

I-Corps for Learning (I-Corps L) Funding Opportunity

A frustration common to both educators and policymakers surrounds the difficulty of getting effective, evidence-based approaches into widespread use in classrooms and other learning environments.

Researchers may do cutting-edge work that shows the impact of an innovative teaching strategy, technology, or set of curriculum materials on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning. The research may prompt the adoption of the innovation on a small scale. However, it often remains effectively a secret – unknown to most STEM educators or the research community at large.

Getting the best evidence-based practices out where they can influence large numbers of students, rather than individual classrooms, requires an entrepreneurial approach. There are a number of analogous elements between trying to bring product discoveries to market and getting learning innovations into broad practice. So the National Science Foundation (NSF) is applying the tools of its [Innovation Corps](#) (I-CorpsTM) to help promote widespread adoption of promising educational practices to promote STEM learning.

NSF will provide up to \$1.2 million to support research into how the I-Corps program's focus on the “ditch of death” between research and development can help address the gap associated with bringing a promising education practice to a common, widespread utilization. NSF will fund 24 teams to participate in an education-focused I-Corps for Learning (I-Corps L) pilot cohort, consistent with the [I-Corps Teams program](#). The I-Corps L cohort teams will receive additional support -- in the form of mentoring and funding -- to accelerate innovation in learning that can be successfully scaled, in a sustainable manner.

Through I-Corps L, the tools of science will help education researchers identify approaches that are effective in teaching and learning STEM. The curriculum uses a hypothesis-testing, scientific method of discovery that is familiar to researchers, in order to garner needed insights regarding issues associated with their innovations. Participants are forced to get “out of the classroom/lab” and gather information by conducting 100 interviews with others (e.g., customers, partners) as a part of the discovery process.

Proposals from potential I-Corps L teams will be accepted through April 15, 2015. A [Dear Colleague Letter](#) describes this funding opportunity in more detail.

Questions can be directed to Program Director John Krupczak, JKRUPCZA@nsf.gov .

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