

# An International Study of “Innovative Learning Environments”

Centre for Educational Research  
and Innovation (CERI), OECD

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Banff, October 2011

# THE FOCUS ON LEARNING AND INNOVATION - ILE

# Why such interest in learning?

- Our societies and economies have transformed **with knowledge central**. Therefore, learning is also central.
- **Strong focus and advance in measuring learning outcomes**, including through PISA. But then how to change outcomes? In what kinds of learning environments?
- Education has been reformed endlessly - **the sense of reaching the limits of educational reform invites a fresh focus on learning** itself
- **Technology development** has re-set the boundaries of educational possibilities but how far reshaping learning environments?
- **The research base on learning grows** but so far a “great disconnect” to policy and practice.

## Hence also the focus on innovation

- If traditional schooling not delivering 21<sup>st</sup> century agendas what new – innovative - learning models promise more success?
- Meeting the research-based criteria of effective learning will call for substantial innovation and change.
- Hence too the need to understand better how such change can be introduced and sustained.

# OECD/CERI project “Innovative Learning Environments”

**ILE aims** to inform practice, leadership and reform through generating analysis of innovative and inspiring configurations of learning for children and young people, by:

1. Understanding the Lessons of Research for Redesigning Learning Environments (**“Learning Research” Strand**) – 2008-2010
2. Compiling & Analysing Innovative Configurations of Learning (**“Innovative Cases” Strand**) (Main pool, 120-150 cases plus 35-40 in-depth case studies) - 2009 to 2012
3. Analysing & exchanging change strategies (**“Implementation and Change” Strand**) – starting now

# Substantial international interest and participation

Many countries/regions/organisations have “joined” - taking an active role in the ‘Innovation’ and ‘Implementation’ strands and anchoring them in real-world systems

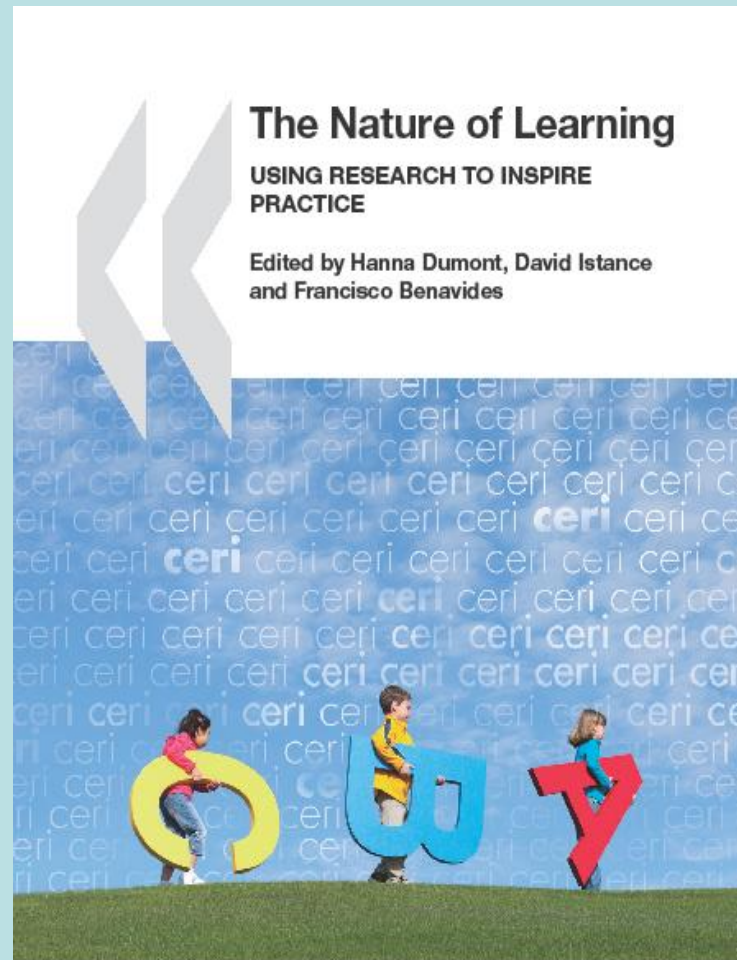
**Austria  
Chile  
Finland  
Hungary  
Israel  
Korea  
Mexico  
Norway  
Portugal  
Sweden  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Denmark?**

**Victoria, South Australia,  
(Australia)  
Alberta, British Columbia  
(Canada) Thüringen  
(Germany) Nuevo Leon  
(Mexico) Berne & Ticino  
(Switzerland),  
Ohio (US)  
Hong Kong, China  
Belgium (French  
community)?  
Australian Capital  
Territory (Australia)?**

**ENSI (Environment and  
School Initiatives)  
Cognition Institute (New  
Zealand)  
Stupski and Nellie Mae  
Educational Foundations  
(US)  
Innovation Unit (England)  
Jaume Bofill Foundation  
(Catalonia, Spain)  
Fondazione per la Scuola  
della Compagnia di San  
Paolo (Italy)  
IMTEC? (Norway)**

# **ABSORBING THE LESSONS OF LEARNING RESEARCH**

# ***“The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice”*** OECD Publications, Sept. 2010, 338pp.



Centre for Educational Research and Innovation





# Chapters and Authors

**1. Analysing & Designing Learning Environments for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Hanna Dumont & David Istance

**2. Historical Developments in the Understanding of Learning**

Erik De Corte

**3. The Cognitive Perspective on Learning**

Elsbeth Stern & Michael Schneider

**4. The Crucial Role of Emotions & Motivation in Learning**

Monique Boekaerts

**5. Developmental & Biological Bases of Learning**

Cristina Hinton & Kurt Fischer

**6. Formative Assessment**

Dylan Wiliam

**7. Technology and Learning**

Richard Mayer

**8. Cooperative Learning & Group-work**

Robert Slavin

**9. Inquiry-based Learning**

Brigid Barron & Linda Darling-Hammond,

**10. The Community and Academic Service Learning**

Andrew Furco

**11. The Effects of Family on Learning**

Barbara Schneider, Keesler & Morlock

**12. Implementing Innovation: from visions to everyday practice**

Lauren Resnick, James Spillane, Goldman & Rangel

**13. Future Directions**

OECD (Istance & Dumont)

# Learning conclusions – environments should:

- Make learning central, encourage engagement, and be where learners come to understand themselves as learners
- Ensure that learning is social and often collaborative
- Be highly attuned to learners' motivations and the importance of emotions
- Be acutely sensitive to individual differences including in prior knowledge
- Be demanding for each learner but without excessive overload
- Use assessments consistent with its aims, with strong emphasis on formative feedback
- Promote horizontal connectedness across activities and subjects, in-and out-of-school

Moreover, all should be present not one or two.

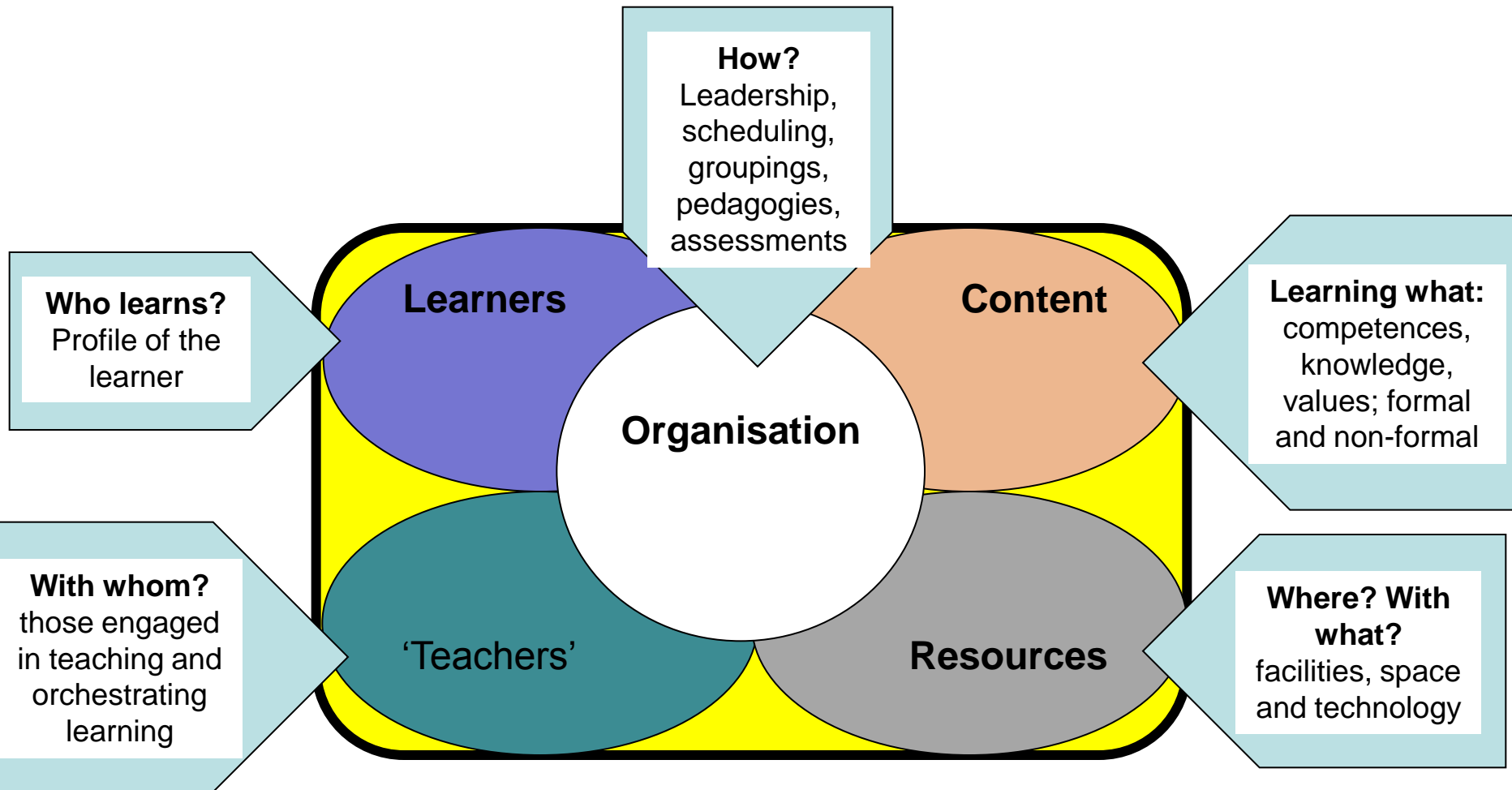
# Re-expressed in educational terms

## Learning environments should be:

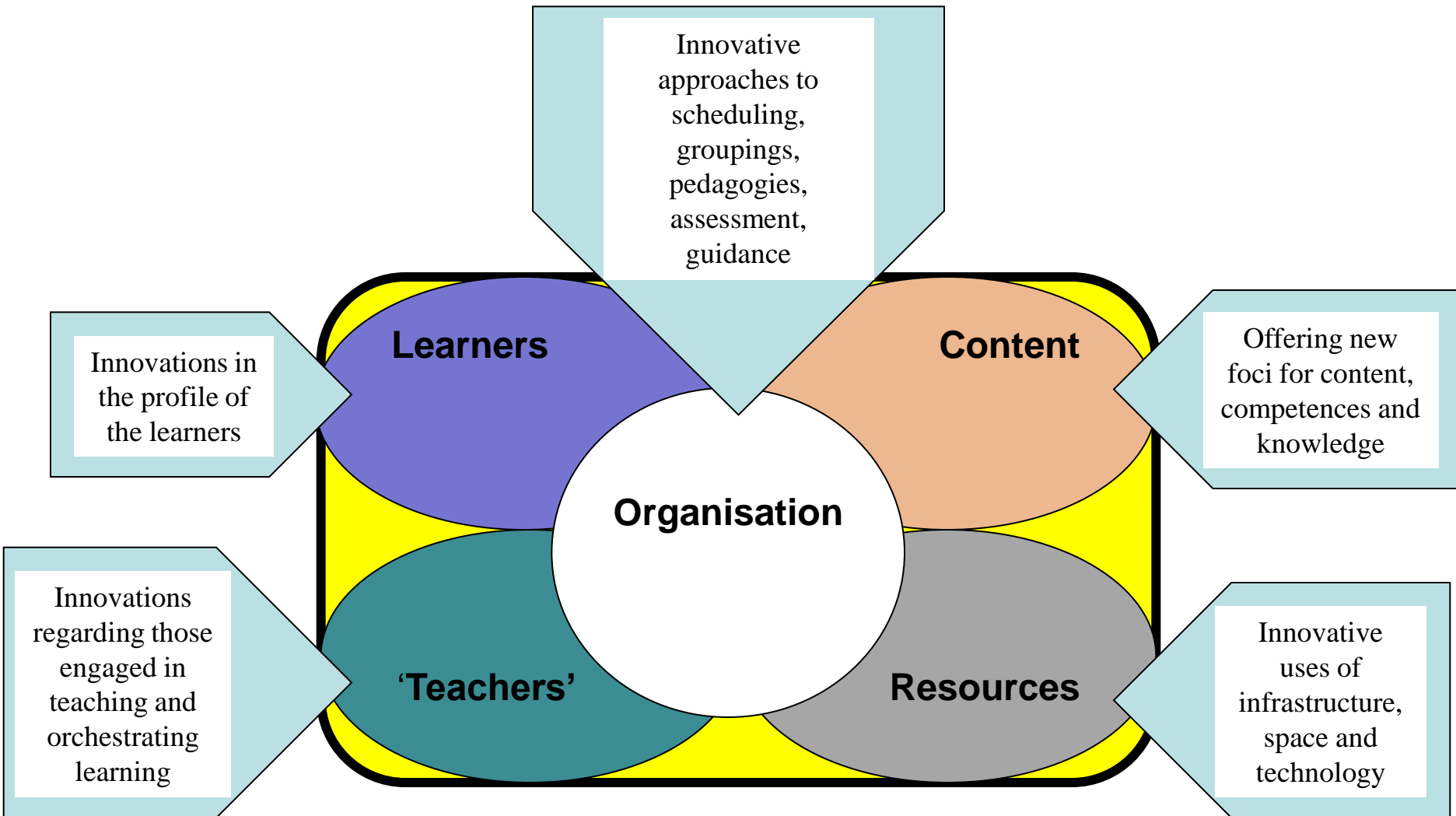
- **Learner-centred:** highly focused on learning but not as an alternative to the key role for teachers
- **Structured and well-designed:** needs careful design and high professionalism alongside inquiry & autonomous learning
- **Profoundly personalised:** acutely sensitive to individual and group differences and offering tailored feedback
- **Inclusive:** such sensitivity to individual and group differences means they are fundamentally inclusive
- **Social:** learning is effective in group settings, when learners collaborate, and when there is a connection to community.

# RETHINKING THE MICRO LEVEL AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

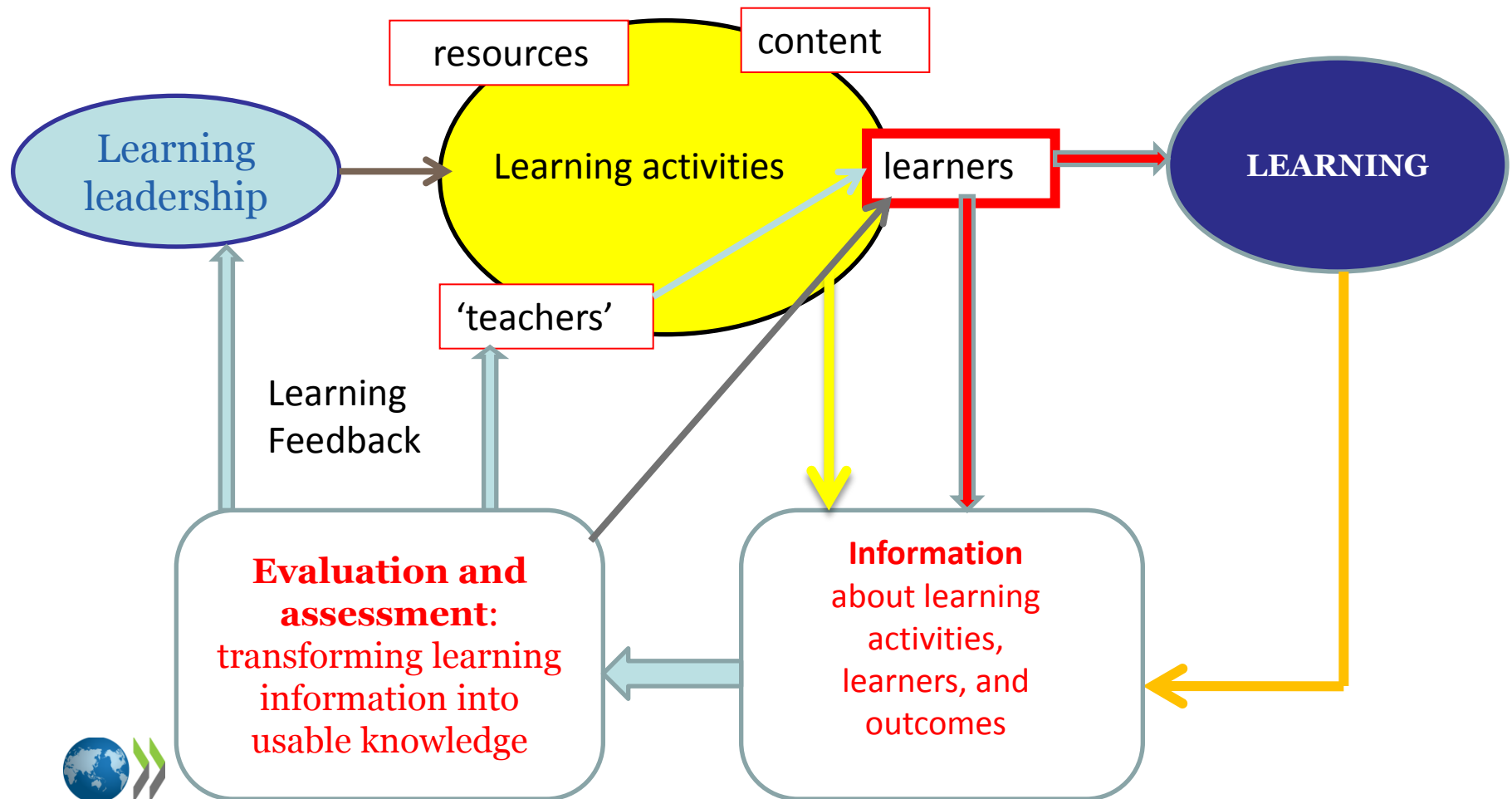
# CERI/ILE understanding of the 'micro' environment level



# Providing the framework to understand micro-level innovations in the ILE study (for 2012 publication)



# Dynamics and Organisation of Learning Environments



# How addressed in our conference programme

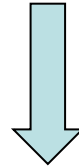
- Project summary presentations (Tuesday am)
- Learning from the innovations
  - The learning experience
  - Organisation and dynamics
  - Redesigning the medium of learning
  - Changing content
- Transversal workshops (Tuesday pm)
  - Research-based innovation
  - Learning leadership
  - Teacher professionalism



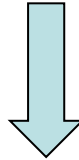
# IMPLEMENTATION AND CHANGE

# COMMON FRAMEWORK IMPLICIT IN MUCH RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION OF SCHOOLING AND LEARNING

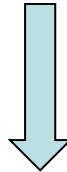
SYSTEM



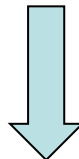
SCHOOL



CLASS



TEACHER

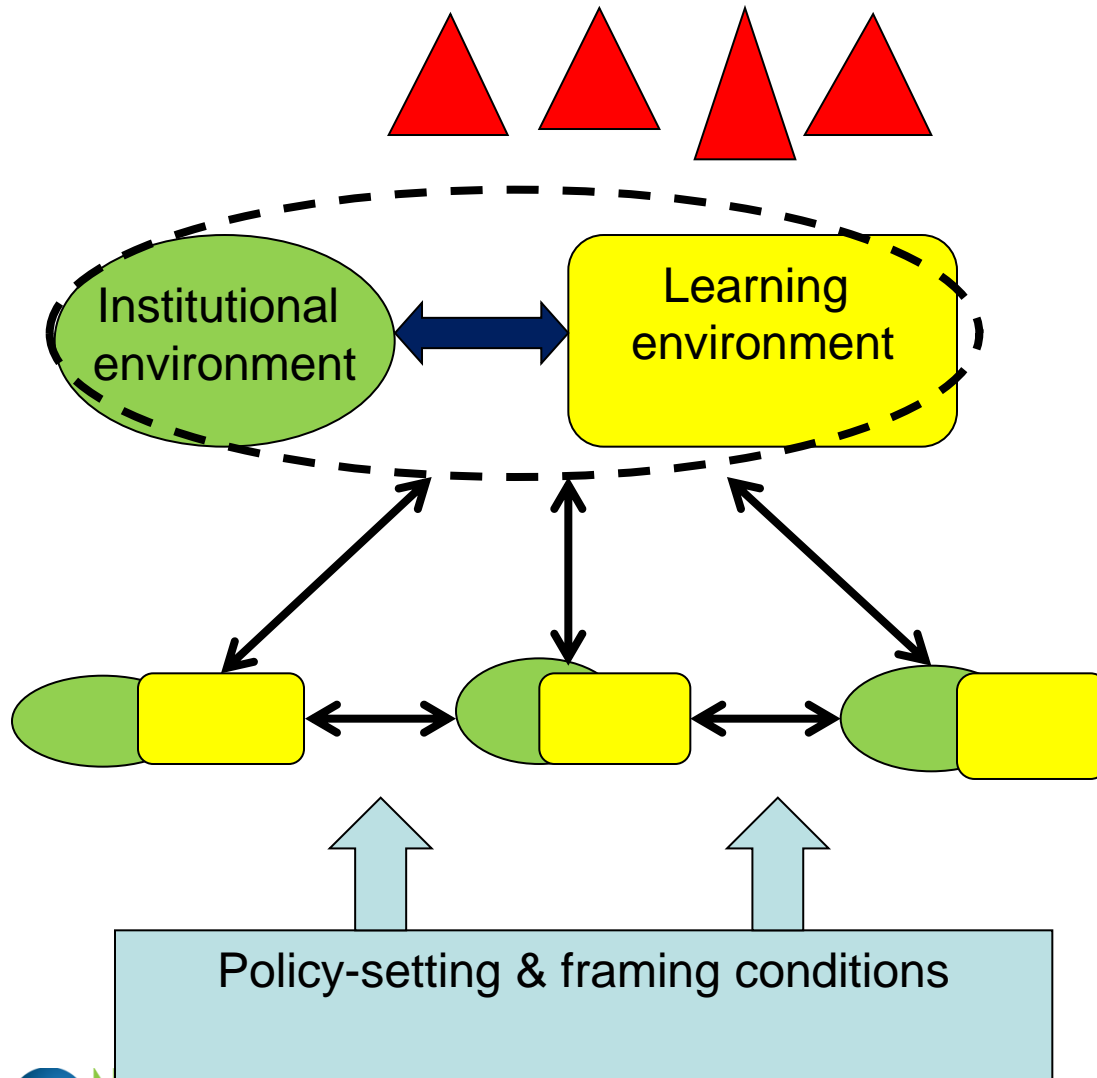


LEARNER

# Why look beyond this framework when our focus is on learning?

- It is expressed in terms of institutional structures not configurations of learning, and too hierarchical
- Assumes existing institutions – discourages consideration of innovations and of hybrid or non-formal learning
- Conflates the relationships between institutions & the organisation of learning - instead these should be problematised & brought into sharper relief
- Too individualistic – single schools, single classes, single teachers - not the wholes relevant for learning - encourages fragmented and snapshot thinking.

# Learning environments embedded in a wider systemic framework



**'Atomic' level** –  
individual classes &  
learning episodes

**Micro level**  
**Environments** –  
learning &  
institutional

**Meso level** Networks  
of environments &  
of practice

**Macro level** -System & ed.  
authorities

# Analysis and exchange of innovative practice around:

- 1. Creating and sustaining effective learning environments (applying the ‘principles’)
- 2. Approaches to align the technical core (the learning environment) and the organisational setting (institutional environment)
- 3. Developing learning-focused networks and communities of practice (‘meso level’)
- 4. Exploring policy approaches to promote change & stimulate innovative learning at the micro and meso levels (macro level)

# Potential role of the participating systems & organisations on ‘Implementation and Change’

Depending on interest and resources:

- A ***short report on initiatives*** showing success in changing learning and the others that did not – why?
- More ***sustained monitoring of an on-going initiative*** - a ‘case study’ in implementing innovative learning.
- “***laboratory of innovative learning change***” - the volunteer system using participation in ILE (framework, material, international network) for transformation

## Expert networks to clarify key issues

- Establishment of small networks (funding permitting) to lead analytical work, possible themes:
  - learning leadership
  - micro-level learning change routines
  - The challenge of hybrid organisations involving mixes of formal and non-formal
  - networking and communities of practice focused on learning change
  - outcomes and evaluation of innovative learning environments

# In our conference programme

- Making Innovation Happen (ILE and IS –Tuesday afternoon)
- Systemic Change – ‘is scaling up our challenge?’ (Wednesday)
- Workshops – governance, networks, resources, policies shaping conditions
- Stakeholder insights



# SUMMING UP AND NEXT STEPS

# The conference aims

- Examine and understand inspiring forms of innovation
- Discuss strategies and priorities for creating and sustaining ILEs and systemic change
- Consolidate the international network of systems, stakeholders and researchers
- Provide substantial input to next steps on ILE

## Still to come...

- Publication analysing cases of innovative learning environments from around the world (2012)
- Knowledge base on innovative learning environments, plus user-friendly materials
- Establish small experts networks – 2011 onwards – and analyses of implementation from participating systems
- Seminars and events in different ILE jurisdictions and work on ‘laboratories of learning change’
- Main international conferences, 2011 (Banff, October 10-12), early 2013 (Chile), beyond?
-  Outputs from ‘Implementation and Change’ work, formats yet to be decided.

Thank you!