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International PLAR Research Centre  
Inaugural Meeting  
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# Rise and Decline of PLAR at a Traditional Research University

1992 - sabbatical leave, Australia

1995 - Australia.- UTS; USA- Vermont,  
Thomas Edison, Empire State,  
Maryland University College

1996 - wrote guidebook for faculty

1997 - applied for government grant

1998 to 2000 - principal investigator: SK  
universities: 9 pilots in 9 disciplines

# Rise and Decline of PLAR at a Traditional Research University

1999 - Provincial symposium; peak of support and interest in PLAR

2000 - sabbatical leave UKOU (assessment)

2001-2002 - Chaired working group to develop U of S policy (April 2002)

2003 - SK provincial policy on RPL;  
U of S shift focus to Canada  
Research Chairs

# Rise and Decline of PLAR at a Traditional Research University

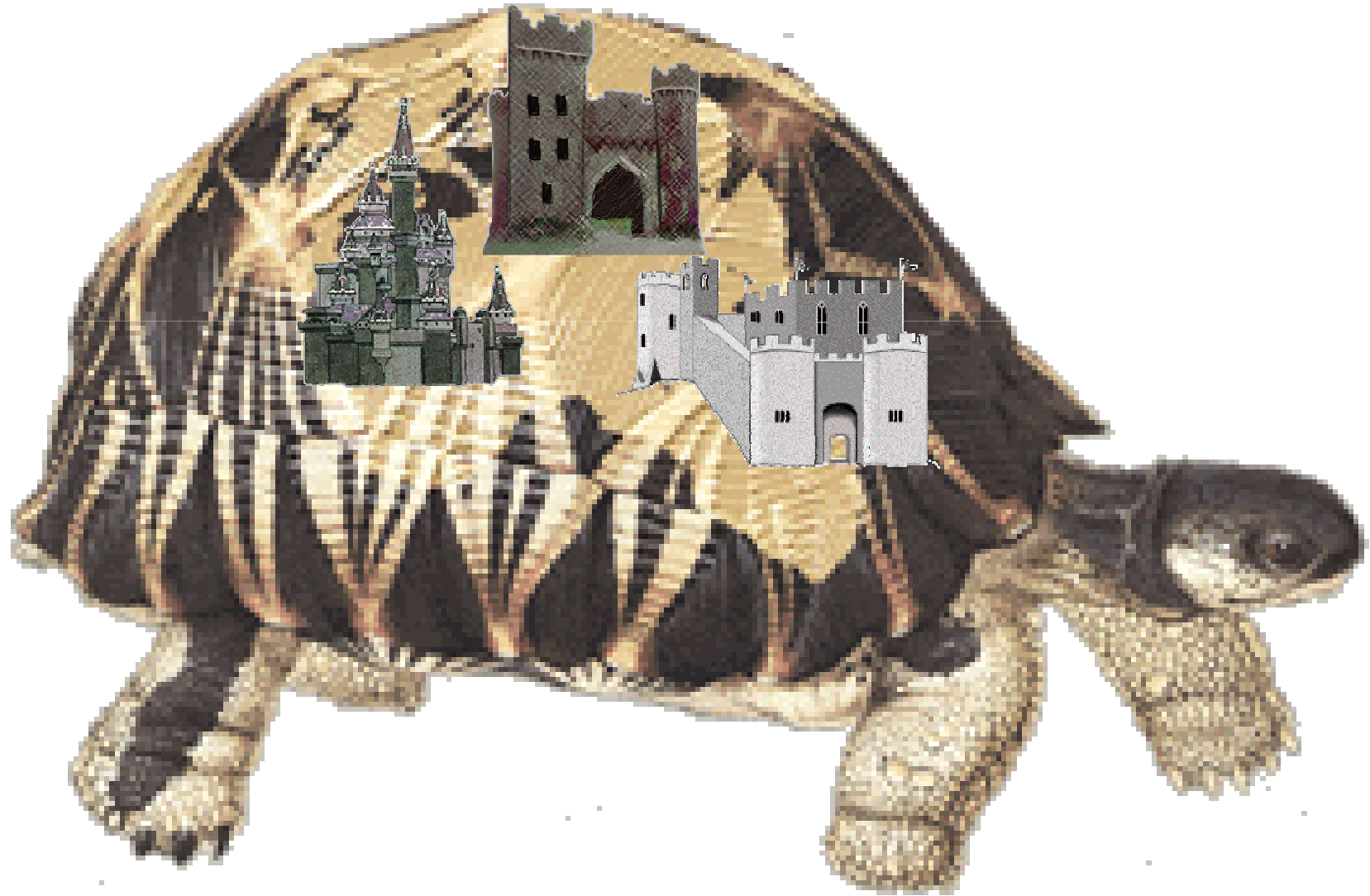
2003-2007 - Head of new centre on distributed learning; new online M.C.Ed with PLAR option & workplace learning

2005-2006 - Informal mentoring: first graduate student admitted on basis of PLAP

2005-2007 - faculty development: teaching and course portfolios

2007-2009 - Professor Emeritus – research and thesis supervision in experiential learning

# Perception of Universities



# What's Behind the Image?

- Recent Canadian studies have not documented actual conditions on the ground among universities
- Impetus for change resides at the departmental level
- Missing: a critical mass of faculty who believe their engagement in the process will be valued and recognized as scholarly activity; institutional support

Collaborative Research  
*Community-Engaged Experiential Learning in  
Higher Education:  
Implications for Students, Faculty, Institutions, and  
Communities*

2009 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences  
Ottawa, May, 2009

*[Experiential] learning is the process whereby knowledge is created  
through the transformation of experience.*

# Experiential Learning with Links to the Community

- Practica in professional programs
- Community service learning (course-based and co-curricula)
- Prior learning assessment & recognition
- Forms of experiential learning ordered from most accepted/institutionalized to least accepted/institutionalized

# Experiential Learning as a Dependent Variable

What factors promote or inhibit greater faculty experimentation with the new approach?

- dynamics of institutional readiness
- differences across disciplines and among different departments
- assessment practices - cognition, observation, interpretation

# The Process of Critical Thinking in Experiential Learning

- Applying model derived from distance learning: Communities of Inquiry (Garrison, Anderson, Archer)
- Content analysis of journals and small group discussions (triggering event, exploration, integration, resolution)
- How can reflection activities be designed to facilitate students' observation, interpretation, and communication of events?