

RISE Guide for Using Feedback Loops to Cultivate Health Science Education Innovation

To develop and cultivate health science education (HSE) innovation, it is important to continuously elicit iterative information and engage with relevant stakeholders. Feedback loops support this cyclical approach through regular exploration and review of outcome data that allows innovators to continually adapt innovation ideas to better align activities with the vision.

Three Phases of Feedback Loops

Feedback loops use recursive cycles to explore, discover, review, and discuss to continually learn from and adapt innovations and can occur at all stages of idea development (pre-pilot, pilot, or post-implementation). Below are three phases of this process.



I. Explore the HSE innovation with a critical, questioning mind-set to **discover** what works and why or why not. Use two types of questions—fundamental and disruptive—to drive exploration and discover the nuances of the idea. Fundamental questions will provide describe the current state of the education innovation topic, while disruptive questions will challenge the commonly held assumptions and uncover new pathways of exploration.

II. Review what is learned as you explored and discovered the innovation idea and **discuss** with stakeholders, including intended recipients of the innovation and people external to the innovation’s primary area of focus. Regular review of outcomes will help assess whether the current state of the innovation aligns with the vision. Discussions should provide stakeholders the opportunity to share their unique expertise and distinct perspectives, challenge their understanding of how change will happen, and determine what elements are essential in order for the innovation to achieve its intended vision.

III. Learn from the review and discussion phase to **adapt** the innovation idea. Innovation ideas must be adapted in order to maximize the usefulness of what is revealed during the exploration and review phases and address shifting contexts, priorities, and stakeholder perspectives. There is much to be learned from what did *not* work as from what *did* work that can inform future directions for the innovation. After engaging in the three phases of the feedback loop, this process should be repeated to understand the impact of any adaptations to the innovation idea.

Using Theory of Change to Propel Feedback Loops

A Theory of Change (ToC) can propel the feedback loop by highlighting specific areas for exploration and discovery as well as guiding innovators to targeted areas for review. The ToC approach identifies the innovation’s vision—i.e. the desired the future state— and uses backward design to create a visual model of the changes, activities, and resources necessary to achieve this vision. To learn more about this approach, please refer to the RISE ToC resource, available at: https://rise.med.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/Designing-an-Innovation-Theory-of-Change_updated-11.12.20.pdf.

References

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