

Making it Easier to Capitalize on Sound Knowledge



EduCel \e-j&-'sel: *Education*, as in the true meaning of the word—to educe, or bring out from within; and *celerity*, as in speed, or rapidity of motion or action.

In a world of information overload, EduCel's mission in the first decade of this century was to help separate the wheat from the chaff and make it easier to capitalize on sound knowledge. Or, as Dr. Peter Lyman (1940–2007), an EduCel board member, put it: "It is clear we are all drowning in a sea of information. The challenge is to learn to swim in that sea rather than drown in it."

EduCel met this challenge with different systems over the years, tailored to accommodate diverse needs—including, but not limited to, vastly different knowledge and skill levels, like those found at Delgado Community College in New Orleans and Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York.

While the company is no longer a separate entity, the concepts, technology, and intellectual property developed at EduCel are still in use, as is its legacy of defining "best practices." EduCel was located in Emeryville, California.

Best Practices Defined

While developing an extensive business efficiency and effectiveness system, it became clear that a succinct, useful definition of "best practices" did not exist. To fix this, Evan Berglund, one of the principals at EduCel, created one by applying the concept of "informed simplicity."

This definition is now widely adopted and used domestically and internationally, including by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the U.S. Air Force, and the United Nations.

It reads like this:

The most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task, based on repeatable procedures that have proven themselves over time for large numbers of people.

At its core, it is an easy-to-grasp, real-world definition, readily applicable to any situation. Take moving a heavy object from A to B: there may be many ways to do it, and some would argue the chosen methodology should depend on the conditions at hand—which is true. However, in most cases, it would be a waste of effort not to first consider a method that has proven itself *efficient* and *effective* for *large numbers of people* over time: the wheel.

The significance of the Berglund definition is that it establishes a set of simple standards for how to best take advantage of empirical knowledge for any task: **efficient, effective, repeatable**, and **proven over time for large numbers of people**. And even though these standards are not intended as exact measurements—just as “best” practices are not “perfect” practices under all conditions—they work well as guidelines and “scaffolding” for the thinking needed to improve performance.

Consider home building: although it may be effective to build a house entirely using 2x6 framing, it is both more efficient and highly effective to use 2x4s for interior walls and for exterior walls in mild climates—as evidenced by the large number of builders who have successfully used them and continue to do so. Thus, using 2x6 framing does not meet best practices in those scenarios unless circumstances differ (e.g., building in a cold-climate region may change the equation).

Simple as that!

The logo for EduCel, featuring the word "EduCel" in white text on a red rectangular background.

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