

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.

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