

**INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS MEETING:  
INTRODUCING THE EMPIRICAL STRAND  
1 OCTOBER**

The learning sciences provide support for learning environments which, while different in context and the learning involved, share the following core features: their instructional methodology focusing on experience and reflection, their integrated curriculum, and their focus on independent and customised learning combined with formative assessment. The deep understanding of complex concepts is best achieved in settings that actively involve learners in activities in which knowledge is being applied (Sawyer 2008). CERI is calling these “Innovative Learning Environments” because too often, these features are not typical of mainstream education.

Innovative learning environments do not necessarily have to be new or recently established. What makes them interesting for us is the creative approach they use to respond to the multiple learning needs of children, adolescents or adults. In this regard, many of the innovative learning environments that already exist in the field are ahead of mainstream education and can serve as meaningful examples of the renewal of learning environments in schools around the globe.

Where are these experiences that are consistent with the learning principles? How do they work and what make them survive? How could their lessons be used in mainstream education?

The general aim of the OECD/CERI project on **Innovative Learning Environments** is to identify and subsequently analyse a number of learning environments in order to provide international examples of such practice and to stimulate a discussion on their potential to enrich mainstream education in OECD countries.

While the **analytical strand** of the project aims at generating a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the current state of what we know about learning, the **empirical strand** will take a close look at innovative learning environments and the conditions of their sustainability and dissemination. The outcomes of these strands will be connected to policy experiences in different countries and to already-existing policy approaches that foster effective learning environments and respond to key challenges (*i.e.* high drop-out rates) as part of the **policy strand**.

***Introducing the empirical strand***

On October 1, after participating in the *Schooling for Tomorrow* Final Conference Conclusion Session and the panel on Innovation and Education, delegates from participating countries/regions are invited to join the half day meeting on **Innovative Learning Environments**.

The main goal of the meeting *is to introduce and obtain feedback on the empirical strand proposal of the project and to discuss how countries/regions could get involved in this strand*. In particular, we will discuss:

- Different options for countries/regions to participate.

- Case studies selection processes.
- Methodology of the case study analyses.
- Analyses of the information gathered.
- Main expected outputs.
- Relevant links to the analytical and political strands.

Interested countries are invited specifically to send experts and representatives who may potentially be engaged in this work in the future. Delegates are invited to register directly through their country's permanent delegation to the OECD before **19 September 2008**.