THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND TEACHER PRACTICES

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Australian Government
Australian Research Council

LEARN
learnetwork.edu.au

Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices: Facilitator Guide

ILETC (2020). *Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices: Facilitator Guide*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.46580/11343.241885>

ARC Linkage project (2016-2019)

© Innovative Learning Environments & Teacher Change, LEaRN, The University of Melbourne, 2020.

This publication copyright is held by Innovative Learning Environments & Teacher Change, LEaRN, The University of Melbourne. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

This research is supported by Australian Research Council's Linkage Projects funding scheme (project LP150100022). The views expressed herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Australian Research Council.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the co-designers of the workshop: Allison Edwards, Dion Tuckwell and Professor Lisa Grocott from WonderLab, Monash University, in collaboration with the ILETC project directed by Associate Professor Wesley Imms. The workshop has been adapted as a professional development tool by Dr Marian Mahat, author and developer of the facilitator's guide. We would also like to thank the Australian Science and Mathematics School (South Australia), the Anglican Church Grammar School (Queensland) and Woodleigh School (Victoria) for their feedback and support in trialling the workshops with their teachers.

Images used throughout this document © ILETC Project, The University of Melbourne.

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	4
FACILITATOR'S CHECKLIST	5
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE	6
RESOURCES	8

Abstract blue geometric shapes, including overlapping triangles and polygons, located in the bottom right corner of the page.

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS IT?

The Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices workshop invites participants to visualise the physical and experiential elements of the learning space they practice in. Working in groups, participants describe and model these elements using art and craft materials. They then organise these physical and experiential elements on a spectrum of emotions, discussing specific challenges of these elements and how they might be improved.

HOW DID WE COME UP WITH IT?

The Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices workshop was developed using design thinking principles that engage participants directly with ambiguous prompts yet tangible materials. These workshops usually move participants between divergent, expansive thinking exercises and convergent, solution-oriented modes of thinking. As a participatory method, design thinking presents a technique for co-creating with the community, ensuring skills and behaviours evolve with the needs of the community by taking into account the ever-changing perspectives of diverse individuals through open collaboration.

The workshop begins with the assumption that a learning environment is characterised by two types of learning elements—the physical (e.g. chairs and lighting) and experiential (e.g. observations and interactions). Through creatively structured activities, the workshop provides a productive experience that leverages off the insights of others in order to prompt individual reflections.

HOW WILL IT BENEFIT YOU?

The design thinking workshop is based on the premise that teachers can make a difference by using an intentional process in order to get to new, relevant solutions that create positive impact. Specifically, information gathered from the workshop can provide teachers and school leaders with:

- a shared language around elements of an innovative learning environment;
- identify opportunities and challenges for transforming teaching practices in innovative learning environments; and
- develop solutions to barriers that impede successful use of innovative learning environments.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Teachers come away from the workshop having a shared understanding of what an innovative learning environment looks like in their particular context. The workshop is collaborative in nature, consequently opportunities and challenges emerge from teachers' collective knowledge and from their multiple perspectives. By identifying the opportunities and challenges to their practices—things that they have some control over and can change—teachers are empowered to transform their practices in innovative learning environments.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about the workshop, please see:

Mahat, M., Grocott, L., & Imms, W. (2017). "In the real world...": Teachers' perceptions of ILEs. ILETC phase 1 teacher workshops. Melbourne: University of Melbourne, LEARN, Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/11343/194339>

FACILITATOR'S CHECKLIST

TIME

Allow a minimum of two hours for this workshop.

WORKSHOP VENUE

Prepare an area that can accommodate whole group interaction as well as tables and chairs for small group collaboration of three to five participants.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants are organised into groups of three to five, preferably where group members are currently not working together, for example across year levels, disciplines etc, or have not met before. It is recommended to have a maximum of 20 participants.

MATERIALS TO PURCHASE

- Sticky notes (76x76mm) in 4 colours
- Art and craft materials such as wooden sticks, pipe cleaners, foam pieces, etc.
- Adhesive tape or blue tack
- Pens

PREPARATION

Code	Item ¹	Format/Preparation	Quantity
TP01	Emoticons	A4 single-sided print	One set per group
TP02	Challenges and Barriers	A4 single-sided print	One per group
TP03	ILE and Teacher Practices	A4 single-sided print	One per group
TP04	Art and craft materials	To purchase	One set per group
TP05	Adhesive tape or blue tack	To purchase	As needed
TP06	Sticky notes (76x76mm) in 4 colours	To purchase	4 coloured sets per group
TP07	Pens	To purchase	One per person

¹ The resource's are supplied at 1:1 scale and should be printed at 100% of the original page size. The 'Choose paper source by PDF page size' on PC and 'Scale to fit paper size' on OSX in Adobe Acrobat will automatically print multiple page sizes automatically. For more information, please visit <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/kb/print-mixed-page-sizes-acrobat.html>

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

As the facilitator, think of what you would like your participants to get out of this. It could be one or a combination of objectives including: developing a shared language around the elements of an innovative learning environment, identifying opportunities and challenges for transforming teaching practices in innovative learning environments, or developing solutions to barriers that impede successful use of innovative learning environments. It could also be a reflective exercise for teachers who wish to start thinking about and transforming their transition into new learning contexts.

The following steps provide a ‘script’ that you could follow when running the workshop. It also provides the recommended time and required resources for each step. You can amend to suit the audience and/or objective that you have developed prior to the workshop.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

[10 mins]

TP01, TP02, TP04, TP05, TP06

- » Decide your overall aims for the workshop – what you would like participants to get out of it.
- » Distribute and lay out the workshop materials (TP04, TP05, TP06) on the tables. One set per group.
- » Stick the spectrum of emotions (TP01) in this order Pleased, Optimistic, Disappointed and Frustrated and Challenges and barriers (TP02) on a wall or white board. Spread it out so that there is enough space. You will need a wall/white board for each group.
- » Welcome participants and direct them to their groups/tables.

STEP 1: DISCOVER

[30-45 mins]

TP04, TP05, TP06

In groups of three to five participants, create a model of an innovative learning environment using the arts and craft materials provided. Describe as many elements of the learning environment you can think of—physical elements using blue sticky notes and experiential elements using yellow sticky notes. After your group completes and annotates a learning environment model (spend about 30 minutes), go around the room to look at other groups’ models (10 mins)

Tip for facilitators:

- » Distribute and lay out the workshop materials (TP04, TP05, TP06) before the start of the workshop.

Discussion prompts:

- » Name some of the physical and experiential elements in your innovative learning environment.
- » Describe your innovative learning environment in one sentence.

STEP 2: REFLECT

[20-30 mins]

TP01, TP02, TP05, TP06, TP07

Within your group, place the annotated elements (on a wall or board) along a spectrum of emotions that best describe how you feel about its use: Pleased, Optimistic, Disappointed and Frustrated. If there are multiple opinions, you can replicate the element and place it under one or more emotions. Then think about the barriers to your teaching practices—write these on the pink sticky notes.

Discussion prompts:

- » Why are these elements positive (pleased, optimistic) or negative (disappointed and frustrated)?
- » How do the elements impact on your teaching practices?

STEP 3: IDEATE

[20-30 mins]

TP06, TP07

Go around to the other groups, write down on green sticky notes possible solutions to the barriers they have identified and place them on the wall/whiteboard.

Discussion prompts:

- » What are some common barriers and their solutions?
- » In particular, what are the challenges that relate to your own practices?

STEP 4: EVOLVE

[20-30 mins]

TP03, TP07

Go back to your group and complete the final worksheet by developing a shared language on innovative learning environments. Identify the barriers and solutions to teaching practices in your innovative learning environments.

Tip for facilitators:

- » Distribute TP03 to participants. One per group.
- » This step will depend on the aims you developed prior to the workshop.

Discussion prompts:

- » How will you use this information to transform your practices in innovative learning environments?
- » What does success look like for you?

Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices

1

In one sentence, describe your innovative learning environment?

2

Select the top three barriers you face in using the elements of your innovative learning environment and its respective solutions.

Barriers	Solutions
1.	
2.	
3.

Pleased

© 2020 ILETC The University of Melbourne

Frustrated

© 2020 ILETC The University of Melbourne

Optimistic

© 2020 ILETC The University of Melbourne

Disappointed

© 2020 ILETC The University of Melbourne

Challenges and Barriers

© 2020 ILETC The University of Melbourne

Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices

1

In one sentence, describe your innovative learning environment?

2

Select the top three barriers you face in using the elements of your innovative learning environment and its respective solutions.

Barriers	Solutions
1.	
2.	
3.

Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

Mahat, M;Imms, W

Title:

Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices: Facilitator Guide

Date:

2020

Citation:

Mahat, M. & Imms, W. (2020). Innovative Learning Environments and Teacher Practices: Facilitator Guide. Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne.

Persistent Link:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/241885>