

Proposal for the Establishment of the Innovative Learning Centre

On the recommendation of the Dean and arising from the Faculty's 2012-1025 Strategic Action Plan (item 1.2), the Faculty of Education proposes to establish the ***Innovative Learning Centre*** (ILC) under the UBC Okanagan Senate Policy 0-5 Research Centres & Institutes.

The goal of the ILC is to provide appropriate tools and spaces for educators, entrepreneurs, dreamers and tinkers¹ to imagine and explore innovations in teaching and learning. It will engage the UBC community – academics, educators, and industry - in all aspects of the creative design process by fostering innovative pedagogy, supporting economic growth in the region, and continuing the advancement of proven accomplishments of K-20 educators who work and live outside the lower mainland.

The ILC recognizes its unique position within a nimble campus and embraces both the potential and promise for contributing to *the place of mind* on the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia. The ILC consists of three integrated components – a design studio, an incubator for pedagogical innovations, and an innovative classroom, each synergistically linked to the Faculty of Education's research agenda. Activity within each component of the ILC is detailed in the Management Plan section in this document.

Educators and industry will benefit from the Innovative Learning Centre through collaborative projects and synergies afforded by access to research, design, incubation, and testing. The ILC will become a home for educators, undergraduate and graduate students, visiting academics, entrepreneurs, and industry partners as they work together to imagine and design new ways of thinking and learning in a time of substantial change, globalization, and ubiquitous access to information. The ILC recognizes that Canada's place in the knowledge economy rests substantially on the ability of education and research institutions to inquire into and grapple with new ways of engaging learners in discovery and innovation.

The ILC will have both a physical and a virtual presence. Initially, the design studios will be housed in two areas on the Education floor of the EME Building (EME 3118-1 and 3118-2). The incubator will be in EME 1110, and the innovative classroom will be in EME 1123 with IT racking and infrastructure in EME 1123B.

The Director of the Centre will consult with the ILC an Advisory Board and report to the Dean of the Faculty of Education who in turn will report to the Provost on matters related to The Centre.

¹ According to John Seeley Brown (2011) "You need to learn that not everything works, most things don't. If the first thing that happens to you when something doesn't work is that it frightens you, then you're not going to be very willing to embrace change **BUT** if you realize that things don't work (which is almost always) you can figure out how to tinker with things and absorb what happens. Often when you are tinkering it doesn't make perfect logic sense, it's something you begin to feel in your hands as much as your mind. Tinkering brings thoughts and action together in very powerful, magic ways" (<http://learnstreaming.com/tinkering-with-john-seeley-brown/>).

Management Plan for the Innovative Learning Centre (ILC)

Mandate

The Innovative Learning Centre (ILC) exists as an interactive space where explorations and innovations in pedagogical excellence can be experienced, examined, and researched. The ILC is envisioned as a developmental space at the intersection of research and practice that provides both participatory and observatory experiences in both real and virtual environments to those teaching and learning in this space.

The ILC will provide a locus from which to explore and address research questions emerging in education at this time of socio-cultural change, globalization, and ubiquitous access to information.

Emergent questions include, but are not limited to:

- How is pedagogical excellence to be re/defined in inclusive multicultural settings?
- In what ways can innovative technology better address the diverse needs of learners?
- In what ways will new media and participatory literacies shape educational practice?
- What types of learning environments are supported and fostered with ubiquitous media?
- In what ways will technological innovation shape educational practice?
- How will teaching and learning be inspired in this type of innovative instructional space?

Drawing from existing strengths and research initiatives currently existing within the Faculty of Education, the ILC will extend inquiry into pedagogical excellence to achieve the following goals:

- To provide faculty, staff, students, and affiliates appropriate tools and spaces to imagine and explore meaningful and significant innovations in pedagogical practice
- To provide space where educators, developers, and innovators can incubate and study innovations
- To work with developers and innovators to incubate the development and application of significant educational tools and explore resulting learning environments afforded by these tools

Unlike other spaces available on campus, the ILC will:

- Provide an instructional research space for faculty and students to facilitate grant and other funding opportunities that will support and further sustain ILC initiatives.
- Provide consultation and leadership, in the Okanagan Valley and beyond, in the design, promotion, and exploration of pedagogical excellence in a time of change and possibility (e.g. with school districts, interdisciplinary and inter-professional activities, government agencies, NGOs, NPOs etc.)

The ILC recognizes its unique advantage being at the Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia. We are driven by our pursuit of pedagogical excellence and as a Faculty; we are nimble enough to act and react to change and possibility. Further, we are

- Supported by academics with a proven record of innovation and pedagogical excellence.
- Networked to existing partnerships with technology innovators and developers in the Okanagan Valley.
- Connected through strong regional partnerships with five catchment school districts

who also have varying experience with and appetite for innovations in pedagogical research.

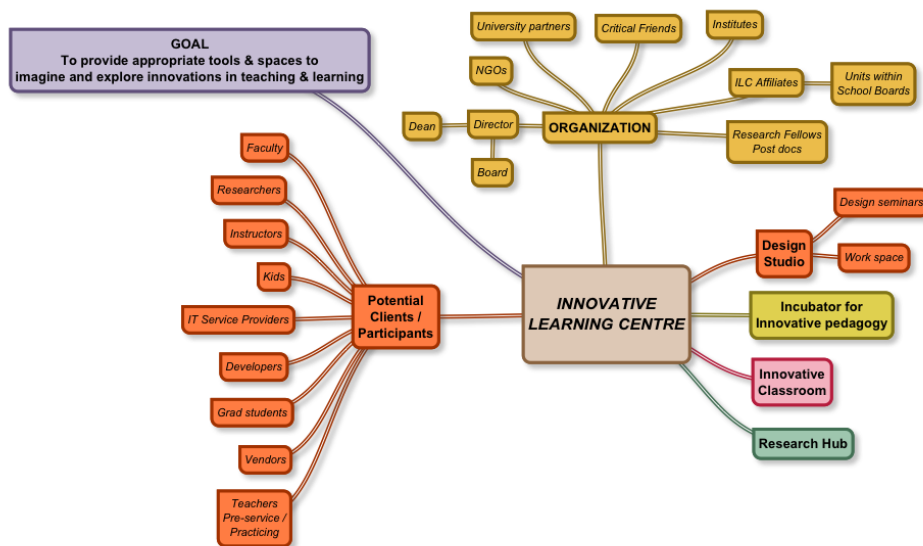
- Networked through existing academic partnerships/affiliations with national and international universities, including but not limited to the Universities of Alberta and Calgary, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia – Vancouver, Cambridge University, and Aga Khan University – both Karachi, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam campuses.

COMPONENTS

The ILC is a synthesis of three distinct components (design lab, pedagogical incubator, and classroom) that will be developed gradually and modified regularly as budget and space allocations allow. Its fourth function, research, will be conducted in concert with initiatives proposed by the Faculty of Education.

We recognize the word innovative is problematic. What is state of the art and exciting can quickly become traditional and ordinary. We also recognize that without innovations in pedagogical practices, exciting technologies can be used for mundane purposes. Therefore, we are thoughtfully creating an iterative model of development. This model stages investments of hardware and software in a phased way in order to leverage budget and donations in a thoughtful and creative manner to match and enhance pedagogical endeavors. Without access to tools, spaces, opportunities, and a range of critical friends from all sectors of our community, both town and gown, educators typically stay with what they know and teach in ways they have been taught.

The following diagram illustrates the relationship of the components within the ILC structure.



ALIGNMENT with the FACULTY of EDUCATION

The Faculty of Education's core business is learning and learning environments. The ILC will encourage educators, researchers, and entrepreneurs to draw from what is known and to imagine and create what might be. This is consistent with all aspects of the Faculty of

Education's Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Examples of this within specific Faculty components include, but are not limited to, activities suggested in the table below.

Examples of ILC Activities within the Faculty of Education	
Bachelor of Education Program (SAP item 1.14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a “digital document centre” offering support for faculty and students • Development of a “digital commonplace book” used as a unifying program element across the B.Ed. program • Support for ICT enhanced teaching and learning to prepare preservice teachers, empowering them to be educational leaders as they start their careers
Proposed Master of Education Degree in Digital Learning (SAP item 1.23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incubate new ways of teaching and learning and support faculty in developing this Master's degree to be unique within the Educational Technology offerings in western Canada and beyond • Provide support to students within the graduate program to explore digital learning and work with professionals to design educational innovations • Provide a space for graduate students to come (both physically and virtually) to incubate ideas • Provide support for exit projects and theses that investigate pedagogical innovations
ICT enhanced research methods for faculty (SAP item 2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue research into digital research tools • Support faculty and graduate students in ICT enhanced research strategies and approaches
Opportunities for graduate students (SAP items 1.28,1.36, 2.8, 2.21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scholarships, research assistant positions, post doctoral opportunities to pursue innovations • Provide industry grants / opportunities to work with entrepreneurs in the region
Partnerships with school districts (SAP items 1.6, 1.25, 3.8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing partnerships and collaborations to support regional excellence in distance education and virtual classrooms. NOTE: The Okanagan Valley was the leader in the Southern Interior telecommunications Project in the early 1990s and has a proven track record of innovative practice. Pockets of excellence and innovation can be found from the Okanagan Valley to Nelson.
Partnerships with community / industry (SAP item 3.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue and expand initial collaborations with groups within the Accelerate Okanagan community, including Fresh Grade, Mathtoons and others. • Continue and expand initial collaborations with groups new to the Okanagan Valley, including Thinkable

Partnerships with other institutions (SAP item 2.10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand relationship with Cambridge University. The proposed director of the ILC is Fellow of the Commonwealth Centre for Education – Faculty of Education, Cambridge University. Academics within the Faculty of Education have networks drawing from universities in Alberta, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatchewan, Guelph, Vancouver, Sydney, Arizona, Oregon, and more.
Appropriate technologies for challenging contexts (SAP item 1.6, 2.4, 2.10, 2.12, 2.15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue and expand relationship with Aga Khan University across its various campuses. A recent PhD student is returning to Eastern Africa to continue his work at the Dar es Salaam campus. The proposed director of the ILC holds a three-year visiting academic position with that institution (2012 – 2015).

The ILC is one of two major comprehensive initiatives currently being developed within the Faculty of Education arising from its 2012-2015 Strategic Action Plan.

The ILC is designed to foster innovative and advanced approaches to core areas of our academic identity as a professional faculty in the disciplinary field of education. It seeks to engage fully and deeply with the campus community, the higher education community, and the broader communities within which education serves a vital civic and economic function. The ILC seeks to encourage reflective, critical, and mindful engagement in all aspects of the methods, questions, and applications upon which it focuses. It seeks to make contribution to sustainable professional practice, institutional vibrancy, cultural harmony, and environmental stewardship.

The ILC supports the Priority Themes of the Faculty of Education's Strategic Action Plan. These themes include:

1. The Scholarship of Teaching
2. Research Capacity and Culture
3. The Scholarship of Engagement
4. Sustainability

DISSEMINATING INNOVATIONS

The ILC, working closely with the University-Industry Liaison Office, will share findings, discoveries, best practices, and innovations with academics, professional educators, and industry through design studies, research, and product design and testing. The three components of the ILC will generate different yet complementary findings and will work closely with faculty to establish and maintain a robust research agenda.

The ILC will engage in a variety of activities, including but not limited to the following:

- Work closely with its participants and partners to be inclusive and to find creative ways for collaborating in both design and research
- Showcase innovations and activities with the larger UBC community – both town and gown

- Present findings at appropriate venues, including conferences, trade shows, teacher conferences, etc.
- Support the delivery of presentations at prestigious national and international conferences.
- Seek opportunities to meet with various levels of government (Ministries of Education, Higher Education, Trade, etc.) to share findings and innovations

Membership and Governance

As shown on the diagram in the section - Components, the ILC will welcome a wide range of participants and members. All members of the Faculty of Education (post docs, instructors, tenure track and adjunct faculty) and thesis graduate students will be members of the ILC as well as interested industry partners, affiliate institutes, and organizations.

The Director will guide implementation and day-to-day management of the ILC in consultation with the ILC Advisory Board and The Dean to determine priorities and ongoing alignment with the Faculty's Vision and Strategic Objectives.

The advisory board will consists of representatives from the Faculties with expertise in the area of design and technology (e.g., Education, Engineering, Creative and Critical Studies, Barber School of Science), elected or appointed members from Accelerate Okanagan, Derek Gratz - Associate Director, University Industry Liaison Office (UILO) at UBC O, an elected or appointed graduate student from IGS PhD program, and appointed representatives from regional school districts.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The ILC will constantly seek grants and other funding opportunities, including industry partnerships and donor funding.

Schedule for Review

The ILC will be reviewed after three years by the Dean of the Faculty of Education, in consultation with the Director and the ILC Advisory Board. If the review is satisfactory, the ILC will continue as planned and the Director will be given a further three-year appointment. If the review is unsatisfactory, the ILC may be granted two more years to fulfill its mandate and the appointment of the Director might be revisited.

After five years, the ILC will again be reviewed by the Dean of the Faculty of Education, in consultation with the Director and the ILC Advisory Board. If the review is satisfactory, the ILC will continue. If the review is unsatisfactory, the ILC may be discontinued as deemed appropriate.

Conclusion

Once the ILC established, the ILC will be self-funding through projects with industry partners who share common interests in creating inventors and creative problem-solvers capable of moving the work of the Centre and industry forward within the Okanagan Valley and beyond.

The ILC will become an internationally recognized place of pedagogical excellence and innovation, sparked by creative design in a supportive environment. The ILC welcomes

colleagues from across campus and the world to imagine and create with industry and educators the tools, technologies and learning environments necessary to promote inventors, innovators, and creative problem solvers needed for a mindful and sustainable Canada.