Population, Innovation, Outcome

Purpose of the Tool

> DEVELOPING AN INQUIRY FOCUS

Because developing innovations for teaching and learning contexts requires the consideration of so many different aspects of one's practice, it may be hard for educators and administrators to know where to start or how to jump in. Through our work with the Creating Communities of Innovation project, we have found that there are three different aspects of practice that educators and administrators need to consider in order to get started. These three different aspects of practice can be described as: population—the target constituent group that will be most affected by an innovation; innovation—the change in practice that will serve as the vehicle to innovation, and; outcome—the intended outcome or effect of a proposed innovation. The following tool is designed to help teachers and administrators begin developing innovation strategies by considering these three different aspects of their practice in a structured way.

Suggested Time Commitment:

60+ min

4 steps

You will probably need at least an hour to engage in this activity, and you will likely return to this activity over time as the you narrow the focus of your innovation project.

When & How

The Population, Innovation, Outcome tool is most useful at the very beginning of an innovation project, when a study group is determining what change in practice they would like to pursue, and whom that change in practice will affect.

To begin, get a sheet of chart paper and some markers. Divide the chart paper into three columns and place the headings population, innovation, outcome(s) at the top of each column, in that order. Working with your study group—or the group of colleagues with whom you will be pursuing your innovation—fill in each column by answering the following questions, in the following order.

Steps

1. Identify your target audience

Under the population column, identify the target audience of your innovation work by responding to the following question:

- Who are the people you most hope to impact by pursuing your innovation?

Here, it is helpful to be as specific as possible. For instance, instead of writing down something vague and over-ambitious like "21st Century learners," it would be more helpful to focus on a specific population, such as "3rd and 4th grade students at Springfield Elementary School."

2. Identify your intended outcomes

Now skip over to the outcome(s) column. Considering the constituent group you identified in the population column, consider what impact you'd like to have on that group by responding to the following question:

- What specific change(s) would you like your target population to experience as a result of your innovation?

Again, be as specific as possible. For example, instead of writing down something vague and over-ambitious like "become global citizens," it would be more helpful to focus on a specific outcome like "be able to consider multiple perspectives" or "be able to say 'hello' and 'goodbye' in two or more languages."

3. Identify your intended innovation

Now shift your attention to the innovation column. The goal for this column is to develop a strategy for achieving the impact you identified in the outcome(s) column for the constituent group you identified in the population column. To do this, consider the following questions:

- How can you change your practice to achieve your intended outcome(s) for your target population?
- What strategies can you employ to achieve your desired outcome(s) for your intended audience?

As before, it will help to be as specific as possible.

4. Develop a plan

Once you have established the population you would like to focus on, the innovations you would like to pursue, and the outcome(s) you hope to achieve, work with your colleagues to develop a plan to put the innovation you identified into action. As you do, it may be helpful to return to your original Population, Innovation, Outcome work with an eye towards being flexible with your intended goals as you engage in the iterative process innovation.

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