



Options for System Engagement in the 3rd Strand of the ILE Project: “Implementation & Change”

The third strand of the ILE project is the most directly policy-relevant part of the overall ILE exercise, exploring approaches to growing and sustaining innovative learning. To join means to become active in a network of systems and organisations from around the world devoted to creating innovative learning and to sharing materials and experiences. Already, more than 25 systems and organisations have joined the project for this policy-oriented phase of the work. This is an excellent point for new ones to come into this international project.

The third “Implementation and Change” strand covers different operational, analytical and dissemination activities that feed each other:

- a) ***New analytical work***: As well as specific expert papers, there is a specific focus on ‘*learning leadership*’, to result in a report and international seminar in 2013. We will be exploring the feasibility of additional analytical work, including on appropriate evaluation methodologies.
- b) ***Materials and tools***: From all the examples and analyses, we are looking to create different materials and tools, designed to assist those wishing to grow innovative learning in their own contexts. The aim is to organise the outputs and materials into a Knowledge Base.
- c) ***Operational activities with participating systems***: ILE is bringing together examples of strategies and initiatives designed to spread and sustain innovative learning. These will be uploaded to the ILE site, reflected in the ‘materials and tools’ referred to in b), and analysed in the main ILE report on “Implementation and Change” to be written in 2014. There are different levels of possible engagement (below), and the network of participating systems and organisations itself represents an important vehicle of the ILE work.

This note outlines the different options for engagement by participating systems [i.e. *c) Operational activities*]. Compared with the onerous research requirements of the ILE 2nd strand, the participating systems will not be required to make the same level of input in this third strand of the work and engagement will vary in intensity according to interest and resources.

1st Level of Engagement: Reporting on strategies/initiatives and network participation

The first level of engagement already defines an active role for the countries, regions, networks and foundations that join. It means to complete the System Note (below) and participate actively in the main international ILE events (Barcelona, December 2013; Paris, second half, 2014), as well as to use as appropriate the ILE materials and contacts to promote their own innovation agendas at home.

The ‘System Note’

The ‘System Note’ concerns strategies and initiatives designed to spread and sustain innovative change across education systems. Whereas the ‘Innovative Cases’ strand looked at particular examples of innovative learning environments, this is broadening the horizon from examples of individual schools or ILEs towards change strategies that necessarily involve several and possibly many different sites. These will contribute to the international understanding of the different strategies being pursued in different countries, and of the dynamics involved in realising innovative change.

We are interested in change initiatives designed to spread and sustain innovative change – altering learning environments and ultimately innovating learning itself. They will cover a variety of different approaches, often in combination: direct promotion, provision of incentives, network creation, knowledge management, leadership strategies and other professional development capacity building, creating new forms of expertise and change management, and more general drives to create climates favourable for change on the ground.

This compilation of information covers at least one initiative/strategy for spreading and sustaining innovative change in learning and learning environments, structured around:

- i) *Aims;*
- ii) *Leadership and partners;*
- iii) *Strategies and activities;*
- iv) *Context;*
- v) *Resources;*
- vi) *Developments over time;*
- vii) *Evidence of effectiveness and efficiency;*
- viii) *Success factors;*
- ix) *Tensions and impediments.*

If the initiative is only just beginning, the initial 'System Note' may focus especially on i) – v).

We envisage that the average completed 'System Note' will be around 5pp in length, but they may vary significantly depending on the detail of information available on each initiative and the number of relevant initiatives available to each participating system or organisation.

We have supposed that systems would submit a single 'System Note' at the outset but they may submit more than one if they choose. If a participating system or organisation wishes to submit a revised or new note at a later date to reflect developments and/or new strategies/initiatives, it is free to do so.

Those systems that have joined ILE but not yet submitted a System Note are kindly requested to do so before the end of March 2013.

2nd Level of Engagement: Focus on an Initiative to Spread Innovative Learning Environments

To build on the information provided in the System Note, the participating systems that so wish may follow and report to an agreed format on one of the initiatives (normally one that has already been included in the System Note). This may be an established initiative or instead it may be just beginning.

The aim is to deepen the *richness of description* as captured in the System Note and so move beyond aims, intention statements, and core programme features. The aim is also to be able to *follow change* over time (one year) and to learn from the changes that occur.

The details of the monitoring and reporting format will be made available in March 2013. There will be two reports prepared as part of this exercise: an initial report at the start of the one-year period (normally May 2013) and a follow-up report a year later.

The first will differ from the initial System Note by:

- a) Focusing on one initiative only (some of the submitted System Notes cover several);
- b) Providing more contextual information about aims and rationales and about the target populations and institutions involved;
- c) Elaborating on the theory of change underpinning the strategy, and the mechanisms in place to realise such a "theory".

The main report, however, will be provided a year later and it is expected that each participating system at this level will put mechanisms in place to be able to monitor progress. Basic questions are here likely to include:

- How far have the original intentions and mechanisms been maintained and, if they have changed, why?
- Have new stakeholders come into the frame? Has the policy context changed? Have new opportunities or resources emerged?
- How responsive has been the initiative to altered circumstances?

A strategy or initiative that aims to change learning environments should be evaluated in these terms as well: how far has the reorganisation of learning and behaviours been reached in the way intended?

- *Change of learning environments*: how have arrangements and behaviours been altered – inspired or driven by the initiative. How far-reaching is that change?
- *Reach*: how many learning environments (schools etc.) have shown evidence of change and has such reach met the ambitions of the initiative?
- *Change theories and mechanisms*: how robust have proved to be the underpinning strategies and what might be strengthened to assure wider success?

We would like this note to contain reflections on the evaluations that have been done and that ideally would have been conducted to do justice to the initiative/strategy, including why these may have proved difficult to put in place. Such reflections will provide invaluable additional insight on appropriate evaluation methodologies for innovation in learning in the future.

Once the reporting format has been circulated, it would good to have an immediate feedback from participating systems on whether it is likely that they can engage with the project at this level, with definite confirmation to follow.

3rd Level of Engagement: “Laboratories of learning change”

We have maintained the ambition to include more intensive operational work in ILE under the notion of “laboratories of learning change”. While further clarification is needed of the precise contents, the basic idea is that the “laboratory systems” - some 5 (4-6) ILE systems - cover the same monitoring and reporting as with 2nd Level, but then in addition engage in action, development and reflection to grow innovative learning environments through this strategy. This would be done as part of being a “laboratory of change” and the experiences and results will be shared with the ILE team and the other laboratory systems.

This intensive part of ILE will depend on finding additional resourcing, and on suitable volunteer systems. Each participating system would also need to cover the costs of travel, accommodation etc. of at least 4 participants to the laboratory workshop events, and final conference. Participation in the “laboratories of learning” will depend on the desire of the system to so engage and it will also depend on alignment of the proposed strategy/initiative to the ILE work.

Activities and outputs

Once identified, the invited systems will prepare the initial monitoring note as in the 2nd Level and submit this in time for the first workshop (mid-2013). At the first workshop, the five systems will present their own particular strategy/initiative for growing and sustaining innovative learning and each of these will be held up to the scrutiny of “peer review”. During the year, the ILE project will facilitate the exchange of insights and experiences. The second workshop will be organised around the “implementation and change” learning that had taken place, and will prominently deal how that learning is being infused into the system or across multiple sites so that it goes beyond the immediate workshop participants.

To stimulate the reflections during and after the first workshop, we will present a set of materials and guidelines based on our own analyses - emerging from ‘The Nature of Learning’, the new model for developing powerful 21st century learning environments, from the detailed ILE cases, from the analytical work on learning leadership, evaluation etc. We will continue to develop these materials based on the proceedings of the Workshop so that they can be used by the 5 systems throughout the year.

The final outputs would be a set of short monographs from each participating system, plus new materials created by and for these workshops. These could provide one of the centrepieces of a CERI conference on Innovating to Reform later in 2014.

We are currently working on defining the contents and methodology of the Laboratories of learning change. An update will follow shortly.