



Making the Leap: Utilizing a Framework for Evaluation to Strengthen Factors that Support Program Innovation

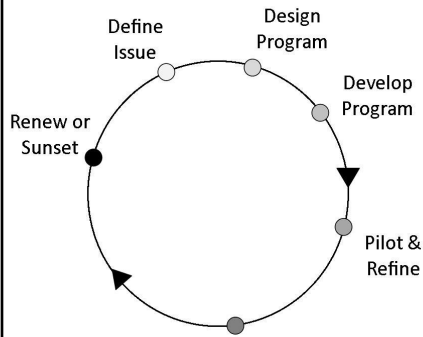
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How can we use a **developmental evaluation approach** to guide our **intentional steps** to help Extension teams make **innovative leaps** with their programming?

(OR...a presentation of 3 “so’s?,” 3 cases and a few questions.)



WHAT'S NEXT?



EXTENSION PROGRAM INNOVATION

The ongoing process of challenging and adapting to generate new ideas, processes or products to strengthen impact performance.

Meyer, Boyce, & Meyer (2015)

So...How do we capture what we do at our desks every day to develop and strengthen programming?



Evaluate

1.1 County enrollment data show 4-H participation is underrepresented in urban areas.

Growth in Impact

Design

1.2 Team identifies partnership with urban community-based youth organizations (CBOs) to offer Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) clubs as a strategy to grow participation.



Construct

1.3 One team member invites urban CBO staff and 4-H leaders into a year-long cohort to develop their abilities to facilitate exploratory science and design activities for youth, using a nationally recognized curriculum.



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Examples?

- Developing a **completely new STEM event** that involves real-world problem solving.
- Taking **network weaving and other novel approaches** to strengthen local food systems.
- Using **new technologies** to better train citizen scientists.
- Completely **re-thinking traditional program approaches** to serve new audiences.

****Check out *Working Differently in Extension* podcast!**



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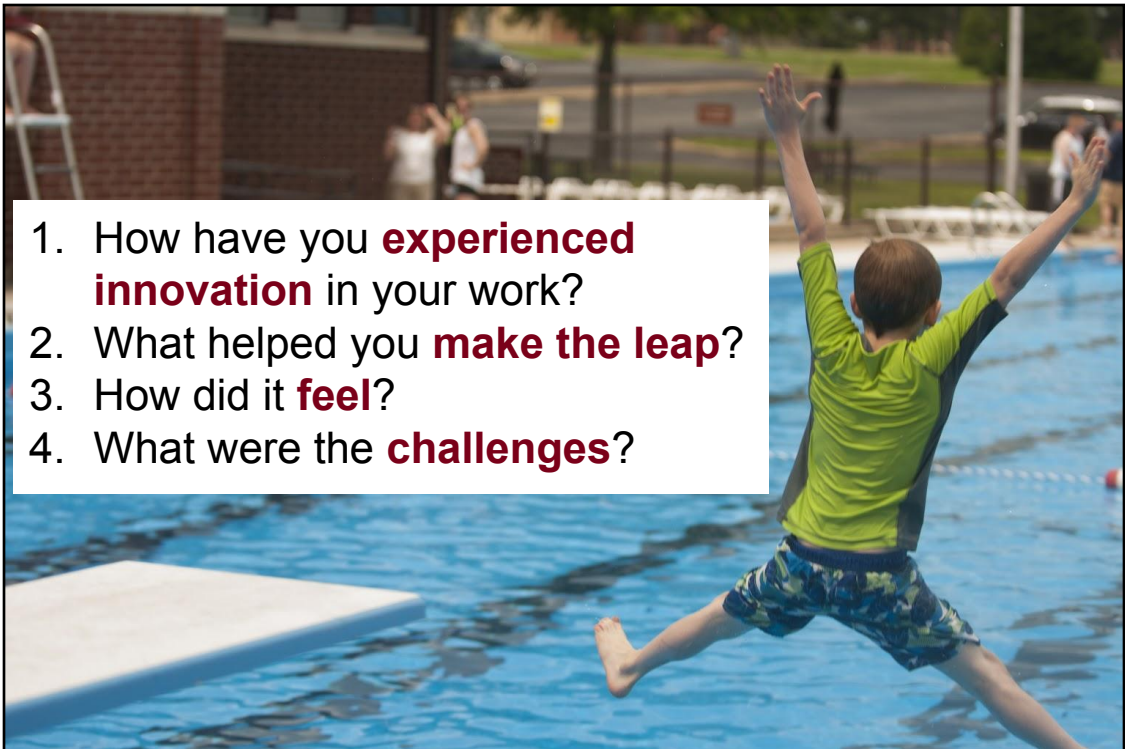
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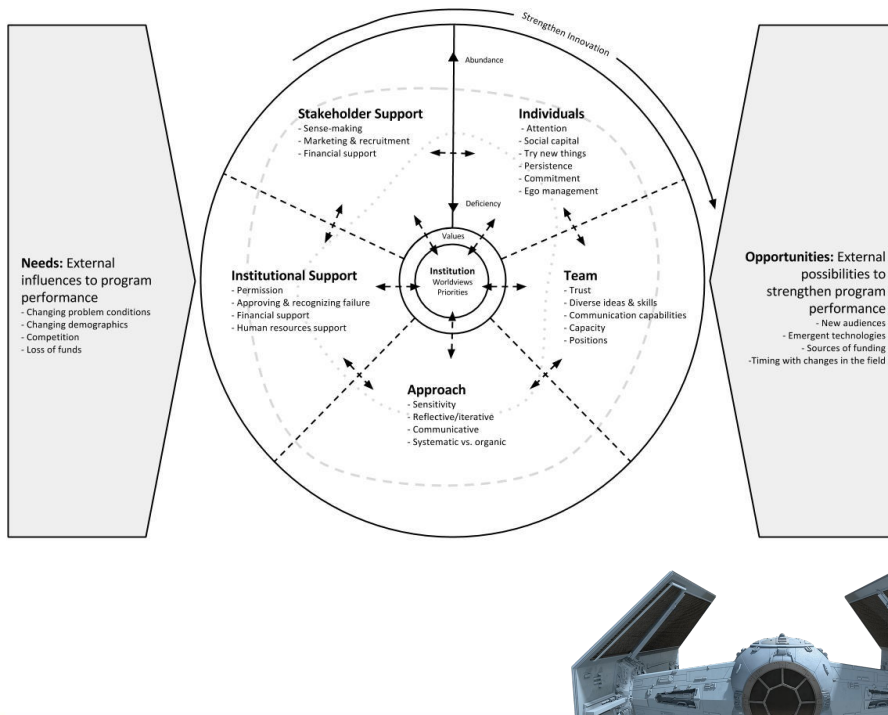
SO... what **organizational factors** can **prompt, reinforce and sustain** the **program innovation practice**?

We call this “taking the leap,” especially in reference to enabling more radically different approaches to programming.



1. How have you **experienced innovation** in your work?
2. What helped you **make the leap**?
3. How did it **feel**?
4. What were the **challenges**?





Individual characteristics

Perceptiveness | Commitment | Collegiality | Ego Management

1. Perception of **potential** to address need or tackle opportunity
2. Level of **excitement or commitment** to innovation
3. Abilities for **collegiality** (e.g., S-E Intelligence)
4. Abilities for **ego-management**
5. **Persistence** for innovation



Team characteristics

Varied Expertise | Communication | Trust

1. Team composition includes **different kinds of expertise and strengths** necessary to tackle innovation.
2. Abilities to **share and understand** different points of view, skills and ideas.
3. Team members **feel safe** in sharing ideas and providing feedback.



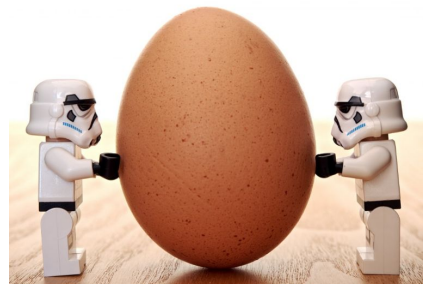
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Approach to Innovation

Systematic | Organic | Autonomy | Reflection

1. The team has **structured ways** of meeting and working toward innovation.
2. Team members **value their approach** to drive their innovation practice.
3. The approach enables team members to **raise novel ideas and strategies.**
4. The approach enables team members to **reflect and learn.**



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Support

Institutional | Stakeholder

1. The team feels a **sense of permission** to attempt innovation.
2. The team can access **necessary expertise** to help with their innovation practice.
3. The team has **resources** sufficient to try novel strategies or ideas.



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SO... How can we use a **developmental evaluation approach** to guide our use of the framework to strengthen **innovation practice**?

(The last of the “so’s?” for those who are counting.)



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Developmental Evaluation?

- Niche is **innovation** and **complexity**
- Elements of the framework are “**sensitizing concepts**”
- Program innovation happens in **different systems**
- There is **uncertainty** and **unintended consequences**
- Evaluators work as **trusted team members**
- Fit into **existing processes**

****Check out Patton, 2011 and others.**



CASE 1

It is possible to work with **program teams and community stakeholders** to assess current opportunities and together drive **program innovation.**



The Unusual Suspect: The Opioid Crisis



CASE 2

It is possible to work with **regional groups** to connect program plans and **program innovation goals**.



** Biggest factor in feeling safe to fail when attempting innovative work. (for me.)*

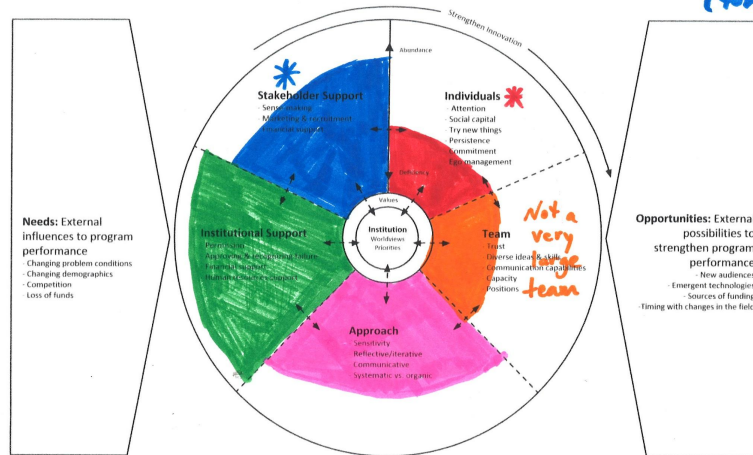


Figure 1. An Innovation capitals Model
Taking the Leap: Exploring a Theory of Program Innovation
Meyer, Meyer, & Katras (2018)

(positive vs. negative attitude)
** Biggest factor in whether program fails or succeeds*



CASE 3

It is possible to work with **individuals** to assess and guide how work plans fit into a **program innovation process**.





**Assessing and deciding
how to grow agroforestry.**



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We are called to **Action....**

Franz and Cox (2012) issued a call: “every Extension system, team, and worker should explore, implement, and evaluate disruptive organizational innovations to enhance relevance and sustainability.”

And...we hope our diagnostics
can aid teams, individuals and
institutions to take these leaps.

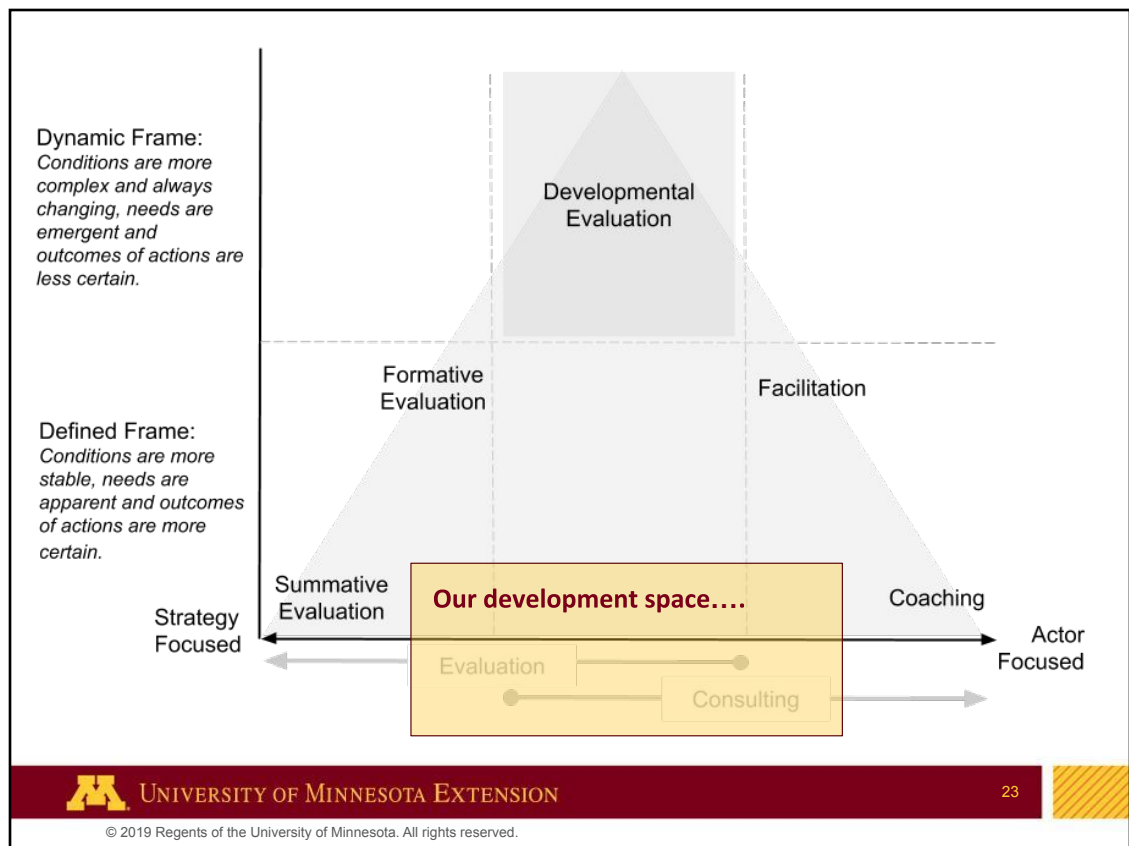


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What's next....

- Refine our **developmental processes**.
- Develop **reflective worksheets** for individuals and teams.
- Curate and/or develop **evaluation instruments** for some factors.
- Describe **more cases** to support and refine the framework.
- Collaborate with **others like you?**



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Extension Program Innovation

Extension Program Innovation

A website to support Extension faculty who are interested in innovation to strengthen program impacts.


In *A Call to Embrace Program Innovation*, Meyer, Boyce & Meyer contend that innovation is critical for Extension to remain vital. They define program innovation as "the ongoing process of challenging and adapting to generate new ideas, processes, or products to strengthen impact performance," and contend that three core practices of *designing, constructing, and evaluating* programs lead to innovation opportunities. Program innovation is a forward-facing, non-sequential, and developmental approach to creating strong programs that operate effectively in the uncertain circumstances inherent to wicked problems and grand challenges.

In *Taking the Leap: Exploring a Theory of Program Innovation*, Meyer, Meyer & Katrass analyze data from a national survey of practitioners from innovative programs, a panel presentation, and interviews with faculty at the University of Minnesota to describe seven factors that influence what prompts innovation and how the process tends to unfold. They present a capitals-based conceptual model that can be used for diagnosing and strengthening program innovation.

The resources on this site are intended to help you in taking an innovation approach to strengthen your programming and impacts.

MyU | Campuses: [Crookston](#) • [Duluth](#) • [Morris](#) • [Rochester](#) • [Twin Cities](#)

<http://z.umn.edu/programinnovation>

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