A. Innovation Garden Overview & Strategy

This Book provides the strategic foundation, seasonal rhythm, and operational structure of the iLEAD Innovation Garden. It articulates the Garden's mission, outlines the 18-month Innovation Cycle, clarifies leadership and RACI roles, and explains how iLEAD's activities integrate with the iLRN Knowledge Tree and Immersive Futures Searchlight. It serves as the primary entry point for contributors seeking to understand how all Garden elements work together to cultivate evidence-based immersive learning practices.

1. Overview: What Is the Innovation Garden?

The iLEAD Innovation Garden is the **practice-facing pillar** of the Immersive Learning Research Network (iLRN). It is a collaborative space where educators, designers, technologists, artists, and community practitioners develop immersive learning experiences, refine applied methods, and contribute practice-based evidence to the global field.

The Garden exists to:

- Support hands-on design, prototyping, and iteration
- Surface emergent cross-platform practices
- Provide tutorials, walkthroughs, and design examples
- Create a welcoming pathway for new practitioners
- Generate experiential contributions for the annual iLRN conference
- Feed validated practices into the Knowledge Tree and the iLRN Repository

Through these activities, the Innovation Garden serves as a **living ecosystem** where ideas are explored, strengthened, and shared. It provides an accessible entry point into the iLRN community while supporting the growth of immersive learning as a global, evidence-informed discipline.

2. Position in the iLRN Ecosystem (Garden–Tree–Searchlight)

2.1 The Knowledge Tree: Disciplinary Foundations

The Knowledge Tree provides the conceptual, scholarly, and disciplinary backbone of iLRN. It organizes the field across:

- Foundational roots and trunk disciplines
- Branches representing specialized areas of practice and research
- Shared vocabulary, competencies, and standards
- Scholarly outputs such as proceedings, research articles, and theoretical frameworks
- Communities of practice anchored in each branch

The Tree captures the **research identity** of the network: rigorous, cumulative, and grounded in peer-reviewed knowledge.

2.2 The Innovation Garden: Practice, Prototyping, and Applied Methods

The Innovation Garden is iLRN's **practice-based engine**—a space where practitioners develop immersive learning experiences, test design methods, refine workflows, and share their processes. While the Knowledge Tree emphasizes the theoretical and scholarly side of the field, the Garden emphasizes:

- Creative experimentation
- Hands-on prototyping
- Frugal innovation and reusable templates
- Cross-platform exploration
- Evidence-informed instructional design
- Peer-supported iteration and community learning

The Garden also serves as one of the primary entry points into iLRN for educators, designers, technologists, and creators who are interested in applied immersive learning practice.

2.3 The Searchlight / Lighthouse: Foresight and Global Horizon Scanning

The Searchlight (also referred to as the Lighthouse) is iLRN's **foresight function**, responsible for monitoring emerging signals across technologies, learning contexts, and global sociotechnical trends. It generates insights that:

- Identify new opportunities for immersive learning
- Track shifts in technologies, platforms, and modalities
- Surface global innovations and regional developments
- Support the annual Immersive Futures Report
- Guide experimental directions for Garden activities

The Searchlight enables iLRN to look ahead—to anticipate, rather than simply react to, changes in immersive learning ecosystems worldwide.

2.4 How These Components Reinforce One Another

These three components of iLRN form a **continuous cycle of knowledge and practice**:

Searchlight ? Garden

The Searchlight identifies emerging trends, future directions, and areas requiring exploration. These signals guide where the Garden focuses its creative and experimental efforts.

Garden ? Knowledge Tree

Outputs from the Garden—prototypes, design patterns, tutorials, exemplars, reflective case studies—become evidence-informed contributions. Once documented and refined, they strengthen the Knowledge Tree.

Knowledge Tree ? Searchlight

The scholarly insights of the Tree provide conceptual grounding for interpreting new signals and orienting long-horizon futures thinking within the Searchlight.

Through this interplay, iLRN maintains a dynamic balance between scholarly rigor, practical innovation, and strategic foresight.

2.5 The Role of the Innovation Garden in the Ecosystem

Within this integrated structure, the Innovation Garden plays a unique and essential role:

- It expands global capacity for immersive learning design.
- It provides a structured environment for practice-based innovation.
- It enables rapid experimentation in areas highlighted by the Searchlight.
- It creates accessible pathways into the network for new practitioners.
- It produces the “fruit” that nourishes the Knowledge Tree.
- It supports the development of design patterns and standards across the field.
- It contributes experiential content to iLRN’s hybrid conference programming.

In short, the Garden is the **creative engine** that connects emerging ideas, hands-on practice, and the evolving scholarship of immersive learning.

3. Strategic Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The iLEAD Innovation Garden exists to strengthen immersive learning practice across global contexts and to support the growth of the immersive learning discipline through applied experimentation, community engagement, and evidence-informed design. This page defines the strategic intent of the Garden and the outcomes it is structured to achieve within the iLRN ecosystem.

3.1 Core Strategic Purpose

The Innovation Garden is designed to function as iLRN's **practice-driven innovation ecosystem**, providing an accessible environment for practitioners, designers, educators, students, and creative technologists to:

- Develop immersive learning experiences across platforms and modalities
- Explore applied uses of XR and multimodal tools
- Test, refine, and adapt emerging design patterns
- Share practical methods, workflows, and instructional strategies
- Generate practice-based evidence that supports the evolution of the field
- Build community capacity through shared learning and repeatable templates

The Garden anchors iLRN's commitment to nurturing both individual creativity and collective advancement in immersive learning design.

3.2 How the Garden Supports iLRN's Mission

Within the broader mission of iLRN, the Garden contributes to:

- **Community democratization** by lowering barriers to participation in immersive learning design
- **Professional development** through structured experiences, guided explorations, and peer mentoring
- **Global capacity building** across educational, cultural, workforce, and informal learning sectors

- **Applied research readiness** by cultivating prototypes and methods that can mature into scholarly contributions
- **Innovation leadership** through alignment with trends and signals surfaced by the Searchlight
- **Network cohesion** by offering year-round activities that connect practitioners to scholars, designers, and regional chapters

This strategic orientation supports iLRN's long-term goal of positioning immersive learning as a recognized global discipline.

3.3 Intended Outcomes for Practitioners and Contributors

The Garden aims to generate clear, actionable outcomes for its participants:

- Increased confidence in using immersive tools and platforms
- Skill development in design-based research, prototyping, and learning experience design
- Practical insight into cross-platform decision-making and multimodal literacies
- Documented examples and showcases that can support career advancement
- Integration into global networks of practice and interdisciplinary collaboration
- Opportunities to contribute workshop proposals, demos, and practitioner papers to the annual iLRN conference

These outcomes support sustained engagement and the growth of a vibrant practice community.

3.4 Intended Outcomes for the Immersive Learning Discipline

At the field level, the Garden contributes:

- **Evidence-informed design patterns** that strengthen Book B (Design Patterns & Standards)
- **Practice-based case examples** that enrich the Knowledge Tree
- **Validated prototypes** ready for adaptation, research, or scaling
- **Design methods and templates** that enable frugal, repeatable innovation
- **Global exemplars** that illustrate the evolving state of immersive learning practice
- **Inputs to the Immersive Futures Report**, informed by year-round Garden activity

The Garden thus acts as a continuous pipeline of insights, methods, and creative outputs that reinforce disciplinary growth.

3.5 Strategic Benefits to the Annual iLRN Conference

The Innovation Garden directly supports conference excellence through:

- A consistent pipeline of practitioner proposals
- Well-prepared submissions grounded in shared methods and templates
- Showcases and demos aligned with the Knowledge Tree branches
- Cross-platform coverage informed by Guided Adventures
- Authentic examples of innovative immersive practices across global contexts

This creates a more robust and diverse iLEAD stream while offering contributors a clear annual pathway from idea to presentation.

3.6 Long-Term Vision

The long-term vision for the Innovation Garden is to become a globally recognized, practice-based innovation ecosystem that:

- Serves as a catalyst for ethical and human-centered immersive learning
- Connects international communities through shared creative exploration
- Supports scalable frugal innovation in education, culture, medicine, workforce training, and community development
- Anchors immersive learning as a multidisciplinary, evidence-driven discipline
- Sustains year-round engagement with the iLRN community, grounded in collaboration, curiosity, and creative experimentation

Through this vision, the Garden becomes a strategic asset that strengthens the immersive learning discipline and supports iLRN’s global impact.

4. The 18-Month Innovation Garden Cycle

The Innovation Garden operates on an 18-month cycle designed to provide continuity, predictable engagement, and a clear pathway from early idea exploration to full conference contribution. This rhythm anchors the Garden's activities, ensures year-round momentum, and supports both practitioners and organizers in planning their work across seasons.

The cycle is composed of **five phases**, each with a distinct purpose and set of activities.

4.1 Tilling the Soil (March–August)

This preparatory phase strengthens the foundation for the coming Garden year.

Focus:

- Refresh templates, workflows, and design patterns
- Update forms and submission processes
- Recruit program leads, volunteers, and community stewards
- Prepare Garden Pod spaces and Guided Adventure offerings
- Align directions with the Searchlight trend scan
- Coordinate with the Knowledge Tree and conference organizers

This phase sets the conditions for a successful and well-supported cycle.

4.2 Germination (September–October)

The Garden year formally begins with early opportunities for participation and light experimentation.

Focus:

- Opening Walkthroughs in Frame VR
- First Garden Pods and seed projects
- Initial Guided Virtual Adventures

- Orientation sessions for newcomers
- Early design conversations and informal prototyping

This phase sparks momentum and invites broad engagement.

4.3 iLRNovember Bloom (November)

Following submission of Academic papers & proposals for the coming annual conference, November is the Garden's most active and visible period—its annual "super bloom." **The iLEAD community activates during this month!**

Focus:

- Weekly Walkthroughs and multi-platform Guided Adventures
- Toolshed Sessions demonstrating workflows and techniques
- Maker Panels featuring practitioners' design processes
- Proposal Clinics supporting contributors preparing iLEAD submissions
- Showcases and discussions across the Virtual Campus

This month generates an intense, supportive burst of activity that helps contributors develop strong, well-prepared ideas.

4.4 Cultivation (December–April)

This is the steady, sustained work of refining contributions and building capabilities.

Focus:

- Deepening skills through ongoing workshops and explorations
- Advancing Pods, prototypes, and curricular integrations
- Preparing and revising conference submissions
- Peer-supported iteration and reflection
- Continued Guided Adventures and Garden interactions

This phase translates early sparks of creativity into polished and evidence-informed contributions.

4.5 Harvest (May–June)

The cycle culminates in the integration of Garden work into the annual hybrid iLRN conference.

Focus:

- Innovation Garden District on the Virtual Campus
- iLEAD workshops, demos, and practitioner sessions
- Pod showcases and cross-platform demonstrations
- Preparation for Repository submission and Knowledge Tree integration
- Community reflections and celebration of contributions

The Harvest phase ensures that Garden outputs become part of iLRN’s formal scholarly and community record.

4.6 How the Cycle Supports Contributors

The 18-month rhythm is designed to provide:

- Predictable, supportive opportunities for engagement
- Clear pathways from early idea to conference-ready contribution
- Multiple entry points for newcomers
- A steady cadence of skill-building and design exploration
- Integration with iLRN’s scholarly, practitioner, and foresight functions

This cycle sustains the Garden as a dynamic, inclusive, and evidence-informed practice ecosystem.

5. Annual Activities & Engagement Rhythm

The Innovation Garden provides a coordinated set of activities that support creativity, skill development, community building, and contribution readiness throughout the year. These activities offer multiple entry points for newcomers and sustained pathways for returning contributors. Each activity type plays a distinct role within the Garden’s 18-month cycle.

5.1 Garden Pods (Showcase Micro-Spaces)

Garden Pods are small, structured spaces—typically hosted in Zoom and/or Frame VR—where practitioners share immersive learning experiences, prototypes, or design ideas.

Pods may include:

- A demonstration or prototype
- A description of design intent and context
- Tools, platforms, and workflows used
- Reflections on challenges and lessons learned

Pods serve as “seeds” that can grow into workshops, demonstrations, practitioner papers, or Knowledge Tree contributions.

5.2 Innovation Garden Walkthroughs (Frame VR Tours)

Walkthroughs are guided visits to Garden Pods and project spaces on the Virtual Campus. They are one of the Garden’s most accessible activities and a key entry point for newcomers.

Walkthroughs provide:

- A live, curated exploration of current Pods
- Insight into design decisions and methods
- Peer discussion and Q&A

- Inspiration for proposals and collaborations

During iLRNovember, Walkthroughs occur weekly, often with high attendance across regions.

5.3 Guided Virtual Adventures (Cross-Platform Explorations)

Guided Virtual Adventures (GVAs) introduce participants to immersive experiences across diverse XR platforms. These small-group sessions highlight design possibilities, platform strengths, and applied use cases.

Common destinations include:

- Frame VR
- Mozilla Hubs
- Engage
- VRChat
- Spatial
- CoSpaces
- Mobile XR storytelling tools
- Simulation environments

GVAs help practitioners make informed platform choices and broaden their exposure to emerging modalities.

5.4 Toolshed Sessions (Technique & Workflow Workshops)

Toolshed Sessions are short, focused workshops in which practitioners share specific tools, techniques, or production workflows.

Examples include:

- How to build a simple interactive scene
- Rapid audio capture and spatialization
- Frugal VR content creation methods
- Creating visually coherent experiences in Frame VR
- Designing multimodal learning flows

These sessions strengthen practical skills and expand participants’ technical toolkits.

5.5 Maker Panels (Design Reflections & Case Conversations)

Maker Panels highlight the processes, decisions, and creative reasoning behind immersive learning projects. Contributors discuss:

- Design challenges
- Platform constraints
- Pedagogical goals
- Moments of insight
- Lessons learned

Panels deepen collective understanding and encourage reflective, community-centered practice.

5.6 Proposal Clinics (Conference Preparation & Feedback)

Proposal Clinics support educators, designers, and early-career practitioners as they prepare submissions for the iLEAD track at the annual iLRN conference.

Clinics help participants:

- Understand submission types and expectations
- Refine concepts and align them with the Knowledge Tree
- Strengthen narrative coherence and relevance
- Receive peer and mentor feedback
- Build confidence in presenting work

These clinics directly improve the quality, clarity, and readiness of submissions.

5.7 Additional Community Engagement Touchpoints

Throughout the year, the Garden also hosts:

- Informal co-creation or coworking sessions

- Mentor-supported onboarding for students and newcomers
- Platform-specific workshops
- Chapter-led design sessions tied to regional priorities

These touchpoints ensure that the Garden remains active, inclusive, and responsive across the entire cycle.

5.8 How These Activities Support the Cycle

Together, these activities enable:

- Entry-level exploration during Germination
- Deep skill-building during Cultivation
- Intense creative momentum during iLRNovember Bloom
- Confidence and preparedness at Harvest
- Continuous alignment with Searchlight trend insights

This steady rhythm makes the Innovation Garden a reliable and energizing space for practitioners worldwide.

6. Governance, Roles, and RACI Structure

The Innovation Garden operates through a distributed, community-centered governance model that balances creativity with coordination. This page outlines the core roles, responsibilities, and the RACI framework that supports decision-making and smooth operations across the Garden's programs.

6.1 Governance Approach

The Garden's governance model emphasizes:

- **Shared stewardship** rather than top-down control
- **Clear decision pathways** to support volunteer-led activity
- **Lightweight coordination** aligned with the 18-month cycle
- **Transparency** through documented processes
- **Continuity** across annual conferences and leadership changes

This structure ensures that the Garden remains adaptable, scalable, and hospitable to new contributors.

6.2 Core Leadership Roles

Garden Steward (iLEAD Innovation Garden Lead)

Responsible for overall vision, alignment with iLRN strategy, and coordination across programs.

Key functions:

- Set annual priorities in alignment with the Searchlight and conference themes
- Support program leads and ensure role clarity
- Maintain cross-Book consistency within the Codex
- Guide integration with the Knowledge Tree and Repository
- Ensure quality of participant experience

- Represent the Garden in iLRN leadership forums

Program Leads (Pods, GVAs, Walkthroughs, Toolshed, Maker Panels, Proposal Clinics)

Each major activity type has a designated lead responsible for planning, facilitation, and volunteer coordination.

Program Leads:

- Design the activity format and seasonal cycle
- Recruit facilitators and participants
- Ensure sessions run smoothly
- Maintain templates, forms, and documentation
- Coordinate with the Garden Steward on scheduling and alignment

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Digital Content Strategist / Communications Lead

Supports storytelling, outreach, and volunteer engagement across iLEAD initiatives.

Responsibilities include:

- Managing communication rhythms and event promotion
- Creating visual assets or coordinating volunteers who do
- Ensuring alignment with iLRN branding and messaging
- Supporting documentation and showcase preparation
- Helping contributors translate their Garden output into conference-ready material

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Volunteer Contributors

The backbone of the Garden’s community-driven success.

Volunteers contribute by:

- Hosting Garden Pods
- Leading Guided Adventures
- Participating in ToolShed Sessions
- Supporting Walkthroughs
- Assisting with documentation or moderation
- Providing peer feedback and community care

Community Moderators and Technical Support

Part-time roles (or shared responsibilities) that ensure:

- Safe and welcoming virtual spaces
- Smooth use of platforms such as Frame VR, Zoom, Discord
- Troubleshooting and participant support during Garden activities

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6.3 RACI Structure

The following RACI breakdown clarifies the OPTIMAL staffing for who is **Responsible (R)**, **Accountable (A)**, **Consulted (C)**, and **Informed (I)** for core Garden functions.

Activity Planning & Design

- **Garden Steward** – A
- **Program Leads** – R
- **Content Strategist** – C
- **Volunteers** – I

Event Facilitation (Pods, GVAs, Walkthroughs, etc.)

- **Program Leads** – A
- **Volunteers** – R
- **Garden Steward** – C
- **Participants** – I

Documentation & Templates

- **Program Leads** – R
- **Garden Steward** – A
- **Content Strategist** – C
- **Knowledge Tree Editors** – I

Community Engagement & Communications

- **Content Strategist** – R
- **Garden Steward** – C
- **Program Leads** – C
- **Volunteers / Contributors** – I

Integration with Conference Programming

- **Garden Steward** – A
- **Program Leads** – R
- **Conference Organizing Committee** – C
- **iLRN Board / Circle of Scholars** – I

Integration with Knowledge Tree & Repository

- **Garden Steward** – A
- **Program Leads** – R
- **Knowledge Tree Editors / Repository Team** – C
- **Contributors** – I

6.4 RACI Table: Innovation Garden Governance

Core Function	Garden Steward	Program Leads	Digital Content Strategist	Volunteers / Contributors	Knowledge Tree / Repository Teams	Conference Organizing Committee
1. Annual Planning & Program Design	**A**	**R**	C	I	I	I
2. Activity Facilitation (Pods, GVAs, Walkthroughs, Toolshed, Panels)	C	**A/R**	I	**R**	I	I

Core Function	Garden Steward	Program Leads	Digital Content Strategist	Volunteers / Contributors	Knowledge Tree / Repository Teams	Conference Organizing Committee
3. Template & Documentation Development	**A**	**R**	C	I	C	I
4. Community Engagement & Communications	C	C	**R**	I	I	I
5. Volunteer Recruitment & Onboarding	C	**R**	C	I	I	I
6. Alignment With Searchlight Trends	**A**	R	I	I	I	I
7. Conference Proposal Clinics & Support	**A**	**R**	C	I	I	C
8. Integration Into Conference Programming	**A**	**R**	I	I	I	**C**
9. Integration With Knowledge Tree & Repository	**A**	**R**	I	I	**C**	I
10. Quality Assurance for Garden Experiences	**A**	**R**	C	I	C	I

Core Function	Garden Steward	Program Leads	Digital Content Strategist	Volunteers / Contributors	Knowledge Tree / Repository Teams	Conference Organizing Committee
11. Technology & Platform Coordination (Frame VR, Tally.so, Discord, etc.)	C	**R**	C	I	I	I
12. Cycle Review & Reflection (Post-Conference)	**A**	**R**	C	I	C	I

Interpretation Notes:

- **A = Accountable**: final authority; owns the outcome.
- **R = Responsible**: executes the work and ensures completion.
- **C = Consulted**: provides input, expertise, or feedback.
- **I = Informed**: kept aware of progress; not directly involved in decision-making.

This table is designed so the Garden Steward provides continuity and direction, Program Leads handle day-to-day operational execution, and volunteers have a clearly bounded yet meaningful role. It also shows where the Garden integrates with the Knowledge Tree, Repository, and Conference Organizing Committee without overlapping responsibilities.

6.5 Why This Governance Model Works

This structure:

- Provides clear decision authority
- Enables volunteers to lead meaningful work
- Minimizes bottlenecks
- Ensures alignment with iLRN’s strategic priorities
- Supports continuity across leadership shifts
- Scales easily as programs expand or evolve

The Garden remains both **co-creative** and **well-coordinated**, enabling practitioners worldwide to participate confidently and contribute effectively.

7. Pathways for Participation (How to Enter the Garden)

The Innovation Garden is designed to be an open, accessible entry point into iLRN. Whether someone is exploring immersive learning for the first time or returning to develop more advanced work, the Garden offers multiple pathways for participation. This page provides a simple guide to help newcomers find their footing and returning contributors plan their involvement across the Garden's programs.

7.1 Start Here: Entry Pathways for New Participants

Newcomers typically begin through one of the following low-barrier options:

Attend an Innovation Garden Walkthrough

Walkthroughs provide guided tours of Garden Pods and active projects on the Virtual Campus.

- No preparation required
- Offers immediate exposure to design examples
- Ideal for understanding the ecosystem at a glance

Join a Guided Virtual Adventure (GVA)

GVAs introduce participants to immersive learning tools and platforms beyond Frame VR.

- Focused on exploration, not expertise
- Helps newcomers choose the right platform for future projects

Visit an Open Co-Creation or Coworking Session

Informal sessions where participants can ask questions, share ideas, or simply observe.

- A welcoming space to meet peers

- Helpful for early-stage thinking or identifying potential collaborators

These are the easiest ways to “step into the Garden.”

7.2 Intermediate Participation: Contribute or Experiment

Once comfortable, participants may choose to contribute more actively:

Create a Garden Pod

A small, structured space for showcasing a prototype, lesson idea, workflow, or early XR experiment.

- Works well for in-progress ideas
- Low risk, high learning value
- Ideal preparation for formal conference proposals

Lead or Co-Host a ToolShed Session

Share a technique, workflow, or platform tip.

- Short sessions (typically 20–30 minutes)
- Good for building facilitation confidence
- Helps strengthen community skills

Participate in a Maker Panel

Contribute to a moderated conversation about design decisions, methods, or project evolution.

- Useful for reflective practice
- Supports deeper learning across the community

7.3 Advanced Participation: Prepare Formal Contributions

For practitioners ready to formalize their work:

Join a Proposal Clinic

Receive guidance on shaping proposals for the iLEAD stream and other conference tracks.

- Clarifies expectations and required formats
- Helps refine ideas and structure
- Often leads to stronger acceptance outcomes

Prepare a Conference Submission

Contributors may develop:

- Workshops
- Demos
- Practitioner papers
- Panels or roundtables
- Exhibits or experiential showcases

These formal submissions often originate from work first shared in Pods, ToolSheds, or Walkthroughs.

7.4 Participation for Students and Early-Career Contributors

Students and emerging practitioners benefit from several tailored opportunities:

- **Join iLRNFuser Game Jams** to rapidly build skills
- **Develop Pods** to showcase early XR projects
- **Participate in GVAs** to explore platforms
- **Receive peer and mentor feedback** in moderated sessions
- **Create submission-ready materials** through Proposal Clinics

These pathways are designed to support both skill development and confidence building.

7.5 Faculty, Designers, and Organizational Partners

Educators and institutional partners can engage in ways that support curriculum and applied practice:

- Integrate Garden Pods into coursework
- Use GVAs as cross-platform literacy experiences
- Collaborate on ToolShed Sessions grounded in institutional tools or priorities
- Bring student cohorts to Walkthroughs
- Align capstone or applied research activities with conference pathways

The Garden is structured to support scalable, repeatable curricular integration.

7.6 Participation Beyond the Annual Conference

The Garden sustains year-round engagement. Contributors may:

- Join ongoing platform-specific workshops
- Co-design templates and repeatable workflows
- Support the development of design patterns
- Participate in Searchlight-informed exploration
- Assist with documentation and community moderation
- Collaborate across international chapters

These contributions strengthen the global practice community and maintain momentum across the entire 18-month cycle.

7.7 Summary: A Simple Path

Most participants experience the Garden in this order:

1. **Observe** → Walkthroughs, GVAs
2. **Experiment** → Pods, ToolSheds, Maker Panels
3. **Contribute** → Proposal Clinics, conference submissions
4. **Lead** → Facilitation, mentorship, program support

This flexible pathway helps practitioners grow at their own pace while supporting the iLRN community as a whole.

8. Operating Principles and Values

The Innovation Garden is built on a set of shared principles that guide how contributors design, collaborate, and learn together. These principles shape the Garden's culture and ensure that activities remain aligned with iLRN's mission of cultivating an evidence-informed, inclusive, and globally connected immersive learning discipline.

8.1 Practice First, Evidence Informed

The Garden encourages hands-on experimentation, rapid prototyping, and creative exploration. Contributors are invited to try new tools, test methods, and iterate openly. At the same time, activities are grounded in the wisdom of existing research, design patterns, and community knowledge.
Practice and evidence are viewed as complementary forces: each informs and strengthens the other.

8.2 Co-Creation and Community Care

The Garden thrives through collaborative creation. Contributors share their work generously, offer constructive feedback, and support one another's growth.
Community care is expressed through:

- Welcoming newcomers
- Respectful dialogue
- Generosity with methods and resources
- Recognition of contributors' efforts

This creates a culture where practitioners feel safe exploring new ideas.

8.3 Cross-Platform Exploration

The Garden is intentionally platform-agnostic. Contributors experiment across a wide range of XR tools, including Frame VR, engageVR, Spatial, VRChat, CoSpaces, mobile augmented reality, and

simulation environments.
This approach encourages:

- Multimodal literacy
- Adaptability to changing technologies
- Informed platform selection based on pedagogical goals

Exploration is a feature, not a distraction.

8.4 Frugal Innovation and Reusable Templates

The Garden emphasizes **design that is accessible, scalable, and achievable** for educators and organizations with varying levels of resources. Contributors build and share templates, workflows, and repeatable structures that others can adapt without requiring advanced technical capacity. This principle supports equity, sustainability, and global participation.

8.5 Hybrid Agility

The Garden supports hybrid modalities—virtual, online, XR-based, and in-person—reflecting how immersive learning operates in classrooms, workplaces, labs, and communities worldwide. Flexibility enables the Garden to serve participants across time zones, contexts, and levels of technical access.

8.6 Cultural Grounding and Local Knowledge

Many Garden activities involve participants and partners working within specific cultural, regional, or community contexts. The Garden embraces the importance of grounding immersive learning in:

- Local knowledge
- Cultural protocols
- Ethical storytelling
- Respect for Indigenous and community-led practices

This principle helps ensure that immersive learning remains human-centered and socially responsible.

8.7 Transparency and Shared Stewardship

The Garden operates openly, with clear documentation, accessible templates, and visible processes. Contributors understand how decisions are made and how responsibilities are shared. This clarity strengthens trust and enables distributed leadership across the global iLRN community.

8.8 Continuous Learning and Reflective Practice

Garden activities are structured to support reflection at every stage—before, during, and after design work. Contributors articulate their intentions, document lessons learned, and share insights with the broader community.
Reflection is not an end in itself: it drives improved practice, stronger research questions, and more impactful immersive learning experiences.

8.9 Alignment With iLRN’s Broader Ecosystem

All Garden activities are designed to complement and support:

- The Knowledge Tree (scholarly structures and branches)
- The Searchlight (futures and trends)
- The conference (iLEAD practitioner track and experiential showcases)
- The Repository (evidence-informed outputs and exemplars)

Alignment ensures that practice-based innovation contributes meaningfully to the development of the immersive learning discipline.

Summary

These principles shape how the Innovation Garden grows: collaboratively, ethically, creatively, and with a shared commitment to building an open, evidence-informed future for immersive learning.

9. How Practice Feeds the Knowledge Tree

The Innovation Garden plays a central role in generating the practical insights, design approaches, and experiential examples that strengthen the immersive learning discipline. This page explains how Garden activities evolve into contributions to the iLRN Knowledge Tree and the broader scholarly ecosystem. Such experimentation and practice using new and emerging technologies applied to meaningful learning gains is vital to our growing field.

9.1 Practice as a Source of Disciplinary Growth

Immersive learning is an emerging field defined not only by scientific theory and research but by **applied creativity, experimentation, and reflective design**. The Innovation Garden serves as the network's practice-based engine—where methods, prototypes, and experiential learning flows are developed, tested, and refined.

Through structured activities such as Garden Pods, Guided Virtual Adventures, Toolshed Sessions, and Maker Panels, practitioners create:

- Prototypes and experiential scenes
- Platform workflows and technical approaches
- Instructional strategies suited to immersive modalities
- Reflective insights about learning design
- Early evidence of impact and learner engagement

These outputs become the raw material for deeper scholarly work.

9.2 How Garden Outputs Become "Fruit" for the Knowledge Tree

Once refined, Garden outputs move into more formal structures within iLRN. Typical pathways include:

Design Patterns

Practical insights and recurring solutions identified through Garden work are distilled into formal design patterns documented in Book B.

Case Examples & Practice Narratives

In-depth descriptions of immersive learning experiences become illustrative cases that inform teaching, research, and conference sessions.

Templates & Reusable Workflows

Step-by-step guides, platform-specific workflows, and prototypes evolve into reusable resources that can be adopted across the network.

Tutorials and Demonstrations

Walkthroughs and ToolShed Sessions often lead to clear, replicable guides that strengthen the Knowledge Tree's applied foundations.

Repository-Ready Contributions

High-quality Garden outputs are added to the iLRN Repository of Immersive Learning Experiences—making them accessible and citable within the global community.

These contributions become "fruit hanging from the Tree"—visible, interpretable, and useful for scholars, practitioners, and students.

9.3 How the Knowledge Tree Strengthens Practice

The relationship is reciprocal. As Garden outputs inform the Knowledge Tree, the Tree provides:

- Conceptual grounding for new Garden experiments
- Scholarly frameworks and models to test through practice
- Taxonomies, patterns, and standards that improve design quality
- Shared language that supports collaboration
- Research-informed insights for program design

This feedback loop ensures that the Garden does not drift into disconnected experimentation but remains aligned with and reinforced by the evolving discipline.

9.4 Practice ? Evidence ? Scholarship: The Development Pathway

The pathway from idea to evidence-informed contribution generally follows these steps:

1. **Exploration**
   Early ideas take shape during Walkthroughs, Adventures, and informal co-creation.
2. **Experimentation**
   Prototypes and early-stage concepts are showcased in Garden Pods or ToolShed Sessions.
3. **Reflection & Refinement**
   Contributors gather feedback, adjust design choices, and develop clearer articulation of goals and outcomes.
4. **Documentation**
   Templates, workflows, or case examples are created to formalize learning and methods.
5. **Integration**
   Refined contributions enter the Knowledge Tree, the iLEAD conference stream, or the Repository.
6. **Scholarly Development**
   Some projects evolve further into practitioner papers, research studies, or emerging scholarly inquiries.

This pathway preserves the creative spirit of the Garden while ensuring a meaningful contribution to the broader field.

9.5 Why This Relationship Matters

By connecting practice and scholarship, the Innovation Garden:

- Strengthens the immersive learning discipline with lived examples
- Ensures the Knowledge Tree remains evidence-informed and practitioner-rich
- Provides a pipeline of new ideas for research, standards, and evaluation models
- Enables global practitioners to contribute beyond their local context
- Sustains iLRN as a community where creativity and scholarship evolve together

This integration supports the network’s long-term mission of building an open, globally relevant, and human-centered immersive learning field.

10. Relationship to Conference Programming (iLEAD Stream)

The Innovation Garden is closely linked to the annual iLRN conference, particularly the iLEAD practitioner stream. This connection creates a consistent pathway from early creative exploration to formal contribution, helping practitioners refine their work and present it to the global immersive learning community. This page outlines how Garden activities align with conference programming and how contributors can transition their work into conference-ready submissions.

10.1 The Garden as the Starting Point for Conference Contributions

Throughout the year, Garden activities generate early-stage ideas, prototypes, and applied insights that often mature into conference submissions. Typical starting points include:

- Garden Pods showcasing initial prototypes
- Guided Virtual Adventures supporting platform selection and design literacy
- Toolshed Sessions demonstrating workflows and techniques
- Maker Panels reflecting on design decisions and methods
- Co-creation sessions supporting collaborative ideation

These activities help contributors identify promising ideas while gaining feedback from peers across the iLRN community.

10.2 Proposal Clinics: Preparing Submissions

As the conference submission window approaches, the Garden hosts a series of **Proposal Clinics** to help contributors refine and formalize their work. These sessions offer guidance on:

- Choosing the right submission category (workshop, demo, practitioner paper, etc.)
- Aligning contributions with the Knowledge Tree’s branches and trunk disciplines
- Articulating purpose, methodology, and impact
- Strengthening coherence and narrative structure
- Addressing ethical, accessibility, and design considerations

- Meeting the expectations of the iLEAD review process

These clinics significantly enhance the quality and clarity of conference proposals.

10.3 The iLEAD Practitioner Stream

The iLEAD stream focuses on educational and design applications of immersive technologies across:

- K–12 and higher education
- Workforce training
- Community learning and GLAM contexts
- Cultural and heritage education
- Informal and lifelong learning

The Innovation Garden is the primary incubation space for iLEAD submissions. Garden contributors often present:

- Hands-on workshops
- Experience walkthroughs
- Demos and prototypes
- Case narratives
- Mixed-media experiential sessions
- Design patterns grounded in practice

This tight integration ensures the conference showcases a rich diversity of applied immersive learning work.

10.4 The Innovation Garden District (Virtual Campus Showcase)

During the conference, the Garden comes to life as the **Innovation Garden District** within the Virtual Campus. This space features:

- Live and asynchronous Garden Pod showcases
- Experience walkthroughs led by contributors
- Toolshed Sessions and maker conversations
- Interactions with global attendees
- Opportunities to gather feedback for Repository and Knowledge Tree contributions

The District serves as a vibrant, hands-on environment that complements the scholarly sessions of the Knowledge Tree.

10.5 How the Conference Strengthens the Garden

The relationship is reciprocal. The conference provides:

- Global visibility for contributor work
- Peer feedback that deepens reflective practice
- Opportunities to engage with international presenters and chapter leads
- A milestone-oriented cadence that drives project development
- A platform for ideas that will inform next year’s Garden cycle
- Themes and priorities that shape upcoming areas of exploration

The conference serves as both a culminating event and a launching point for future cycles of practice-based innovation.

10.6 The Full Pathway: From Idea to Conference Contribution

Most contributors move through the following sequence:

1. **Explore**
   Join Walkthroughs, GVAs, and community sessions.
2. **Experiment**
   Build a Pod, lead a ToolShed Session, or join a Maker Panel.
3. **Refine**
   Participate in Proposal Clinics to shape a coherent narrative.
4. **Submit**
   Enter the iLEAD reviewer pipeline and prepare for presentation.
5. **Showcase**
   Present in the Innovation Garden District or iLEAD stream.
6. **Integrate**
   Document outputs in the Repository or Knowledge Tree.

This consistent pathway gives practitioners a clear roadmap from initial idea to formal contribution.

10.7 Why This Relationship Matters

The link between the Innovation Garden and the annual conference:

- Ensures the iLEAD stream remains rich with practice-based innovation
- Enables global participation through both virtual and hybrid modalities
- Builds continuity between year-round activity and the conference experience
- Strengthens the overall quality of practitioner contributions
- Supports the network’s broader strategy of integrating practice, scholarship, and foresight

This alignment helps position iLRN as a uniquely hybrid, globally engaged community advancing immersive learning through both scholarship and practice.

11. Related Codex Pages and Crosslinks

The Innovation Garden operates within a larger constellation of iLRN programs, documentation, and knowledge structures. This page provides direct links to relevant Books, frameworks, and resources that complement the Garden’s strategy and activities. Contributors can use this page to quickly navigate across the Codex and understand how the Garden’s work fits into the broader iLRN ecosystem.

11.1 Core iLRN Ecosystem Books

Knowledge Tree (Book K)

The foundational scholarly structure of the immersive learning discipline. Includes branch houses, conceptual frameworks, competencies, and disciplinary standards.

Searchlight / Lighthouse (Book S)

The foresight and horizon-scanning function informing Garden priorities and future directions.

Repository of Immersive Learning Experiences (Book R)

A curated archive of experiential outputs, exemplars, and case-based contributions across the network.

11.2 Innovation Garden Companion Books

Book B — Design Patterns, Standards, and Practices for iLEAD

Contains reusable methods, tutorials, platform guidance, ethical considerations, design patterns, and evidence-informed standards that support all Garden activity.

Book C — Project Beds: Programs & Activities

Operational frameworks for Garden Pods, Guided Virtual Adventures, Toolshed Sessions, Maker Panels, proposal clinics, and the iLRNFuser Game Jams.

Book D — Community Engagement & Capacity Building

Volunteer pathways, facilitation training, community care structures, and the onboarding resources that strengthen contributor engagement.

Book E — Showcases, Evidence, and the Garden Bounty

Finalized outputs from the Garden, including showcase documentation, validated methods, and contributions mapped to the Knowledge Tree and Repository.

11.3 Conference and Submission Resources

iLEAD Practitioner Track Guide

Submission expectations, session formats, and review criteria for the iLEAD stream.

EasyChair Submission Portal

The platform for submitting, revising, and tracking conference contributions.

Innovation Garden District Guidelines

Expectations and preparation guidance for presenting Pod-based or experiential contributions during the hybrid conference.

11.4 Tools and Operational Frameworks

18-Month Innovation Garden Cycle (Book A ? Page 4)

Defines the annual and extended rhythms that anchor all Garden programming.

Innovation Garden Walkthroughs & Guided Virtual Adventures

Operational templates and facilitator guidance for platform exploration and community learning.

Toolshed Session and Maker Panel Guidelines

Repeatable models for skill-focused and reflective design conversations.

11.5 How to Use This Page

These crosslinks are intended to:

- Provide rapid navigation to related information

- Help contributors understand how Garden activities connect to the Knowledge Tree and Searchlight
- Support program leads, volunteers, and newcomers in locating relevant templates and structures
- Maintain coherence across the Innovation Garden shelf

As the Codex evolves, this page should be periodically updated to include new Books, chapters, and reference materials.

Choose a file Choose a file