrong...



Learning Objects in a Wider Context



- Designers tried to build learning *into* the objects, but learning defined by how the objects are *used*

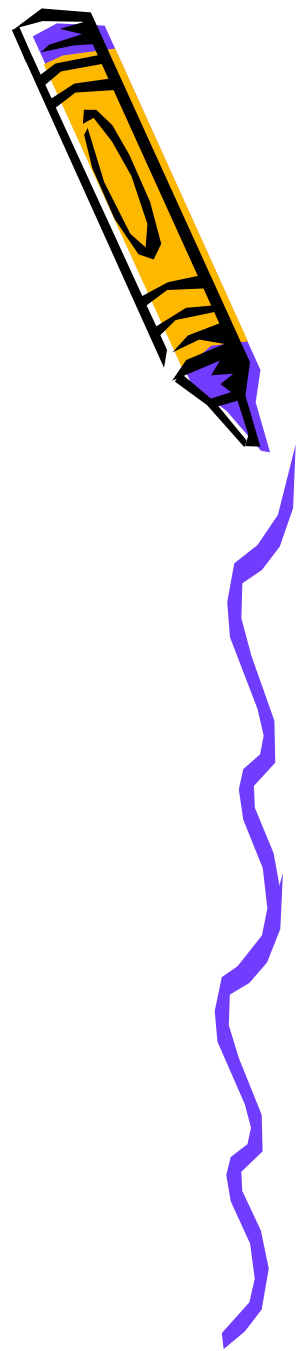
<http://www.downes.ca/files/widercontext.ppt>

- Designers tried to string learning objects to create courses, but learning objects belong in a learning *environment*

<http://www.downes.ca/cgi-bin/website/view.cgi?dbs=Article&key=1037890664>



Learning Environments: Still Tomorrow



- Learning environments are on the horizon - simulations, blogs, wikis, workplace support
- But they require a change in perspective - from *teaching* to *learning*



What Student Centered Learning Really Means

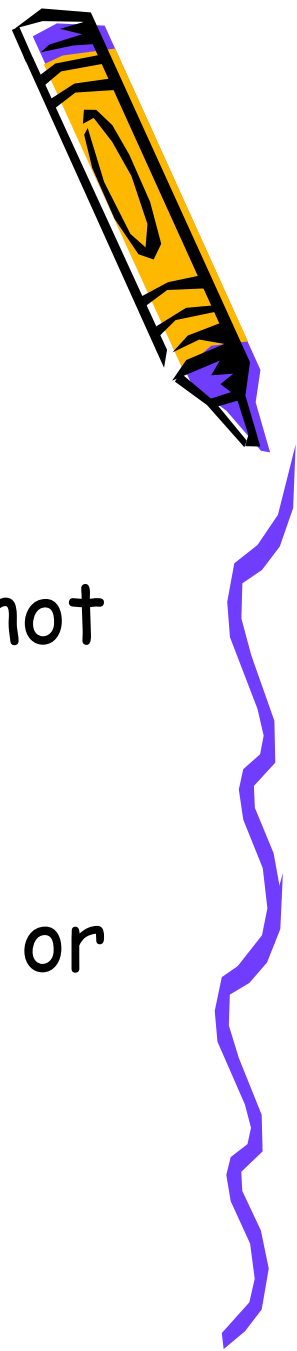


- There was much talk about student centered learning
- But people still want teachers (or computers) to make their decisions
- Tomorrow: students make decisions

<http://www.downes.ca/cgi-bin/website/view.cgi?dbs=Article&key=1012279256>



Online Learning: The Dream



- It's hard to imagine, but...
<http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/nw2000/main/4-30debate2.htm>
- Center learning around activities, not topics
- Base learning decisions on need (event driven), not authority (time or sequence driven)



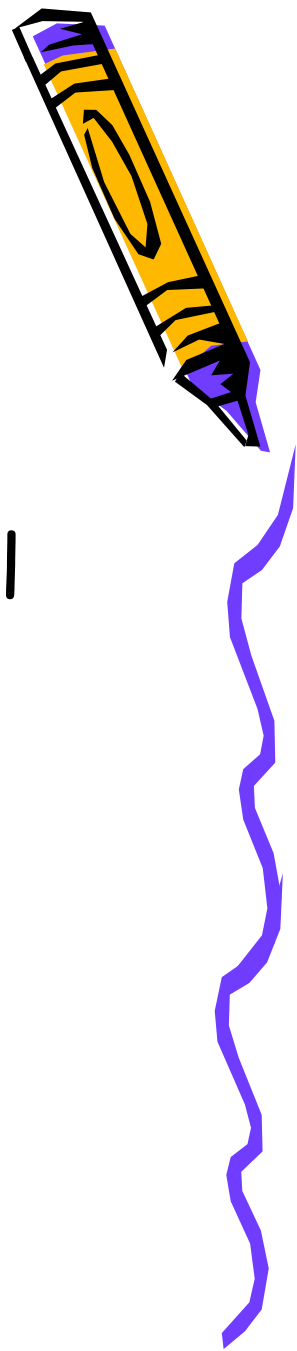
So Where Is The Teacher?



- Will the teacher be eliminated?
- No, but... teachers become, variously:
 - The subject matter expert
 - The mentor or coach
 - The conversation facilitator
 - The instructional designer



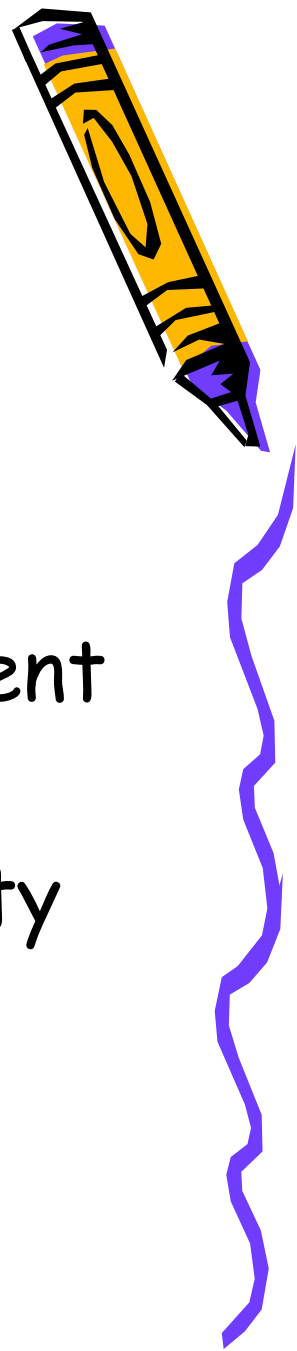
Toward Client Based Teaching



- Over time, teachers will specialize
- They won't have students, they will have clients
- Students access a *network* of teachers, resources, peers...
- (Teachers as learning objects?)



The End of The Great Schism



- Students will begin in simulated environments...
- But as they mature, this environment will become more real...
- Seamlessly transitioning into reality

http://www.downes.ca/files/Online_Learning.ppt

