

“Risk” is not only in the things that we do but often in the things that we don’t do.”
-George Couros, author *Innovator’s Mindset*

Intelligent risk-taking weighs benefits and disadvantages of choices to assume calculated risks that yield impactful outcomes. Intelligent risk-taking is a behavior that can be learned and improved with practice. Taking intelligent risks requires tolerance and an expectation that education innovation includes both successful and unsuccessful endeavors.

Cultivating Intelligent Risk-Taking

Intelligent risk-taking can be cultivated and supported by applying deliberate, thoughtful consideration to both the problem and its potential solutions. Consider the following steps as a guide for cultivating intelligent risk-taking:

1. **Identify What You Hope to Achieve**—Clearly establish what makes a risk worth taking. Think through and describe the desired short-term and long-term changes you expect.
2. **Assess Lessons Learned**—Draw on personal experience to make the best decisions in the present moment. Consider how others failed and what mistakes were made to inform future directions.
3. **Develop a Plan of Action**—Create a plan of action by defining your timeline, listing resources and knowledge you might require, and considering potential unintended and/or negative outcomes or barriers that potentially stand between you and your desired outcomes.
4. **Decide Whether Risk is Worth Taking**—Consider potential benefits, disadvantages, and consequences of exercising the proposed decision or plan of action. Balance available information and intuition to decide whether to proceed.
5. **Implement Ideas into Action**—Transfer ideas into activities that advance innovative ideas. Include activities that push the status quo and may have high potential for failure.
6. **Evaluate Outcomes**—Embrace failure as an important part of the education innovation process. Allow yourself freedom to fail and acknowledge failure as a learning opportunity. Use what you learn from both successes and failures to further improve your education innovation.

Assessing Your Intelligent Risk-Taking Competency

Intelligent risk-taking can yield bold changes and unexpected outcomes. As you assess your personal development in this education innovation competency, consider the extent to which you have:

- explored new ideas, methods, or interventions through experimentation;
- asked provocative questions to explore or challenge existing paradigms;
- tested the boundaries of new possibilities; and/or
- used failed attempts to learn what did and did not work.

References

1. Sicinski A. How To Take Intelligent Risks In The Pursuit Of Your Goals. IQ Matrix. 2008. Available from: <https://blog.iqmatrix.com/intelligent-risks>.
2. Intelligent Risk-Taking: How to Make Good Risk Decisions. Talent Management 360. Available from: <https://talentmanagement360.com/intelligent-risk-taking/#:~:text=What%20you're%20aiming%20for,the%20entire%20company's%20business%20success>.
3. Ashkenas R, Taking Risks in Troubled Times. Harvard Business Review. January 18, 2011. Available from: <https://store.hbr.org/product/taking-risks-in-tough-times/H006PP>.