# Quality learning in progress

## Description

Researching the quality assurance process for digital education, I realized there are no general standards that apply to all—instead, it's a work in progress. I started with a question, 'Can we trust the sources of online teaching materials?' I immediately became curious about who and how we do quality checks for digital learning.

First, I had to ask myself what quality education is. Some might argue the students' experience, test results, or completion of courses. Moreover, some may believe that evaluated progress, continuing education, or even furthermore rate of admission to colleges may determine the quality of education. It all depends on our goal. What is our objective? What are we trying to achieve through promoting quality digital education? We want students to learn to their fullest potential with the most updated information and technology.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, kids ages 8-18 now spend, on average, 7.5 hours in front of a screen each day, 4.5 of which are spent watching TV. Over a year, that adds up to 114 full days watching a screen (CDC-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). On top of that, statistics on *Teen Social Media Addiction* show that 24% of teens are online 'Almost Constantly' 76% of teens engage in social media – 71% are on Facebook, 52% on Instagram, 41% on Snapchat, 33% use Twitter and 14% are on Tumbler. 77% of parents say their teens are distracted by devices when they are together (Common Sense Media report, 2022).

In reality, students are constantly exposed to technology and social media. We must teach students in the way that is most familiar to them. The digital learning format through the web, interactive textbooks, online classes, media, apps, games, e-books…etc. So, who decides on teaching materials, including technology, in schools? For example, Washington state allows the school districts and local authorities to choose. Therefore, educators play a significant role in deciding which digital materials to use. They must be informed and have the tools to assess the teaching materials properly. Educators should actively evaluate and question (Coiro, J. 2017):

*Who created the information at this site, and what is this person's level of expertise?
*When was the information at this site updated?
*Where can I go to check the accuracy of this information?
*Why did this person or group put this information on the internet?
*Does the website present only one side of the issue, or are multiple perspectives provided?

Naturally, my next question was, 'Is there proper legislation or compliance in place? If the standards are ignored, can we hold educators accountable for their actions?' There are mandated requirements for accessibility, including those of legislative accessibility standards and generally accepted guidelines, such as the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative. We need to see more implementation of laws to set global standards. In the digital world, we are truly universal and share the same issues and needs regarding digital learning. Efforts have been made through pilot research programs like EQUIP (Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships) by the Office of

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Educational Technology. *The goals of the experiment were to: (1) test new ways of allowing Americans from all backgrounds to access innovative learning and training opportunities that lead to good jobs but that fall outside the current financial aid system; and (2) strengthen approaches for outcomes-based quality assurance processes that focus on student learning and other outcomes. The experiment aimed to promote and measure college access, affordability, and student outcomes.* Partnership and combined efforts like this make changes and possible reforms to address the issue.

While writing this blog, I realized the importance of building a professional community with the same values and concerns in digital education. They become crucial resources with hands-on experience. I have learned that being informed – getting the latest information, feedback, critical thinking and a proactive approach are key factors in making progress toward quality digital education.

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