

Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments
& Kerr-Tar Workforce Development Board Present:

INNOVATE 2023

QUESTION. DESIGN. THRIVE.



Photo Courtesy of Lakeland Cultural Arts Center

March 23, 2023
Lakeland Cultural Arts Center | Littleton, NC

INNOVATE 2023

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9:00 - 9:30 AM NETWORKING & REGISTRATION

9:30 - 9:45 AM WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

- Diane Cox, Executive Director, Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments
- Bertadean Baker, Chair, Warren County Board of Commissioners
- Marqueta Welton, Chief of Staff, NC Department of Commerce
- Brian Tarallo, Managing Director, Lizard Brain
- Peter Holloway, Executive Director, Lakeland Cultural Arts Center

The event proceedings will be illustrated live by Brian Tarallo of Lizard Brain

9:45 - 10:30 AM UNLOCKING YOUR INNOVATION SPIRIT

Introduction: Audrey Boone, Economic Development Specialist, Granville County

Workshop Facilitators:

- Melissa Carrier, Director, Office of Social Innovation, UNC-Chapel Hill
- Sanji Datar, Design Thinking Fellow, Innovate Carolina, UNC-Chapel Hill

10:30 - 11:00 AM CREATING, SUPPORTING, & BUILDING IN RURAL EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Introduction: Rose Ponton, Community & Economic Developer, Warren County

Speaker:

- Inez Ribustello, Owner, Tarboro Brewing Company, On the Square (*joining virtually*)

11:00 - 11:15 AM BREAK

Richie Duncan, Director, Franklin County Economic Development

11:15 AM - 12:00 PM SESSION 1: CHALLENGING BIAS & CREATING ROOM FOR INNOVATION: HIRING PRACTICES & WORKPLACE CULTURE

Introduction: McKinley Perkinson, Director, Henderson-Vance County Economic Development Commission

Moderator:

- Dan Barkin, Contributing Writer, Business North Carolina Magazine

Panelists:

- Marqueta Welton, Chief of Staff, NC Department of Commerce
- Keiyonna Dubashi, Founder & Executive Director, Profound Ladies
- Eric Haddock, State Reentry Coordinator, NC Department of Commerce
- Michael Westray, Regional Reentry Specialist, NC Department of Commerce
- Beth Butler Fadel, Executive Director, Disability:IN North Carolina

12:00 - 12:20 PM

INNOVATION IN EDUCATION: GAINING GROUND BY CUTTING LOOSE OLD IDEAS

Introduction: Brandy Lynch, Director, Person County Economic Development

Speaker: Rupen Fofaria, Reporter, EducationNC (EdNC)

12:20 - 1:00 PM

SESSION 2: REDESIGNING SYSTEMS: INNOVATIVE EDUCATION FOR A MORE PURPOSE-DRIVEN WORKFORCE

Introduction: Monique Wilkins, Economic Development Specialist, Franklin County

Moderator:

- Rupen Fofaria, Reporter, EducationNC (EdNC)

Panelists:

- Erin Swanson, Assistant Superintendent for Innovation & Strategic Planning, Edgecombe County Public Schools
- Donnell Cannon, Executive Director, Maureen Joy Charter School & Co-Founder, North-Phillips School of Innovation
- Brett Brenton, Regional Impact Manager, myFutureNC

1:00 PM

CLOSING REMARKS

Charla Duncan, Community & Economic Development Director, Warren County

A GLIMPSE INTO:

Lakeland Cultural Arts Center

COMMUNITY THEATER/NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Lakeland Cultural Arts Center is at the site of the old Littleton High School, which was the town's K-12 school from 1918-1975. In 1978, a man named Mark Taylor convinced the town to turn the old school into an arts center, and Lakeland was born. Through the efforts of countless devoted volunteers, Lakeland continued as a community theater until the pandemic came along and closed it in March of 2020. Over the next two and a half years, through the generosity of the Ed Fitts Charitable Foundation, Lakeland was rebuilt and expanded from top to bottom. Now a state of the art multi purpose venue, Lakeland is an economic driver and social connector with a broad regional audience. While maintaining its community theater heritage, educational and inclusive programming that serve all local populations are priorities. Lakeland has a very diverse board of directors, which is very representative of the community. Lakeland offers a wide variety of programming, from stage plays and musicals to touring acts to classic and contemporary films. Additionally, the lobby doubles as an art gallery, with rotating displays of local and regional artists. Lakeland is also a popular choice for business meetings, community gatherings, wedding showers and other events. To learn more about Lakeland Cultural Arts Center, head over to their website, lakelandcac.org, and make sure to check out their upcoming events calendar found in your INNOVATE 2023 swag bags.



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ABOUT:

Innovate Carolina

TOGETHER, INNOVATE FOR ALL

Innovate Carolina is UNC-Chapel Hill's department for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development that provides a full-scale hub designed for today's problem solvers: innovation-minded faculty, students and community partners who use their ingenuity to nudge the world forward.

Their programs and services help Carolina innovators and entrepreneurs launch startups and create market-ready technologies, products and services. By helping these problem-solvers move more inventions and valuable ideas into the world faster, they make the greatest social and economic impact possible.



UNLOCKING YOUR INNOVATION SPIRIT:

- **Welcome & Introduction to the Workshop**
- **Way of Visioning: Headlines from the Future**
 - Imagine it's 2033! This region has successfully met its economic development goals. After some initial challenges, you are having a huge impact on the world in ways you'd never even imagined! Let's draft a newspaper headline and sketch an image for a New York Times feature of this reality.
- **Way of Being: Reflecting on Your Individual Lenses**
 - A lens is an attribute or identity you relate to. Potential lenses may be your gender, religion, education, nationality, etc. We will reflect on how each of these could shape your personal perspective of the world and investigate the assumptions guiding your economic development work in the region.
- **Way of Thinking: Understanding Your Innovation-Specific Cognitive Biases**
 - *Cognitive bias* is an umbrella term that refers to the systematic ways in which the context and framing of information influence our judgment and decision-making.

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UNLOCKING YOUR INNOVATION SPIRIT:

- **Way of Thinking: Understanding Your Innovation-Specific Cognitive Biases**
 - We all have cognitive biases. We will investigate which biases you are most prone to on innovation projects. We will explore how you might mitigate or overcome these biases as an individual and how others might help you expand beyond these biases.
- **Wrap Up**
 - Q&A



QR Code for all workshop questions



MARCH 23, 2023 | LITTLETON, NC

16 Key cognitive biases that impact creativity and the innovation process.



Confirmation bias.

We believe what we want to believe by favouring information that confirms pre-existing beliefs or preconceptions. This results in looking for creative solutions that confirm our beliefs rather than challenge them. Tread carefully when you “disagree with” or discard evidence brought forward by the team!



Projection bias.

From behavioural economics, over-predicting future tastes or preferences will match current tastes or preferences. This bias has particular influence as new innovations are conceived in the now and are projected into the future when they enter markets resulting in over value-appreciation of consumer preferences.



Authority bias.

Favouring authority figure opinions ideas within innovation teams. This means that innovative ideas coming from senior team members trump or better all others, even if other concepts, ideas and inputs could be more creative and relevant to problem solving. Take this into account, especially when you yourself speak up. Whatever you as a sponsor, say will carry a lot more weight than any other opinion.



Loss aversion bias.

Once a decision has been made, sticking to it rather than taking risks due to the fear of losing what you gained in starting something and wishing to see it finished. We also attach more value to something once we have made an emotional investment in it. As a consequence of effort, time and energy put into creative thinking, team members can become emotionally attached to their outcomes. To remedy this, the 11th commandment: “thou shalt not fall in love with thy solutions”.



False causality.

Citing sequential events as evidence the first caused the second. This can occur within the Design Thinking empathise phase where you are intentionally seeking confirmation of causality between what people say vs. what they do, leading to taking the wrong problems or needs forward to solve. Question yourself: can you really prove causality? Or only the correlation. Or only sequence?



Action bias.

When faced with ambiguity favouring doing something or anything without any prior analysis even if it is counterproductive. Team members can feel that they need to take action regardless of whether it is a good idea or not. This can be an issue when under time pressure in strict design sprint workshops for example. When a team walks into this, question whether their actions have clear reasoning (why?) behind them and are based on evidence of their chosen direction. On the other opposite end of the spectrum avoid “analysis paralysis” by encouraging pragmatic decision making based on partial evidence.



Self serving bias.

Favouring decisions that enhance self-esteem. This results in attributing positive events to oneself and conversely negative events to others. Within innovation workshops this can mean that decisions made can be loaded with personal agenda's rather than customer and business logic for the company. Encourage team members (or yourself) to look at the idea from different points of view (other departments, stakeholders, clients, etc.) to truly gauge its merit objectively.



Framing bias.

Being influenced by the way in which information is presented rather than the information itself. We see this one all the time particularly when developing prototypes for pitching as well as in presenting polished slides. People will avoid risk if presented well and seek risk if presented poorly meaning that decision making logic can easily be skewed. When judging a team's pitch: are you judging the content? Or the delivery?



Conformity bias.

Choices of mass populations influence how we think, even if against independent personal judgements. This can result in poor decision making and lead to groupthink which is particularly detrimental to creativity as outside opinions can become suppressed leading to self-censorship and loss of independent thought. When you spot group think within a team, try to gain everyone's personal perspective separately first (either through a silent, written brainstorm or through one on one conversations) before discussing the topic in a team setting.



Strategic misrepresentation.

Knowingly understating the costs and overstating the benefits. When developing innovation concepts, ballpark figures and business model prototypes, teams are prone to understating the true costs and overstating the likely benefits in order to get a project approved (which happens all the time in large governmental contracting). Over-optimism is then spotted and challenged by managers assessing how truly innovative team outcomes are. Challenge your teams: are they showing the full image of costs? What about FTE's and other time investments?



Bandwagon bias.

Favouring ideas already adopted by others. This is especially influential when linked to authority bias. Bandwagon effect is a common occurrence we see in workshops. The rate and speed at which ideas are adopted by others (through discussion, ...) can significantly influence the likelihood of those ideas and concepts being selected by the group and taken forward. Do you like a teams idea just because you've seen it done before? Are you favouring ideas just because other banks do them too?



Ambiguity bias.

Favouring options where the outcome is more knowable over those which it is not. This bias has dire impacts innovation outcomes because the process is fundamentally risky and unknown process. If team members subconsciously favour known known's, you will most likely follow known knowns and previously trodden paths. When disliking an idea or way of working: think for a second. Is it based on merit or just because it's new and unknown?



Pro-innovation bias.

New innovations should be adopted by all members society (regardless of the wider needs) and are pushed-out and accepted regardless. Novelty and 'newness' are seen as inherently good, regardless of potential negative impacts (inequality, elitism, environmental damage etc.) resulting in new ideas and concepts generated being judged through somewhat rose tinted spectacles. Question the idea: are we judging it too much on its level of novelty or “sexyness”? Without falling into status quo bias, are we taking all possible (also negative) impacts into account?



Anchoring bias.

Being influenced by information that is already known or that is first shown. This causes pre-loaded and determined tunnel vision and influences final decision making. We deliberately manipulate team members' minds by 'pre-loading' them one of our warm-up exercises to demonstrate this bias at play. The impact is highly-significant on creative thinking and outcomes.



Status-quo bias.

Favouring the current situation or status quo and maintaining it due to loss aversion (or fear of losing it) and do nothing as a result. This is a subtle bias on an emotional level that makes us reduce risk and prefer what is familiar or “the way we do things round here” as it is known. It has severe consequences when seeking out new ways to creatively solve needs and problems. When you dislike an idea, ask yourself: “Is this just me sticking to what I know?”



Feature positive effect.

(close links with optimism bias): due to limited time or resources, people tend to focus on the ‘good’ benefits whilst ignoring negative effects even when the negative effects are significant. This is influential when deep-diving into specific new feature sets for new concepts (especially when coupled with loss aversion bias), because it means that teams will overlook missing information especially when it is outside expertise resulting in taking ideas forward with critical flaws.

LUNCH

Following the summit, all attendees will have the opportunity to grab a bite from a couple of food trucks that will be conveniently stationed outside of Lakeland Cultural Arts Center.

All meals will be at the expense of each attendee and to-go orders may be placed. There is also seating at Lakeland Cultural Arts Center if you'd like to bring your lunch back to the event venue.



THE HEN & THE HOUND

ABOUT:

The Hen & The Hound serves up the finest & freshest wood-fired pizza, seasonal appetizers, a variety of top-notch entrees & farm-fresh favorites.

MENU:

www.thehenandthehound.com



LAWRENCE & PERRY BBQ

ABOUT:

Lawrence & Perry BBQ specializes in slow-smoked ribs, Authentic Eastern NC BBQ, and freshly grilled wings. They offer homemade delicious sides and desserts to compliment every meal.

MENU:

www.lpquenc.com

LOCAL EATERIES:

Craving something different? Grab a bite at one of the local eateries listed below!

- Grandpa's Kitchen
- Littleton Food and Spirits
- Casa Mia's
- Daphne's Coffee Shop



Event Sponsors



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Vance-Granville Community College

Warren County Economic Development Commission



Let us know what you think!

Scan the QR code to the left with the camera on your smart phone and click on the link that pops up to take the Innovate 2023 survey. We appreciate any and all feedback! Thanks for coming and have a safe trip home!

Event supported in part by funding from the Economic Development Administration.