Innovation of Education: The Success Factors of Learning Communities

BALANCING LOCAL EXPECTATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL GOALS: THE CASE OF THE INNOVATION LAB HIBO

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Research purpose and value

The main purpose of this research project was identification of success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO. To put it simply, the research project had to establish "what is needed" for the Innovation Lab HIBO in order to succeed, where success is understood as achievement of the established targets and goals.

By the same the results of this research project would enhance our current understanding of what determines and what enhances the successfulness of living labs as well as provide insights on how successfulness of (specific) living lab is linked to the valorisation of living lab activities.

More generally, the research outcome will contribute to innovation of education by providing insights on success of learning communities that are developing within the educational eco-systems of Hanze University AS.

Research question

What are the success factors of learning communities with regard to:	*(a) the local school level expectations about the performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO,*
	(b) the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS.

For defining the success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO two research topics are formulated:

1) analysis of the formal school expectations regarding role(s), goal(s), objective(s), task(s), expected result(s), and general functioning of the Innovation Lab HIBO

2) analysis of various Hanze University AS strategic and policy documents, in which is defined what is (or might be) the role(s), goal(s), objective(s), task(s), expected result(s), and general rules for living labs at Hanze University AS

The main purpose (objective) the Innovation Lab HIBO: providing a well-structured industry interface
Roles, activities, tasks of the Innovation Lab HIBO and outcomes from its activities:
• The Innovation Lab HIBO is a place “where all questions from both local and international companies could be answered, on different levels, such us:
• by deploying students in placements (PLM),
• or students in graduation reports (GPJs),
• or lecturers in practice-oriented research,
• or by professors in bigger and subsidized research projects with SMEs”.
• The Innovation Lab HIBO is “the central place to keep an overview of the current contacts and past projects”.
• The Innovation Lab HIBO is “the meeting point for all stakeholders in this field”.
• The Innovation Lab HIBO “is to lead to more practice-oriented research”.
• The Innovation Lab HIBO is a “consultancy for specific companies, leading to agreements between IBS, FEZ, and Hanze Pro, so as to handle all this well financially”.

The main purpose (objective) the Innovation Lab HIBO in detail: "combine its time-honoured activities with companies (placements, graduation reports, etc) with new ideas, plans, and activities –on practice-oriented research, consultancy, organizing guest lectures and excursions, and trainings for companies- to further strengthen these links"
The specified target for the Innovation Lab HIBO: "a more effective and efficient cooperation with companies in the North of the Netherlands (N-NL) and abroad"
Expectations regarding the final outcome of activities of *the Innovation Lab HIBO*: **"**to enable our students and lecturers/researchers to more actively engage in practice-oriented research (academic and professional engagement)".
Direction for modernisation of school's interface with businesses: "IBS *needs to activate its interface* with the industry, so as *to move* from the current ad hoc phase on this topic towards a more process/systems based approach".

Additional roles and tasks for *the Innovation Lab HIBO* (based on the IBS Vision Document):
1. The Innovation Lab HIBO is the IBS' career centre.
2. The Innovation Lab HIBO manages an annual programme on "company visits and guest speakers, for all bachelor and master programmes (excursions and guest lectures)".
3. The Innovation Lab HIBO has several data lists, such as a list of companies with formal contacts, a list of IBS staff with company contacts, and a list of services (how can companies make use of the services of the HIBO).
4. The Innovation Lab HIBO is involved in mentoring of IBS students at companies.
5. The Innovation Lab HIBO is involved in living labs at IBS.
6. The Innovation Lab HIBO involves both the Hanze Languages Centre and the Intercultural Learning Lab, by providing "a programme of trainings for companies (in-company or at Hanze) in foreign languages and intercultural communication or management.
7. The Innovation Lab HIBO organizes staff traineeships for short periods (1 or 2 weeks) at companies.
8. The Innovation Lab HIBO mission contributes to meeting the AACSB requirements.
9. The Innovation Lab HIBO makes use of the professional network of the International Business Talents programme.

The Innovation Lab HIBO is a home to four info-desks (based on the IBS Vision Document)
1. The IBS Placement Desk.
2. The International Research Desk.
3. The International Business Desk.
4. The IBS Trainings Desk.
The Innovation Lab HIBO is the information point on international business for internal and external stakeholders

No.	**Expected intermediate and long term outcomes** (based on the IBS Vision Document)
1	students find suitable placements
2	the learning environment is promoted
3	the AACSB targets on academic and professional engagement are achieved

	Institutional vision on pre-conditions for a learning organisation (based on Charter 2016)
1.	Trust in the professionalism of the employee
2.	Willingness to learn with and from each other
3.	Recognising mistakes and successes and learning from them

	The institutional criteria for a living lab (based on Charter 2016)
1.	Addresses complex social issues
2.	Is multidisciplinary and inter-professional
3.	Focuses on learning and co-creation
4.	Diversity of partners from education, research, and professional practice

	The institutional vision on success preconditions (based on Charter 2016)
1	collaboration of partners from knowledge institutes and professional practice
2	co-creation of knowledge in providing solutions for complex present-day issues
3	collaboration across disciplines
4	an agreement on how ambitions can be achieved
5	Felt responsibility for the results

	Institutional prerequisites and success factors (based on Charter 2016)
1	**collaboration of partners** from knowledge institutes and professional practice
2	**co-creation of knowledge** in providing solutions for complex present-day issues
3	**cross-disciplinary** collaboration
4	**the successful activity of a professor** in connecting the knowledge
5	**an agreement** on how these ambitions can be achieved
6	**the felt responsibility** for the results

	Institutional living lab performance evaluation criteria (based on Charter 2016)
1	**there is impact on the professional field** (further specification is needed)
2	**all participants achieved their own (learning) objectives**
3	**(the professor) established knowledge connections** with education and professional practice in terms of knowledge co-creation, transfer, and application
4	**the horizontal accountability** i.e. accountability to the partners involved and the environment, **is valid(ated)**

Conclusions

The success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO refer to ability (competence, skills, knowledge) and organisational capacity (organisation's resources in terms of finances, time, staff) of the school to develop the living lab as able and capable to fulfil the multiple roles and attain the established goals.

Conclusions

The success factors for living labs within the university's educational eco-system refer to ability and organisational capacity of the school to develop the living lab that matches the institutional vision on living labs as learning communities with an open culture of a learning organisation.

Conclusions

In addition, there needs to be:

1) successful activity of a professor,

2) an agreement on how ambitions can be achieved,

3) a felt responsibility for the results of the living lab

Conclusions

Balancing top-down and bottom-up expectations

The top-down defined institutional guidelines on goals, tasks, and functioning of living labs

The bottom-up drafted expectations regarding goals and tasks of a living lab based on locally identified real and felt social and organisational needs and their local interpretation

Themes for follow up research

Follow up research	1. Operationalization of success factors for the living lab.
	2. Definition of performance criteria for the living lab.
	3. Evaluation of performance of the living lab.
	4. Development of suggestions for the improvement of performance of the living lab.
	5. Development of a blueprint for other living labs.