FROM IDEAS TO ACTION: TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING LEARNING INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

AN INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

Stacy D. Southerland, PhD, University of Central Oklahoma
Bucky J. Dodd, PhD, University of Central Oklahoma

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Innovation is a hot topic in education, but many who aspire to reimagine, renew, even revolutionize learning, projects, and processes at the personal, team, or organizational level find it challenging to make innovation happen on a practical level. This is due, not only to the many components in the innovation landscape that need to be considered and understood, but also to the need for an effective method for communicating one's vision effectively to collaborators in the innovation design and implementation process and for sound decision-making for mapping, planning, and implementing new ideas.

While continuing efforts to innovate learning are integral to ensuring that learning experiences remain relevant, robust, engaging, and transformative, they must avoid encouraging change simply for the sake of change. In addition, meaningful innovation requires intentional, strategic implementation in order to ensure that the resultant transformative learning experiences have measurable and sustainable outcomes.

The Center for eLearning and Connected Environments and the Institute for Learning Environment Design at the University of Central Oklahoma created the Learning Environment Innovation Inventory (LEI2) and Learning Environment Innovation Landscape (LEIL) to help educators profile learning environments and understand the capacity for innovation in those spaces. The LEI2 survey instrument is comprised of questions that assess the mindset, values, goals, and perceptions of available support for change in the learning environment. The questions also address the capacity for successful development and implementation of new ideas in the setting. The report of LEI2 findings, the Learning Environment Innovation Landscape, presents an overview of influences and processes related to the innovation mindset and values of participants in the innovation process and the learning environment to be reimagined. Together, the two inform and support efforts to identify drivers of meaningful innovation, promote abundant ideation, and manage promising concepts to help developers move them successfully through the innovation cycle from ideas to action. Educators may leverage this information to maximize capacity for, and bridge potential barriers to, innovation in order to ensure that promising ideas progress through experimental and development phases and culminate in successful and sustainable operations.

This effort is supported by the internationally award-winning design technique Learning Environment Modeling™ (LEM) that can be used for planning effective implementation strategies for new ideas. LEM is a revolutionary, visual, tangible, interactive technique for reimagining and innovating learning environment design. It serves as a powerful tool to innovate and energize learning in any space—online, traditional, or blended; academic or corporate. LEM offers an engaging, enjoyable, and easy-to-learn visualization method for communicating key components in learning environments, just as architectural blueprints communicate building plans. It allows designers to create an idea canvas and invite others to participate actively in the design experience by rearranging and adding to designs and captures ideas as they evolve. As a catalyst for effective communication, decision making, and collaboration, LEM eliminates barriers and fosters innovation and creativity.

LEM disrupts the flow of inefficient miscommunication and allows effective idea sharing by way of its simplified language—Learning Environment Modeling Language (LEML)—that consists of four primary features: Building Blocks, Contexts, Actions, and Notations. These components can be assembled in limitless configurations to represent any learning environment and experience imaginable. Intentional, strategic, coordinated implementation of LEM helps educators advance the overarching design goals of creating engaging and unique learning experiences and improving learner success through its ability to advance innovation in learning.

Learning Environment Innovation Inventory and Landscape components align with LEM building blocks to streamline and facilitate effective application of LEI2 findings to the innovation of learning experiences. As such, this powerful combination of systems advances educators' efforts to transform learning environment design and learning itself.

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For further information, contact the lead presenter:
Stacy D. Southerland, PhD
Professor
University of Central Oklahoma
100 N. University Drive, Box 170
Edmond, OK 73034
Phone: (405) 974-5517
E-Mail: ssoutherland@uco.edu