Augmenting student experience with open innovation platforms: the example of OpenIDEO

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Overview

- Open innovation (OI) platforms
- A “learning experiment” with OpenIDEO
- What happened
- Student experiences
- Personal reflections
- Implications for using OI platforms in HE

Open Innovation (OI) platforms

- websites where complex problems are publicly posted and an undefined group of people is invited to generate and submit proposed solutions – also known as *"crowdsourcing for innovation"* (Howe 2006)

- Diverse problems: complex science & technology, data science & analytics, social innovation, design & marketing, creative work

Large variety of OI platforms

Opportunities offered by OI platforms

- Interaction with the outside world
- Engage with “real world problems”
- Challenge oneself
- Work alongside high profile sponsors
- Engage in exciting collaborations
- Learn to navigate digital environments

Such opportunities are being explored by other HE institutions, such as NYU and Harvard

Designing an “experiment” to use OpenIDEO (1)

- Social innovation challenges: no need for expert knowledge (“we are all designers”)
- MSc Module on Innovation at WBS
- Assessed group work (20%): group participation, idea submission, presentation (reflection and use of theory)
- Supportive mentor: Professor Joe Nandhakumar

Designing an "experiment" (2)

Learning activity	Learning objective
1. Participation in OpenIDEO challenge	***1A)*** Skills for creative problem solving ***1B)*** Group working skills ***1C)*** Experiential learning of innovation process
2. Reflection on group work	***2)*** Learning journey and Personal development
3. Propose theory-informed enhancements to the OpenIDEO platform	***3)*** Develop skills to apply theoretical knowledge

The OpenIDEO challenge

How might parents in low-income communities ensure children thrive in their first five years?

RESEARCH	IDEAS	EFINEMENT	TOP IDEAS	IMPACT	FUNDED
430 contributions	441 ideas	31 final ideas	Announced!	Ongoing	Announced in 3 days

What we asked students (within 4 weeks)

- Create a group profile
- Work in groups and discuss the “research contributions”
- Brainstorm, develop and submit one idea
- Respond to comments made by others to their idea
- Make comments to other ideas
- Reflect on participation
- Prepare presentation and demonstrate application of concepts

How might parents in low-income communities ensure children thrive in their first five years?

Veggication - Communal vegetable planting education scheme to give children the opportunity to learn about their individual influences, secure food supplies, and strengthen family ties.

On-going interactions & adjustments

- Encouragement: my personal submission
- Some groups submitted two ideas
- Reminder of "rewards": *"assessment will be based on evidence of participation"*

Students' reflections

- ✓ Platform easy to use
- ✓ Creative confidence: *"by surrounding ourselves with like-minded innovators, our creativity was reinforced"*
- ✓ Lack of pressure to submit a "perfect" idea
- ✓ Articulating ideas and challenging each other
- ✓ *"Our own life experiences can be a source of new ideas"*
- – Groupwork tensions (also positive)
- – Had to do research for an unfamiliar topic
- – Lack of expertise specific to the challenge
- – Required too much work + few incentives ("only 20%")

Personal reflections

- Challenges specific to OpenIDEO
  - Pre-requisite understanding of “design thinking”
  - Exclusive social Innovation focus
  - Finding a relevant challenge + timeframe challenges

- General issues:
  - Under-estimated effort required by students
  - Risk of matching module objectives with OI platform activities
  - Consider benefits (and costs) of customized solutions

Implications for using OI platforms in HE

- Use of OI platforms can augment student experience
- New possibilities for experiential learning
- Plurality of platforms offer diverse opportunities
- Thinking beyond individual modules?

Thank you! Any questions?