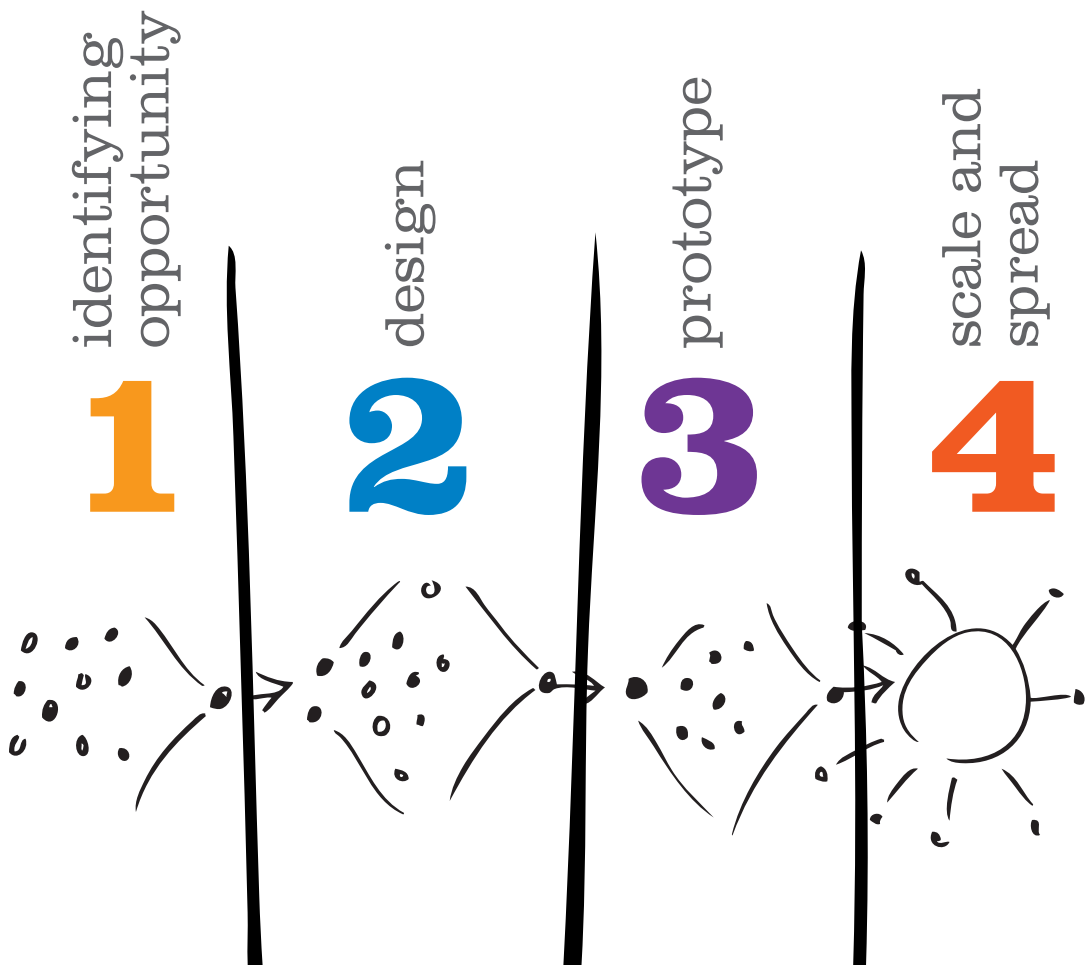
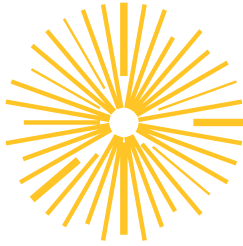


# action collabs

The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) first piloted Action Collabs at Big Ideas Fest 2009. The primary goal of Action Collabs is to demonstrate a new framework for generating actionable ideas by creating a space for conversation, collaboration and action.





An Action Collab is a group process that creates fresh thinking, innovative designs, and viable solutions to challenges in education. You have a chance to go through an Action Collab here at Big Ideas Fest and we hope you will then take the framework back to your organization to help design new solutions to challenges within your own educational work. You could use an Action Collab to create new thinking on detailed projects such as lesson and curriculum creation or on larger systems-thinking applied to school and district design. Whatever your focus, Action Collabs dynamically engage a group to brainstorm, design, and solve challenges in education.

During the first lab, **Identifying Opportunity**, your group first listens to real-life experiences from interviewees directly impacted by the subject matter of your selected Design Challenge. You will then use those stories to brainstorm new Opportunities that address the Design Challenge. Your group will choose one or two Opportunities and move them into the second lab of **Design** where you will narrow in on one Design concept that breathes new life into the Design Challenge. Next, during **Prototype**, your group builds and tests various ways the Design could be realized and reaches one approach that works. And finally, in **Scale and Spread**, your group generates avenues for your idea to both fit into and advance out to the world.

Your Action Collab experience culminates with presenting your idea as a **3-Minute Pitch** in the form of a video, photos, role-play, or other presentation. Convince the audience to get involved, fund, and spread your idea. After each pitch, commentators will give feedback and recommendations on how to give your idea legs and viability in the real world.

### Design Challenge

Throughout an Action Collab, the group focuses on a central issue for design. The central issue is referred to as the Design Challenge. The subject matter is either a current concern facing the group or a new idea that the group wants to explore. Design Challenges sound something like, "How might we bring parents into a more supportive role with our school?" Or "How can we create a system that incentivizes teachers?"

### Big Ideas Fest 2010 has three Design Challenges to help focus the Action Collab process:

1. How to enable teachers to have the greatest impact on learners.
2. How to create learning opportunities for students pushed out of formal education.
3. How to create alternatives for certifying or credentialing learning, as a means of expanding education and career opportunities.

My group's Design Challenge is:

Do you have assumptions about how your group will address your Design Challenge?

Have you worked on this issue before Big Ideas Fest?

Why is this topic important to you?

### Improv

Improv, the improvisational method of achieving cooperation, is a major component of Action Collabs. Improv provides opportunities for participants to play, let go of familiar beliefs, and open to unimaginable possibilities that connect the mind to the body.

### Some primary tenets of improv are:

- Suspend judgment (stay present, evaluate later)
- Let go of your agenda (be open, be present)
- Listen in order to receive (listen for where you agree or can support, find the "yes")
- Build on what you receive (connect and move forward with your partner, find the "and")
- Make your partner look brilliant (focus outward, build on what they say)
- Serve the scene (it's not about you, it's about what you're creating together.)

### Improv (choose one):

- a) helps me connect my mind and body
- b) makes me want to run out of the building screaming
- c) gives me massive butterflies in my stomach
- d) is my favorite way to shake up a party
- e) is something I've never dipped my toe into but I have a feeling that's about to change.

Improv exercises I can see taking back to office meetings:

Are you feeling uncomfortable with Improv? Write down a few reasons why:

Once you write them down, we suggest you move on and embrace the process - what have you got to lose?

### Who is Your Facilitator?

Your highly experienced facilitator has been trained specifically for the Big Ideas Fest. Their primary role is to be an active and consistent presence who presents information and expectations clearly. You should look to them for structure and guidance, but remember that they are not really the teacher or leader. They are your guidepost that keeps your group within the structure and parameters of the Action Collab without influencing where you end up. They will explain the Action Collab framework and kickoff all activities throughout the process, but you, the participant in concert with your cohort, will lead the direction of work and decisions made during the labs.



Elizabeth Doty

Andrea Saveri

Lisa Petrides



Megan Simmons



Jonah Houston



Chris Miller



Rich Cox



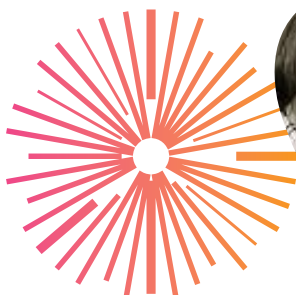
Lionel Mohri



Maggie Barber



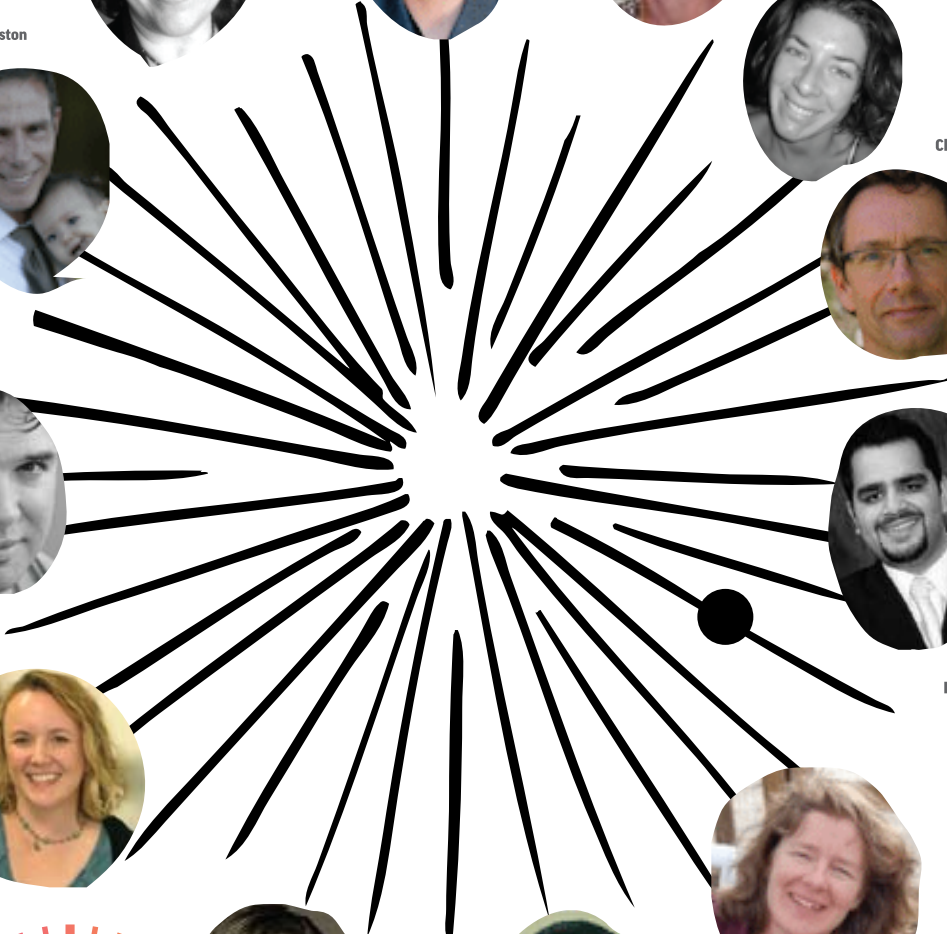
Erin O'Connell



Samantha Wayne



Carl Mack



# action collab team

The team includes ISKME President and Founder Dr. Lisa Petrides, IDEO Designer Jonah Houston, LifePlays Co-founder Chris Miller, and ISKME Education Program Design & Facilitator Samantha Wayne. Combining acumen in educational research and practice with global design expertise and the transformative power of improv, Action Collabs are dynamic experiences in thought and action.

Want to bring Action Collabs into your organization to tackle a daunting challenge from a new angle, spark strategic thinking around a crisis, or discover partnerships waiting to happen? We offer three tiers of engagement in the Action Collab process: Half-Day, Full Day, and Two-Day. Contact [bigideas@iskme.org](mailto:bigideas@iskme.org) and we'll share the scoop.

## Action Collab Design Team:

**Lisa Petrides** is president and founder of the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME), an independent non-profit educational research institute. Her research seeks to inform and improve the ways in which those in formal and informal education foster the creation and sharing of information, apply it to well-defined problems, and create knowledge-driven environments focused on improved learning and organizational success.

**Jonah Houston** is a senior project leader at IDEO in Palo Alto. He works on a wide variety of projects ranging from medical devices, office furniture, consumer electronics, food and beverage, and large-scale systems design.

**Chris Miller** has been performing and teaching improv for almost 20 years. He co-founded LifePlays, which brings the powerfully transformative and connective skills of improv to communities and innovative workplaces, such as Google, Genentech, Microsoft, and Whole Foods.

**Samantha Wayne** brings education program design & facilitation to ISKME. She loves contributing to the growth, creativity, and collaboration of communities. Her background includes facilitating group therapy, teaching college courses, training unemployed adults on the importance of networking, and managing after school art programs.

## Action Collab Facilitators:

### Maggie Barber, professor

Barber is a faculty member in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Utah where her teaching and research focuses on the design, delivery, and evaluation of leadership development programs for school leaders leading change, particularly in high-need communities.

### Rich Cox, improviser, performer, coach, consultant, author

Cox is a communication and acting coach who brings creativity, collaboration, and presentation from theater to organizations and businesses. Cox teaches performance improv acting to students in the Bay Area.

### Elizabeth Doty, organizational learning consultant, coach, and author of "The Compromise Trap"

Since 1993, Doty's firm, WorkLore, has focused on diagnosing breakdowns and dysfunctions in large, complex organizations, helping clients such as Intuit, Hewlett-Packard, and Archstone-Smith capitalize on hidden opportunities to improve performance.

### Carl Mack, cultural diversity, group dynamics, human relations consultant and facilitator

For the past 35 years, Mack has worked at all levels of education including teaching elementary and university students, chairing both Ethnic Studies and African and African American Studies at UC Davis, and serving as a public school superintendent.

### Lionel Mohri, systems designer, project leader

Mohri works at the intersection of Transformation, Systems Design and

the Public Sector. He consistently brings systemic, transformative and empathic thinking to solving complex challenges. Since joining IDEO, he has worked on challenges as diverse as designing a needle-free vaccination device for pandemic flu to designing a training curriculum to transform airport security.

### Erin O'Connell, professor

O'Connell teaches Classics and Comparative Literature at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Her scholarly interests include ancient and modern comparisons of literature, performance, and philosophy, and she is committed to making education relevant to today's students.

### Andrea Saveri, foresight and strategy developer, researcher, sense-maker

Saveri applies insights from futures research and emerging technologies to develop strategy and market opportunities. Recently, she created a 2020 forecast of the future context for education, including a map of key trends driving change, disruptive innovation areas, and implications for re-designing public learning systems.

### Megan Simmons, teacher, trainer, environmental educator

Simmons supports the development of education programs, workshops, and training activities for the OER Commons project at ISKME. She is particularly passionate about providing environmental education and art programs to underserved communities nationally and internationally.

### Samantha Wayne, education program design & facilitation

Wayne loves contributing to the growth, creativity, and collaboration of communities at ISKME. Her background includes facilitating group therapy, teaching college courses, training unemployed adults on the importance of networking, and managing after school art programs.

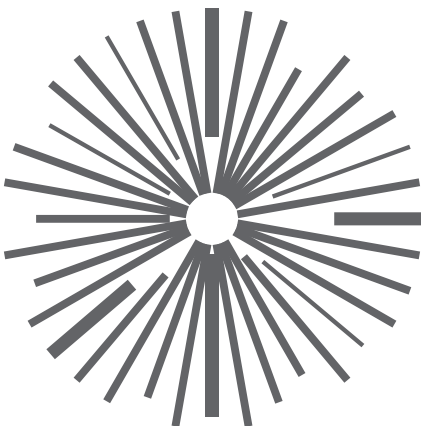


# action collab session 1: identifying opportunity

**Monday, 10:30am – 12:30pm**

Identifying Opportunity takes the Design Challenge and brainstorms into new ideas that address the issue. Your group splits into two smaller groups and conducts an interview with outside people brought into Big Ideas Fest who are connected to some part of your Design Challenge topic. These research conversations provide real-world stories and information from people directly affected by the issue of focus. Then, using newly gathered information, your group clusters concepts and finds patterns in the research that helps clarify your focus to one or two Identified Opportunities.

**My group's Identified Opportunity:**



# action collab session 2: design



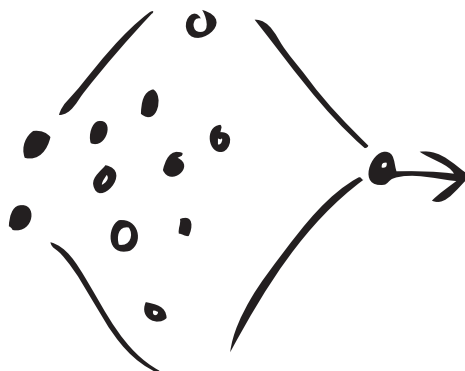
**Monday, 3:15pm – 4:45pm**

Design springboards into brainstorming numerous approaches to your group's Identified Opportunities. Keep your research interviewee in mind as you consider designs that would directly benefit their experiences. Ultimately, your group chooses one design idea to Prototype.

**How did all of the information from the first lab come together when your group brainstormed Design?**

**What do you think your research interviewees would say about your group's Design idea?**

**Draw a picture of how you feel at this moment:**



# action collab session 3: prototype

# 3

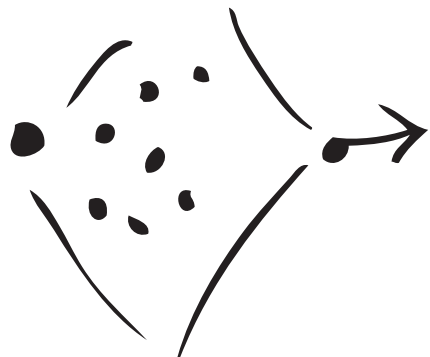
**Tuesday, 10:30am – 12:00pm**

Prototyping is a methodology for making solutions tangible in a rapid and low-investment way. Your group rolls up its sleeves and creates many Prototypes that highlight different aspects of the Design. You'll consider what works and doesn't work in each iteration. Prototyping before creation enables your group to give honest feedback on each approach and prevents your team from getting prematurely attached to one idea. The group chooses one Prototype to move to the final lab of Scale and Spread.

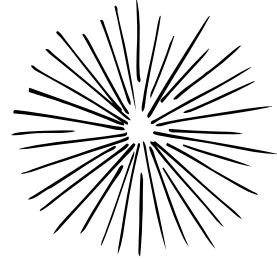


**Were you able to move quickly without attaching to your ideas?**

**Were you surprised with what worked and didn't work?**



# action collab session 4: scale and spread



**Tuesday, 3:30pm – 5:00pm**

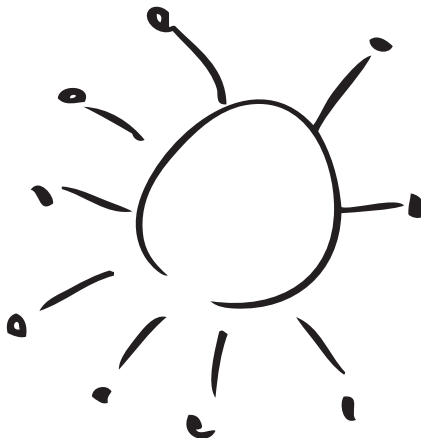
You'll now expand your group's idea into the world. Decide how the idea fits within a larger scope and then develop details on how the idea is dispersed as it is or modified for other contexts. Your group also considers real world obstacles and feasible resolutions to the Scale and Spread of the idea. Ultimately, your group creates a presentation that pitches the idea and catalyzes its Scale and Spread.

**What medium will your group present the idea? (examples: video, storytelling, presentation, etc)**



**How do you think the audience and commentators will react to your group's pitch?**

**Can you really see your idea working in the real world?**



# action collab

## 3-minute pitches

**Wednesday, 9:00am – 11:00am**

Release your Action Collab's idea into the world. Convince the audience to believe in the true need and viable solution that your group has developed. Each group has three minutes to present in any form imaginable. This includes video, photos, storytelling, role-playing, presentation, or any other way that clearly exemplifies your concept. Silicon Valley entrepreneur Dale Dougherty and Foundation Program Officer Suzanne Walsh will host the session and provide commentary to help your group transition your design idea beyond the Fest and into the next phase of implementation.



**Dale Dougherty, Make Magazine & Maker Faire, O'Reilly Media**

Dale Dougherty is the editor and publisher of MAKE, and general manager of the Maker Media division of O'Reilly Media, Inc. Dougherty has been instrumental in many of O'Reilly's most important efforts, including founding O'Reilly Media, Inc. with Tim O'Reilly. He was the developer and publisher of Global Network Navigator (GNN), the first commercial Web site which launched in 1993 and was sold to AOL in 1995. Dale was developer and publisher of Web Review, the online magazine for Web designers, and he was O'Reilly's first editor.

**Suzanne Walsh, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

Suzanne Walsh is a senior program officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation where she leads the Foundation's developmental education and new models strategies. Before joining Gates, Suzanne worked at The Lumina Foundation for Education where she managed the Making Opportunity Affordable initiative, aimed at increasing college productivity by bringing about fundamental change in the way higher education does business. Walsh also worked at The Heinz Endowments where she focused on community colleges, universities, workforce development, tech commercialization and transfer, city/county consolidation, immigration and regional economic development.



# share-outs



After each Action Collab session, cohorts share something with the group-at-large that shows where they are in the Action Collab process. **Share-Outs** happen on 4 x 5 foot magnetic boards, one per cohort, located in the side lobby. Groups use the last 5 minutes of sessions to create their share out which might include diagrams, sketches, or words. Participants will then view each other's work along the way and offer feedback by posting stickies and adding comments.

I hope we get some feedback on:

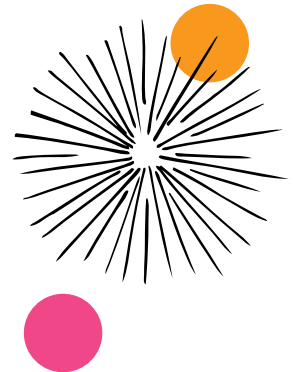
Looking at other groups' Share-Outs, I notice:

I've got to remember to talk to people from Group # \_\_\_\_ because:

Feedback on our Share-Out:

## networking

**Amazing people doing amazing things**



Don't forget to connect \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.

Schedule a meeting with:

Send \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Check out these websites:

Learn more about:

Read this book:

I gave my card to:

# about the big ideas fest

The Big Ideas Fest is an extraordinary immersion into collaboration and design with a focus on modeling cutting-edge thinking in K-20 education. This unique three-day meeting of experts, creative doers, and thinkers is focused on transformational change. Big Ideas Fest is designed to break down silos and empower education champions to create scalable solutions to a host of challenging educational dilemmas, while placing learning at the front and center of all that we do.

## about ISKME

The Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME) is a global leader in research and practice around knowledge sharing in the education sector. ISKME is best-known for its award-winning OER Commons initiative, as well as its international research agenda on information use and knowledge collaboration in the education sector. ISKME's research and development efforts enable schools, colleges, universities, and the organizations that support them, to expand their capacity to collect and share information, apply it to well-defined problems, and create human-centered, knowledge-driven environments focused on learning and success. For more information:  
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