J-WEL Connections: October 5 – 29, 2020

Summary Report

Executive Summary

J-WEL Connections are member and invitation-only virtual gatherings for educational transformers from around the world. These gatherings provide participants first-hand access to MIT innovations and practices, and provide a platform for all of us to connect with and learn from our community.

The theme of this second J-WEL Connections was "Activating the Ecosystem to Reimagine Education." This theme was determined following feedback from you, the members, and built off the discussions from the previous J-WEL Connections.

Figure 1: Screen capture of the Welcome Session

J-WEL Connections was designed in two different sections:

Respond
Weeks 1 and 2 focused on responses to the challenges created and surfaced by the pandemic. During this period, members engaged in thematic conversations around policy; mental health and community; teaching, learning and assessment; and equity. Speakers included Open Learning's Sanjay Sarma, the Honorable Jane Swift, and Professor Tom Kochan. There was also a platform for our community to connect with and reflect on topics relevant to their region.

Reimagine
During Weeks 3 and 4, members had the opportunity to engage with our global membership and invited guests in a series of participatory design exercises focused on the futures we want to create. Members emerged with data and insights to advance their organizations' work and the collective group will determine areas of priority and direction for the MIT J-WEL community.

Educator's Track
As part of J-WEL Connections, interested participants also had the opportunity to participate in a four-week series of sessions around "Intervention Design" to help educators think about how to design, prototype, iterate, and evaluate interventions. The goal was to empower educators to think about their practice, potential areas of improvement as well as what data to gather, and how to understand the impact and assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Each week covered a different topic.

- Week 1 - Introduction to Learning Sciences
- Week 2 - Online and Blended Learning
- Week 3 - Inquiry Based Learning
- Week 4 - Intervention and Project Design

"Respond" Main Takeaways (Weeks 1 and 2)

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<u>Policy</u>

- "Degree and done" is no longer valid
- Education system has a fundamental misunderstanding of the human brain
- Universities must become places of action and engagement
- Using exams as the only measure of learning is bad
- Student life is critical and essentially has been undone due to pandemic
- In dealing with student life, you need to look upstream — 4 predictors of success: 1) self-care; 2) self-control; 3) relationships; and 4) intellectual engagements
- Most important thing is: communication, communication, communication!
- Realization educational inequality is widening — students with privilege returned to school and those of color or poverty struggled with remote

- Disruption of COVID offers opportunity to act — leapfrog moment to drive innovation and reimagining of education
- Personalized learning is no longer just a thought — it's a reality with remote learning. Not to say we are doing it well — but it is being done
- Learn from the crisis to make a more resilient, productive, fair and equitable future
- We must develop new social contract to support the future — guaranteed health care; national paid family and sick leave; employment continuity; unemployment insurance to all workers; expand workforce training; and end benefit retaliation for immigrants

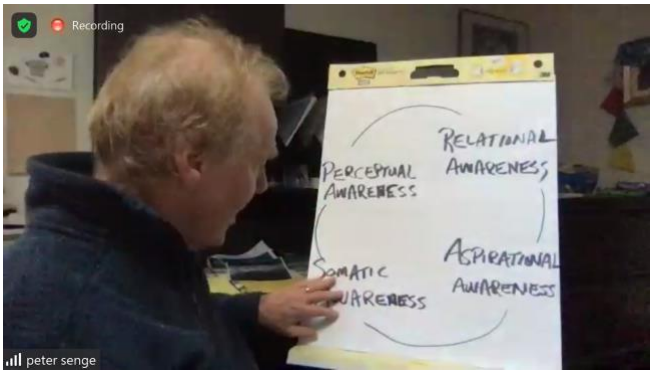
How we must teach in the future

Principle	In-person	Online	Not done well
Lectures	Today →	Future	
Retrieval Effect		Future ←	Today
Spaced Repetition		Future ←	Today
Interleaving		Future ←	Today
Faded examples		Future ←	Today
Context & intent	Future ←		Today
Curiosity	Future ←		Today
Coaching	Future ←		Today
Hands-on Learning	Future ←		Today

- Engage the workforce: time for distributed leadership (self organized support groups!)
- Manage productivity by project, not screen time; build scheduling consensus team by team
- Stimulate water cooler discussion to foster innovation; provide training to manage virtual meetings
- Data is critical to help leaders determine policies they should implement
- We will never go back to normal. What is happening now (flexibility, reduced costs, existing content) provides an example for the future

<u>Mental Health & Community</u>

- Pandemic has brought up issues associated with race and inequality
- Work demands have escalated — having to reinvent, while continuing to do what they used to do, while dealing with childcare
- Managers need to express support for the whole person
- We need to all reconsider how we change the environment to be more supportive. We're on the cusp of new orientation
- We need motivators to work effectively —it's good for faculty to check-in with their students and/or create a bar of expectation
- Students need routine and we should equip them to support their own mental health
- Cultures live outside of us and inside us — we all have profound interconnectedness and dependencies
- We need to create a more personal reflective environment
- Absence of small daily chitchat (pandemic reduces personal interactions for everyone, leaving people feeling more isolated), missing the creative collisions
- Remembering that the students are also in the same space as us — remote learning is new to all of us



Teaching, Learning & Assessment

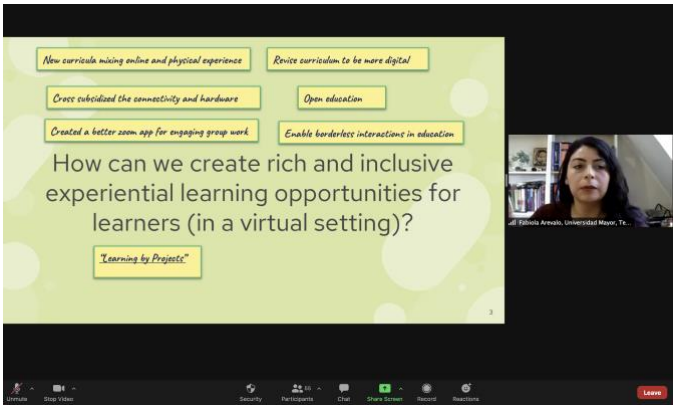
- Human-centered design is helpful (and to consider accessibility)
- Pre-COVID, technology was ubiquitous but with the goals to make things efficient, but not change pedagogy
- Technology integration can serve as a Trojan mouse to change pedagogy
- "Technology itself will not change the way people do things"
- The magic of a residential campus is now clear
- Technology can be helpful to leave traces of helpful data for teachers, which will allow them to use and take on further actions
- Shared key learning science concepts: cognitive overload, active learning, and mastery
- Discussed a framework for implementing learning science principles to challenges of remote learning. Starting with thinking about equity and access, followed by examining how aspects of cognitive science might be used to solve challenges in areas of learning, remembering, applying knowledge and building expertise.
- Examined the range of learning modalities related to online learning. An instructor might use some of these modalities based on the specific context. Assessment should help in evaluating which modality works better.
- Participants defined their challenges before discussing breakout groups with others
- Talked about learning engineering process as an iterative process that can be used to implement curriculum change

In curriculum & course development:

- Important in curriculum reform is the question why: Why are we doing this? One motivation is the inclusion of new knowledge and new perspectives. For faculty, the least motivating factor is the idea of accreditation.
- Implementing a new curriculum requires a substantial centralized effort in coordination with several colleges and departments, but the initial first step needs to be driven by the faculty.
- Faculty need to be in charge of their own course development. Once they have a plan, the centralized continuity group can support them.
- Curriculum revisions need to originate organically. If it is not local and grassroots from faculty as part of the partnership, it will fail. In changing pedagogy, reform should combine improvements in instructional strategies with faculty domain knowledge to increase faculty buy-in.
- "Carrots work better with faculty than sticks." Getting faculty attention, listening, helping them to fill the gaps in their experience is essential.
- "Curriculum Redesign – changing what we teach – is the hardest possible thing you can try to do." It is much harder than technology-infrastructure or pedagogical changes (changing how we teach). Faculty are the major stakeholders in the shape of their programs and know that their experience and domain knowledge are key to any curriculum change.
- Moving from a content-focused to competency-focused curriculum can reduce the inclination to include everything.
- When reimagining a new course: Tasks should build upon each other so that the deep structure of the discipline is being revealed and taught to students.
- The learning sciences can provide evidence-based pedagogical strategies when revising and implementing.
- It is important to develop curriculum for 21st century skills: socio-emotional skills, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship.

Reimagine (Weeks 3 and 4)

To target our "reimagine" work, members participated in a charrette. "Charrettes" are intense, on-the-spot, fast ideation efforts that intentionally focus on a broad diversity of ideas in little time. The word charrette means "little cart" in French: architecture students at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris often pulled intense all-nighters right before final projects were due and these small wooden carts were pulled around studios to collect their giant, final drawings. While the term comes from architecture, charrettes are used in design fields as well — in digital and traditional design media.



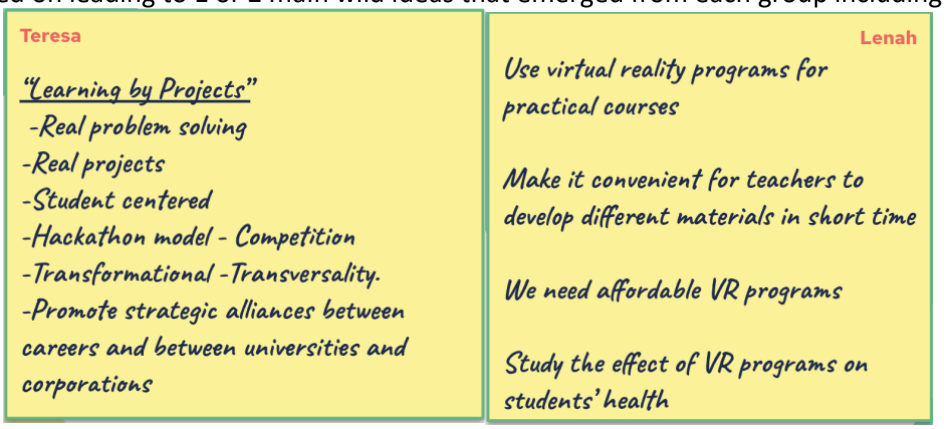
In comparison with some other types of generative ideation methodologies, the greatest benefits of the charrette process is it teases out actionable ideas quickly and equitably — you don't have to be a "designer" to have a great idea, or even to facilitate a charrette. It's a dialogic process with benefits that include:

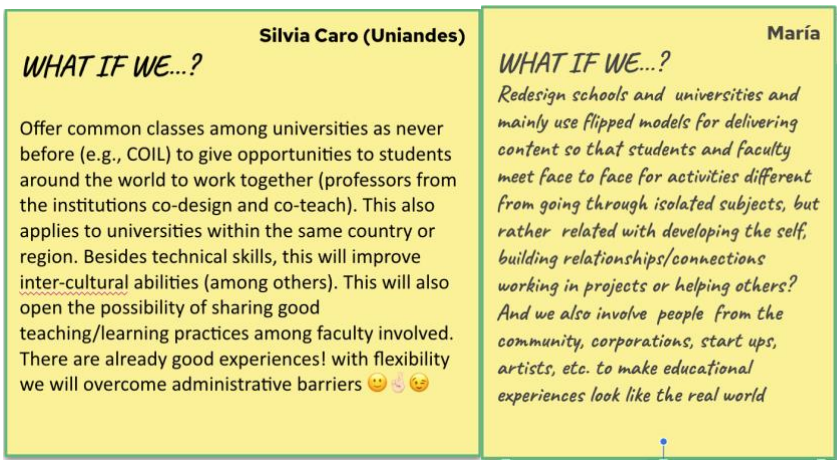
- Being inspired by design ideas from various people
- Kick-starting a "designer" in your midst who is temporarily paralyzed by the blank page (or screen)
- Deeply listening to and understanding priorities from people in different functional groups (and possibly building consensus)
- Making contributors feel listened to and considered equally

The goal of this charrettes process was to invite our community to reimagine solutions to several thematic "design problems". We organized charrettes into four different topic-groups. These topics were voted on by participants:

1. The Future of Teaching and Learning
2. Reimagining Advising
3. Building Learning Communities Online
4. Experiential Learning in a Virtual Setting

During a 90-minute meeting, participants put forth wild ideas which the full breakout group discussed and voted on leading to 1 or 2 main wild ideas that emerged from each group including:





Please find the slides from each charrette group here:

- Future of teaching and learning
- Experiential learning in a virtual setting

Continue the Conversation

The J-WEL Connections site is designed as a living resource to support ongoing engagement and discussion. Recordings of the entire program have now been posted back to the event calendar. The session recordings are on the pages where you joined each session during the event.

You can revisit sessions or view sessions you were unable to attend. We also encourage you to invite colleagues from your organization who were unable to participate to access the event recordings. These recordings could perhaps be used to hold internal discussions.

Our collective views on next steps

In our final report out, each charrette group reported out their wild ideas, and requested input. One report-out included a video from a university bureaucrat from the future!

Dr. Anjali Sastry shared the collectively designed Miro document designed to summarize our shared J-WEL Connections experience.

Participant Summaries

We are also thrilled to have session summaries from the J-WEL community members on the following sessions:

- Dr. Guadalupe Vadillo, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, *Redesigning evaluations so students want to brag about them*
- Dr. Hessah Alqahtani, King Abdulaziz University, *SCALE-UP: "Student-Centered Active Learning Environment with Upside-down Pedagogies"*
- Lori Novick-Carson, teacher, *Re-professionalizing the Field of Education Through Learning Science*
- Dr. Lindelwa Sinxadi, Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), *A Competency Mapping Framework for Service Learning Implementation in Built Environment Curriculum*

List of Participants

J-WEL Connections participants included 221 from 68 organizations
Networking and connecting across our community are important aspects of J-WEL Connections. We encourage you to reach out to participants whom you met during J-WEL Week, to build connections around common challenges, and to share possible solutions. A full list of participants with their emails can be found here.

Next J-WEL Connections

We are currently planning for the next J-WEL Connections to remain virtual and be held on March 22 - April 16, 2021. Based on initial survey feedback we see, innovation, experiential learning and social responsibility as potential ideas, ***but, as always, request member feedback and input.***