



Innoption: Next Gen Adoption Strategies for Next Gen Learning **Executive Summary (9.21.18)**

Summary

A new 18-month, \$450K grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York will support the development of what we are calling *innoption*: next gen change management that leads to enduring, fundamental transformations in community mindset, school design, student learning experiences and 21st-century outcomes. In innoption, the change processes embody the central principle of the entire enterprise – that people of all ages do best in environments that enable agency and autonomy, honor purpose and diversity, and provide opportunities to develop mastery.

Problem/Needs Statement

A growing cloud of innovative educators, including the Carnegie Corporation’s Opportunity by Design and Springpoint Schools grantees and our own breakthrough school designers at [Next Generation Learning Challenges](#), have been working to address a complex and daunting challenge: creating demonstrably effective, 21st-century, next gen alternatives to the industrial-era, compliance-oriented school model, where deeper learning can thrive. There might be 500 to 1000 of these schools now serving students, nation-wide, with many showing [promising results](#).

But the hard part, and the part that we tend to get almost perfectly wrong in public education, is *how to move these new approaches, mindsets, success definitions, and measurement benchmarks into common use without losing the power, promise, complexity and depth of the original ideas*. So that tens of millions of schoolchildren, not just tens of thousands, can benefit and emerge from high school fully prepared to meet the challenges of 21st-century life.

This scaling-up of innovation has proved so difficult because the change processes we use in public education to significantly alter practice and the student experience reflect industrial-age thinking and methodologies. We are deluding ourselves, if we try to end the era of factory-model schools by using factory-model strategies for change. In the words of Albert Einstein: “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.”

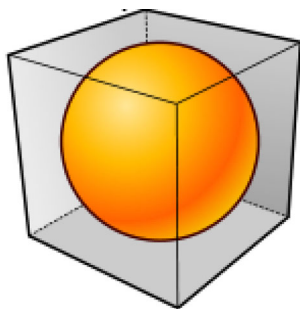
In order for agency-driven, personal efficacy-building, [next gen forms of learning](#) to advance broadly, the change processes we use to make that happen must reflect those same core tenets. Learning models designed to enable deep development of personalized, agency-driven, 21st-century competencies cannot take root through the use of rules-and-compliance-driven 20th-century change processes. The contradiction between them is fatal. We need to think more deeply about our strategies for change – and we need to do that quickly, before the education-industrial complex (unthinkingly, and out of earnest good intention) begins to scale up next gen learning using incompatible processes that are destined to fail.

The Initiative

NGLC's Next Gen Adoption Strategies initiative will connect and integrate a number of strands of the organization's work over the past seven years and co-develop, with several high-capacity grantees and partners, a new set of strategies, resources and capacities (see "The Cube," below) that incorporate the central tenet of post-industrial, 21st-century learning and social organizing ("The Core"). All of this will be staked to a rigorous, high-expectation North Star for students: the fundamentally deeper, broader expression of student success that NGLC developed over the past three years through our [MyWays Project](#) – a distillation of all 25 major research-based frameworks of essential 21st-century competencies.

The Cube:

The frame of evidence, resources, codified strategies, enabling policy, and external capacity needed to adopt and adapt effective practices at scale



The Core:

The central principle, resting on settled social science, that should guide the actions of people and organizations in the 21st century: that people of all ages do best in environments that enable agency and autonomy, honor purpose and diversity, and provide opportunities to develop mastery.

Long-Term Goals:

- **Enable the effective adoption/adaptation by whole communities of the most promising next gen learning design work pioneered largely at the school level over the past six years.**
- **Ensure that this wave of adoption maintains the pioneers' core conviction that rigorous, student-centered, deeper learning approaches are essential for attainment of the full set of competencies students need to thrive in the 21st century and for the nurturing of a just, equitable society for all.**

Central Project Objective:

To achieve these long-term goals, the following outcome-oriented objectives will need to take place during the grant term:

- *Increase awareness and understanding* among leading K-12 reformers and practitioners of the need for their change processes to reflect and incorporate their vision for next gen learning and 21st-century student success.
- *Significantly deepen and improve the K-12 field's chances for success* in executing 21st-century change strategies towards 21st-century goals and next gen learning.

Project Activities

- **Change Management Research:** Identify and synthesize relevant change management strategies and processes driven by principles of agency and enabling, and that have served other sectors well but have not become widely adopted by K-12 education, including those of Kotter International (a longtime NGLC partner); Baldrige and Deming Plan-Do-Study-Act improvement science processes (and similar); lean/agile design processes; and IDEO-style user-driven design thinking.
- **Outlier Practice-based Research:** Review and analyze processes used effectively by selected high-promise schools and school districts to adopt broader definitions of student success and successfully transform school design, learning practice, and student outcomes.
- **Strategy and Tool Development:** Together with strategic partners and at least one forward-looking school district,¹ develop and/or curate a comprehensive set of strategies, resources, and tools designed to serve school districts ready to commit to *innodoption* in the way it is defined above.
- **Dissemination:** Vet findings and recommendations with leading experts and launch the broad dissemination of these materials, both to district and CMO leaders and to ecosystem partner/providers and policy leaders.
- **Innodoption Application and Initiative Design:** Develop a set of ideas for potential application of the innodoption approaches and resources beyond the scope of this R&D grant. One dimension of this work revolves around NGLC's development of a line of fee-based services designed to help interested districts experiment with innodoption, in the interests of positive impact on the field and building NGLC's organizational sustainability. The other dimension is the development of ideas for follow-on grant-supported initiatives. For example: a national school district and community design challenge aimed at developing a cohort of exemplars of varying sizes and community types; or a national alliance – already existing or newly formed – of districts and organizations committing to using innodoption strategies towards next gen learning goals and practices; or an initiative focused on reshaping policies and contractual regulations that tend to reinforce traditional management practices and mindsets.

¹ The inclusion of a district (or 2-3 districts) among the co-developing partners in this work is a reflection of NGLC's founding conviction regarding educators' crucial and central role in building the goals and strategies of next generation learning. This work could not proceed without the deep involvement of committed, impatient, innovative educators. Under this grant, we will identify and recruit one or two districts of different sizes and community types (though both will serve substantial percentages of students of color and/or poverty). Two districts have been identified and recruited to date: Vista Unified and Arcadia, both in California. One other district, likely Salem, MA will join them.