



**For immediate release
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ORION and ABEL team up to offer open access to new webcast learning series

TORONTO – School teachers across Ontario can now access exclusive how-to webcasts on new and exciting online tools for teaching and learning.

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) is partnering with the award-winning Advanced Broadband Enabled Learning (ABEL) program at York University to bring ABEL's 2009 webcast learning series to schools across Ontario and throughout Canada, providing free and open access to unique webcast streams and related teaching resources.

Targeting K-12 school teachers, the ORION-ABEL Professional Learning Webcasts focus on a different educational tool every month, covering the basics of the tool and giving suggestions on how to implement it in the classroom to benefit student learning. Teachers who have used these educational tools will share their experiences in the webcasts, some of which will be live and others taped and posted for downloading.

Previously, the webcasts were available exclusively to the limited number of schools and teachers involved in the ABEL program. Now, ORION has partnered with ABEL to make all currently archived and future 2009 webcasts and curriculum support materials available to all school boards and schools in Ontario, and across Canada, in a joint outreach and promotion partnership project.

Previous webcasts and resources on Podcasting and on Moodle are already available. A new webcast on School-Wide Digital Literacy will be available on March 3. Another session on Smart Boards will be webcast in April, followed by a session on Digital Storytelling in May, and on Second Life in June. The webcasts can be viewed at www.abelearn.ca and clicking the ABEL and ORION Webcast Series button.

"These professional learning webcasts are very popular with teachers as they provide them with easy to access, just-in-time instructional video that also present practical instructional strategies that engage students," says Janet Murphy, Director of ABEL. "ABEL uses this online video format to demonstrate effective classroom teaching strategies and consolidates professional learning with reflective activities or instructional implementation suggestions."

"These are great resources and we're excited about working with our ABEL partners to make them available to schools and teachers across Canada," said Phil Baker, ORION President and CEO. "They help illustrate the benefits of using interactive teaching and learning technologies in schools, while raising awareness of the importance of dedicated, advanced networks like ORION and CANARIE, Canada's advanced network organization, to deliver positive, measurable outcomes in teaching and learning."

About ORION

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network which connects all of Ontario's universities, most colleges, several medical and other public research facilities and a growing number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks. Stretching 5,800 kilometres over 21 communities throughout Ontario, ORION connects over 1.3 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff to critical infrastructure for research, education and innovation. Learn more at www.orion.on.ca.

About ABEL

The award-winning Advanced Broadband Enabled Learning (ABEL) program strives to improve results through its community for sharing knowledge and collaboration, and its professional learning program.

Through both public and private sector partnerships and a research-based approach, ABEL integrates new and existing information communication technologies in teaching and learning. The combination of its networks, partnerships and a focus on research results in innovative models for teaching and learning that drive institutional transformation and creates new opportunities for social innovation. Since its inception in 2002, the ABEL program has established national and international credibility as a leading authority in new modes of learning that leverage broadband networks and interactive technologies. www.abelearn.ca.

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