

ADVANCING
UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO
QUALITY

DIGITAL LEARNING

THROUGH GLOBAL COALITIONS
AND NARRATIVE PRACTICES

An Open Knowledge Product for the 3rd UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC 2022)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	8
Part I – International Leadership Institute	٩
Part II – Narrative Framework	17
Closure	31
Additional Resources	31
References	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has served as a roadmap for countries and communities seeking to address endemic inequities experienced across the globe, particularly related to health, education, prosperity, and peace (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, n.d.). Within this roadmap sit seventeen sustainable development goals (or SDGs) that carve a path toward a more equitable future for all global citizens as an ethical imperative and mandate. Bringing the SDGs to fruition will require innovative and inclusive global partnerships where allies and advocates will unite to create broad and contextualized action plans and solutions. This report documents a collaboration in this same vein, sharing two connected case studies on global coalition-building which both center the theme of access to quality education.

Quality education, the fourth sustainable development goal, is an outcome that sits above any specific modality of instruction and encompasses access through face-to-face (F2F) and digital learning environments, in both synchronous and asynchronous, formal and informal settings. In 2020, the Online Learning Consortium, in accord with its mission to advance quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage all learners, identified a need to create critical professional learning and a community of practice for online, blended, and digital learning leaders.



This manifested as two separate but intertwined initiatives—the creation of:

- A prestigious international institute for digital learning leaders on the operationalization of the UN SDGs in support of access to quality digital learning, and
- An open digital storytelling framework made accessible to all educators seeking to discover, reuse, and remix digital learning change work strategies shared by their global colleagues.

Through this report, we invite you to learn more about these two professional learning experiences and connect the evidence-based practices detailed here to your own educational practice and contexts. By sharing and expanding upon the open educational practices ("teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions (UNESCO, 2021) shared in this report, we move closer to ensuring universal access to quality digital education through a globally connected community of practice.

WHO YOU ARE

All educators working across a multitude of modalities and contexts are invited to explore the action-oriented approaches shared within this report. Whether you are new to digital learning or global coalition building, this playbookstyle report will help you to create a foundation for quality and equitable digital education at any scale, including within individual digitally mediated courses, across online programs, and within institutional/system-wide/country-wide digital strategies.

WHO WE ARE

This report is a publication by the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), a global non-profit and collaborative community of higher education leaders and innovators dedicated to advancing quality and leadership in digital education. The report is designed to serve as a concise guide to address the needs of educators seeking to ensure that online, blended, and digital learning is equitable within their own local contexts and provides models for professional learning, partnership, and collaboration on digital learning change work through global coalitions.



FOUNDATIONAL DEFINITIONS

We have provided definitions here as grounding for several of the terms utilized in this report:

Communities of Practice — A group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. (Team BE, 2011)

Digital Learning — The use of technology and teaching practices enabled by digital tools to enhance learning. It includes a broad range of content and communication tools, curricular models, design strategies, and student support services that personalize instruction for students in blended, hybrid, and online learning environments. Equitable digital learning adapts instruction to students' needs. Implemented well, digital learning has the potential to enable active learning, better student outcomes, and empower instructors with data to inform teaching. (Fox et al., 2021)

Digital Storytelling — A modern method for expanding upon traditional storytelling techniques through a variety of digital modalities including digital photography, audio techniques and videography. (Buckner, 2018)

Diversity — Having different types of people from a wide range of identities with different perspectives, experiences, etc. (Adams et al., 2021)

Equity — Removing the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor (such as race), examining biases, and creating inclusive environments. (Adams et al., 2021)

Inclusion — Putting diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection – where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create value. (Adams et al., 2021)

Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) Global — A prestigious leadership development academy that leverages a series of connected programs to support global coalition building and global change work. (Online Learning Consortium, n.d.)

Narrative — The causal sequence of events that defines the experience—the expression of what happened in story form. (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012)

Narrative Practices — Independent of the field of psychotherapy, narrative practices (as defined within this educational context) refer to the use of various acts employed within storytelling to support collective understanding and collaborative, goal-oriented work.

OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work — A resource for educators working across international contexts and within global coalitions to align strategic initiatives for online, blended, and digital learning to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. (Shellgren et al., 2021)

OLC Global — A community of practice dedicated to global coalition-building and supporting global change work within the field of online, blended, and digital learning. (Online Learning Consortium, n.d.)

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Partners and Storytellers

The work we story here would not be possible without the contributions of the 2020 and 2021 Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Education (IELOL) Global program participants. Your generosity, candor, criticality, and collaborative spirit have helped to collectively redefine global leadership in online learning. The artifacts and initiatives that you created as part of your participation in IELOL Global are only a spark of the rich work that is to come with the help of your international colleagues and peers. We hope this open knowledge product serves as a core testament to the impact your contributions have already made on the field of online, blended, and digital learning.

Likewise, we are indebted to our 2020 and 2021 program partners: the <u>Southern African Regional Universities Association</u> (SARUA), the <u>Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC)</u>, <u>The Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT)</u>, <u>Instructure</u>, <u>Khalifa University</u>, <u>Welearn</u>, and <u>Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)</u>. Their commitment to amplifying the program within their membership communities and funding program participation within their networks support the accessibility of the IELOL Global program. Moreover, their shared commitment to global coalition building in support of digital learning change work serves as a daily reminder for why a program like IELOL Global is worth the investment.

INTRODUCTION

In the following two-part report, we share a pair of unique and interconnected case studies of digital learning change work in support of the advancement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals:

The first part, **Developing an International Leadership Institute on Global Coalition Building and Digital Learning Change Work**, discusses the conception, design, and development of a global leadership academy that builds international partnerships to increase access to quality education across the globe.

The second part of the report, **Creating a Narrative Framework for Advancing Digital Learning Equity**, presents the OLC's process for developing an interactive tool for capturing and sharing the stories of digital learning leaders and their work to address locally contextualized challenges related to online, blended, and digital learning.

Both sections of the report detail how all seventeen of the UN Sustainable Development Goals were leveraged beyond the application of the fourth SDG (quality education), using digital storytelling, rhetoric, metaphor, collaborative storytelling, and other narrative practices, to increase understanding, empathy, and impact across globally situated communities of practice.

PART I—DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE ON GLOBAL COALITION BUILDING AND DIGITAL LEARNING CHANGE WORK

A narrative history and blueprint for the design and development of an international academy for digital learning leaders on the impact and power of global coalition building and borderless collaboration.

A key challenge to advancing change work we routinely hear from our constituents and the broader higher education community is the building and sustaining of infrastructure around shared values. Indeed, in large part due to the historical structuring of higher education, most of academia has and continues to work in silos to this day, situating change work primarily within the disciplines and therefore in relative isolation. The same can be said when taking into perspective the various sectors that contribute to the advancement of quality education (e.g., higher education, industry, government, non-profit), all of which enter into change work from a unique perspective and sense of purpose. Regardless of which sector, discipline, role, or region of the world we enter into change work from, the future of digital learning requires borderless collaboration across distance and difference if it is to truly center quality and equity. Inherent to this challenge is the work of ensuring that the stories of change work being shared globally resist the tendency to forward ethnocentric and colonial perspectives. In the world of online, blended, and digital learning, we find this particularly difficult, where European and Western cultures have historically dominated global conversations around digital transformation and effective practices.

In light of recent responses to COVID-19 and the global emergency shift to remote educational models, it became clear that countries and regions that historically did not have the infrastructure to support online learning prior to the pandemic face even more significant challenges accessing quality education. In the case of the OLC, we saw an uptick in engagement from international partners looking to leverage our services. As we engage in these partnerships, though, it is paramount that we lean into opportunities to learn from one another. We must not forget the relative inequities we each face today globally with respect to advancing access to quality digital learning. For instance, in the United States alone, "approximately 19 million Americans—6 percent of the population—still lack access to fixed broadband service at threshold speeds. In rural areas, nearly one-fourth of the population—14.5 million people—lack access to this service" (Federal Communications Commission, n.d.). With this in mind, we must develop strategies and spaces to meaningfully engage in the amplification of a plurality of voices so that we can truly leverage collaborative and critical dialogues for change. By doing so, we will not only be able to identify locally situated challenges and needs but work to address inequities everywhere.

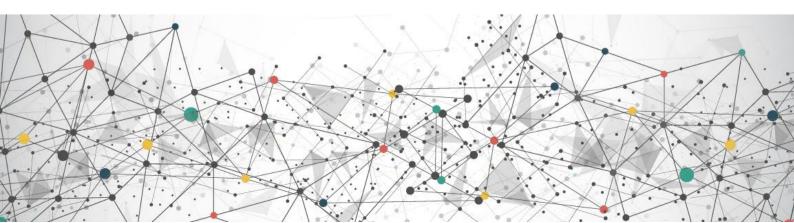
In addition to the development of values-based infrastructure and community, we face the challenge of creating buy-in for supporting change work. The challenges we face today cannot be addressed in isolation of the systems they exist within, and these systems in and of themselves are complex and never transparent. The lack of transparency is further exasperated by our siloed and hierarchical working tendencies. As a result, identifying impactful research questions and specific needs so that we might operationalize specific change-oriented action plans proves difficult. Furthermore, in higher education, we face the additional challenge of addressing concerns of load, capacity, and incentivization as change work is often outside the scope of "regular" job duties and is rarely recognized/valued within institutional contexts. This subsequently results in increased challenges in identifying change-makers, partners, and stakeholders interested in doing change work.

Finally, while standards around quality digital learning exist, familiarity with these standards vary. Consequently, a significant challenge we face within online, blended, and digital learning are the relative gaps in the global understanding as to what *quality* education means and requires. "Quality," in and of itself, is also a locally contextualized concept as relationships to *readiness, capacity, awareness*, and so forth differ greatly across the world. Therefore, any leadership development program that strives for both the advancement of quality digital learning *and* the development of global communities of practice must consider the plurality of perspectives and approaches to *quality*.

We offer below a case study detailing the OLC's response to these challenges; the IELOL Global Program. In this section, we detail each of the six main programmatic anchors of the IELOL Global ecosystem. This case study addresses the following questions:

- 1. How might we create space for leaders from around the world to converge and collaborate around shared values?
- 2. How might we build infrastructure that centers and values engagement in change-oriented and transformational local and global leadership initiatives?
- 3. What scholarship and resources can we leverage to advance global conversations around *quality* while ensuring a plurality of voices and perspectives?

We share the IELOL Global model with you to invite reflection on the infrastructure required to support global coalition building and change work—both locally and globally—within online, blended, and digital learning. Moreover, we aim to identify future partners and collaborators in this work and hope that this report and the case of IELOL Global serve as cornerstones for our continued efforts to advance access to quality digital learning. We close this section with action-oriented strategies for leveraging this model within your own contexts.



IELOL GLOBAL AS A SOLUTION TO ADVANCING CHANGE WORK BOTH LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

Inspired by the collective need for the field of online, blended, and digital learning to address ubiquitous issues of access to education more broadly, the OLC gathered the first cohort of the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) Global in 2020. This new offering was focused on the transformative power of global collaborations in enacting change work in digital learning at local and global levels. Now in its third year, IELOL Global is designed to build global communities of practice around transformative and sustainable digital transformation that collect and amplify international perspectives. Through the program, participants engage with exemplars of impactful cross-institutional/regional collaboration through global coalitions by iterating with and learning from global partners. They also contribute to the curation and dissemination of participant-created artifacts, use cases, and other resources that contribute to connected and aligned global change work. Its ultimate goal is to support the growth of a community of leaders dedicated to collaborative global change efforts. In this section, we detail the broader IELOL Global ecosystem, including its six main programmatic anchors.

IELOL Global is designed around three primary outcomes:

 Models: Develop and share exemplars of impactful cross-institutional/regional collaboration through global coalitions.

- Communities: Building global communities of practice around transformative and sustainable digital transformation that collect and amplify international perspectives.
- Networks: Curating and disseminating participantcreated artifacts, use cases, and other resources that contribute to connected and aligned global change work.

Altogether, the IELOL Global ecosystem consists of six primary programmatic anchors: 1) The IELOL Global Core Program, 2) the Global Leadership Impact Summit, 3) the Global Leadership Design Challenge and Showcase, 4) the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work, 5) the IELOL Global Regional Colloquies, and 6) OLC Global (with the Global Leadership Impact Summit and the Global Leadership Design Challenge being foundational elements of the IELOL Global Core Program and therefore storied as such below). Each anchor uniquely contributes to the OLC's goal of advancing universal access to quality digital learning. With that said, they collectively demonstrate the power of intentional global coalition building and the centering of narrative practices for supporting change work locally and globally.

THE IELOL GLOBAL CORE PROGRAM

The Core Program is a unique and intensive 12-week program that unites global leaders committed to advancing and enacting transformative digital learning change work at scale. Its curriculum moves participants through four stages of digital learning leadership development. The first stage, "Foundations: Blueprinting and Goal Setting," affords participants the space to better understand the unique relationship (including the scale, scope, and ubiquity) between global and local challenges around online, blended, and digital learning. During this phase of the program, participants build a community with one another as they begin to explore foundational elements to global coalition building within and across the field of online, blended, and digital learning. Since IELOL Global centers storytelling as a method for advancing change work and building communities of practices committed to change work across differences, participants also reflect on and engage with core scholarship related to narrative practices within digital learning.

The second phase, "Discovery: Exploration and Connections," stories major themes and priorities relevant to global leadership development and change work through intentional alignment to and engagement with the United Nation's 17 SDGs. As a cohort, a series of guest speakers leverage the 17 SDGs to critically engage participants in dialogue around the challenges and opportunities the world of online, digital, and blended learning faces today. During this part of the program, they begin to forge much deeper connections with each other and the IELOL Global curriculum developers as well as build connections with our global leadership network. Throughout the three weeks of the "Design Phase," the 17 guest speakers story their change

work within digital learning environments through intentionally anchoring around one of the UN's SDGs. Each day of the "Design Phase" centers on a different SDG. The SDGs serve as literal, and at times metaphorical, anchors situating and mapping the collaborative identification of key factors involved in local and global change work within the field of online, blended, and digital learning to broader change efforts happening beyond the field. Crucially, participants learn that how change work happens across the field is not ubiquitous (and indeed manifests in unique and diverse ways locally). However, we nevertheless face similar challenges globally, positioning us well in terms of being able to learn from one another. The curriculum rests on the belief that communities of practice committed to the intentional and critical advancement of online, blended, and digital infrastructures and learning can lead to a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, accessible, and sustainable future for not only education but arguably, humanity and the world.

The OLC firmly believes that we cannot separate our work in the field of online, blended, and digital learning from all that is happening within the world beyond it. As such, we leverage the UN's SDGs to anchor and align our work to that larger landscape. We know that the type and scale of global change work we are contributing to is not possible in isolation. Therefore, the cohort and team-based approaches operationalized within IELOL Global and our intentional engagement with global partners are core elements to our model. We understand that we must retain a global perspective if we are to disrupt the cycles of siloed change management.

The third phase, "Design: Collaboration and Contextualization," opens with the Global Leadership Impact Summit, a free and public two-day synchronous event where community members from around the globe gather to discuss global initiatives, opportunities for collaboration, and the needs and challenges we face locally and collectively. Across the course of the event, we also collaborate on the development of a Global Leadership Action Plan, which will serve our network of international partners and the IELOL Global cohort as they plan for the future. Following the Global Leadership Impact Summit, IELOL Global Core Program participants then enter a 3-week design sprint, also called the Global Leadership Design Challenge—a time-constrained activity that uses design thinking to generate solutions to complex challenges. In this challenge, cohort members work in small teams on the development of an action-oriented and change-centered asset. IELOL Global participants move from planning and preparation to action by working collaboratively on these assets, building toward potential solutions with the goal of broad community benefit in mind. Teams are composed of members representing different global perspectives and are charged with creating an open and shareable resource designed to be picked up and leveraged to support local change work around the world. Assets are shared with the public following the close of the program and situated as open knowledge products that others can adapt or use outright as they operationalize locally contextualized change management strategies.

Project teamwork is supported by a dedicated mentor and the IELOL Global program leadership team, who provide strategic direction and guidance to ensure that each group's collaboratively generated asset is designed and situated for both local and global impact. This phase also helps participants think through how to scale, share, and measure



the impact of their work, as well as advocate for the work of others.

This phase of the program specifically leverages <u>Design for Social Impact</u> (Acharya et al., n.d.) and <u>Liberatory Design principles</u> (Anaissie et al., 2021) and <u>practices</u> (Anaissie et al., 2021) as a means to center human-centered and equitable approaches to social change work. It is also designed to experientially engage program participants in transformational leadership and change initiatives.

The Core Program culminates with the "Transformation: Storytelling and Amplification" phase. During this part of the program, the IELOL Global cohort will invite the broader global community to an open and free synchronous event to gather, celebrate, and engage with participants' project work. As part of their "Global Leadership Design Challenge" project work, program participants are asked to meaningfully story their work and share it publicly. This public storytelling takes place over the course of a "Showcase" day, where family, friends, community members, and stakeholders hear about the newly developed artifacts.

THE OLC FRAMEWORK FOR STORYING DIGITAL LEARNING CHANGE WORK

The IELOL Global programmatic ecosystem centers on using story, specifically a storytelling framework, for change initiatives in the field of online, blended, and digital learning. For most change work, we are often left to our own devices to figure out how we share our work with the world. As a result, not all change work is shared or amplified, resulting in the regularity of siloed work (both within and across institutions). While this tendency within higher education results in some truly amazing and diverse assets, we usually lack an understanding of how and why an asset reflects on a real-world challenge in the field because of how it is presented/shared. These stories are critical anchors for aligning our work to specific stakeholders, issues, or even opportunities (among other things), and their articulation ultimately increases their chances of being operationalized at both local and global levels.

IELOL Global leverages the new OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work (detailed below in "Part II— Creating a Narrative Framework for Advancing Digital Learning Equity") as a means to develop shared language and a tool to support the actual storying of program participants' work. As IELOL Global participants move through the Core Program, they complete the framework, leveraging different parts of it to advance their individual and collaborative project work. The framework engages users in telling the story of their design process as a lifecycle of actions. Our goal is to support movement through key aspects of program participants' change work and identify unique opportunities for sharing their work with others. Through the development and operationalization of this new storytelling framework, change-makers are better positioned to not only share their work with others but meaningfully engage in the work of others as well. We invite readers interested in this framework to read Part II of this report, which covers the creation of this framework in detail.

IELOL GLOBAL REGIONAL COLLOQUIES

Open to participants of the IELOL Core Program, prospective participants of the program, and others interested in global coalition building and supporting digital learning change work at scale, the Regional Colloquies moves IELOL Global participants from cohort-based programming to highly, locally situated programming. This convening features guest speakers and facilitators (chosen and prepared by OLC and our international partners) who guide program participants in impactful talks related to online and digital learning and leadership development as situated within the international partners' contexts.

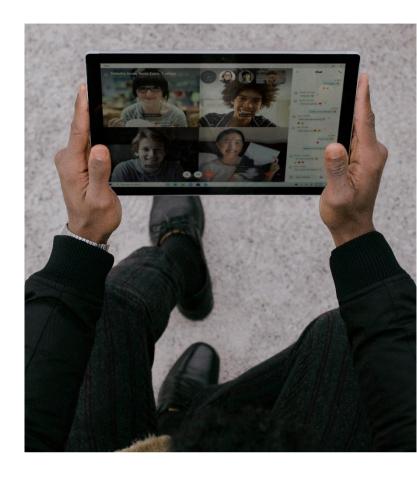
The Regional Colloquies also includes a series of activities where participants are tasked with collaboratively situating the assets developed by the IELOL Global design teams for use within the hosting partner's regionally situated change initiatives and participants' unique local contexts.

In 2021, the Online Learning Consortium partnered with seven organizations in support of our global coalition building and change efforts: the **Southern African Regional** Universities Association (SARUA), the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC), The Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT), Instructure, Khalifa University, Welearn, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Four of the organizations—SARUA, Welearn, KNUST, and Khalifa University—are internationally-based partners; SARUA supports digital transformation in the South African region, KNUST advances change work in Ghana and is supporting network development in and across Western Africa, Welearn serves higher education institutions and change work in Chile, and Khalifa University addresses the entire range of strategic, scientific, and industrial challenges facing the United Arab Emirates.

The OLC partnered with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) on the first of IELOL Global's Regional Colloquies, "IELOL Global Colloquy for Online Learning: Transforming Educational Futures In West Africa Through Innovation," (July 2022).

OLC GLOBAL

In order to advance our goal of curating and disseminating participant-created artifacts, use cases, and other resources that contribute to connected and aligned global change work, we created the <u>OLC Global</u> website. OLC Global is a digital storytelling space designed to support building



communities of practice around systematic and sustainable digital transformation that collect and amplify international perspectives. Following the close of IELOL Global's Core Program, the co-constructed change-oriented artifacts are published as open knowledge products through OLC Global's digital platform. Additionally, we recognize that not everyone has the time or financial capacity to join IELOL Global's Core Program (even with our accessibly low-cost programmatic fees); therefore, anyone in the world can submit and story their change work and associated assets through OLC Global even if they are not enrolled in the program. By opening this platform up to the greater population we extend an invitation to others beyond IELOL Global's Core Program to join our growing community of leaders dedicated to collaborative global change efforts. Through aligning our change work to the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work (and therein the United Nations' 17 SDGs), we can advance our collective global stories of change within digital learning.

APPLYING THIS CASE TO YOUR LOCAL CONTEXTS

The IELOL Global ecosystem was intentionally designed to invite and welcome global engagement and collaborations. Whether through participation in programmatic assets and artifacts or critical reflection on global coalition building within and across digital learning environments, we invite readers across contexts and stakeholder roles into the IELOL Global ecosystem in support of collaborative global change efforts.

- REFLECT ON THE EFFICACY OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: Use IELOL Global's
 programmatic ecosystem as a point of reflection on a leadership development program's efficacy and its
 capacity to support global coalition building and local and global change work.
- 2. **BECOME AN IELOL GLOBAL PARTNER:** Connect with us about becoming an IELOL Global partner (all members of partnering organizations receive discounts for joining IELOL Global's Core Program). We also work directly with partners interested in hosting Regional Colloquies.
- 3. **BRING A TEAM TO THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IMPACT SUMMIT:** Leverage an upcoming Global Leadership Impact Summit (a free event) as a catalyst for driving locally and globally situated change-oriented work within your context(s).
- 4. **LEVERAGE OLC GLOBAL OPEN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS:** Engage in the stories and leverage the assets made available through OLC Global, where you can find and explore examples of the IELOL Global strategy in action.



PART II—CREATING A NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCING DIGITAL LEARNING EQUITY

An exploration of impactful and sustainable narrative practices for supporting, amplifying, and driving globally and locally contextualized digital learning rooted in both quality and equity.

As educators demystify challenges to accessing education and seek effective practices to ensure quality and equity in digital learning environments, knowledge sharing and collaboration are impactful in keeping communities of practice connected in service to students. The connective work of these communities of practice has become all the more important amidst the ongoing threat to the continuity of instruction. While presented as a direct outcome of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, prevalent inequities of health, wealth, and prosperity have challenged access to education across the globe well before the pandemic. In setting a path for our educational future that centers universal access to education through the unique affordances of online, blended, and digital learning, narrative practices help to elevate educator-driven communities of practice in sharing challenges, successes, and new ideas for learner support within and across locally and globally situated contexts. This section provides a case study of OLC's design and implementation of a narrative framework of their creation as both an assessment and design tool helping global coalitions organize and assemble around collaborative digital learning change work. This case study addresses the following questions:

- 1. How might we utilize narrative practices and other reflective assessment tools to document the impact and advancement of digital learning equity?
- 2. What tools or reflective practices will help to increase the practice of sharing and recontextualizing stories of impactful digital learning change work?

In the case study, you will find a discussion of challenges educators currently face for storying and sharing their digital learning change work across four dimensions. Immediately following, you are invited to explore OLC's solutions and action-oriented approach to addressing the identified challenges through implementing a storytelling framework, as well as evidence of the formative impact of the framework across a series of international contexts. This section concludes with the presentation of concrete actions you can take to leverage both the framework and the effective practices shared here in this case study.

FROM SILOED CHALLENGES TO EMPOWERING GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

The formative call to action to create a narrative framework for storying digital learning change work began simply as a series of conversations around the need for spaces where educators might candidly share their progress on addressing endemic inequities related to access to education. Influenced by the practice of design thinking (IDEO, n.d.-b), each of the articulated challenges was resituated as "How might we..." statements that helped us to operationalize each of the concrete needs our organization had observed within the field of online, blended, and digital learning:

- STORYING: How might we, as individual educators working in digital learning environments, create a process and practice for storying our change work?
- 2. SHARING: How might we engender the narrative practices of sharing, adapting, and remixing our work and the work of our colleagues connected to digital learning?
- 3. COLLABORATING: How might we break down siloes across institutions, regions, and countries to foreground the impact of engaging in narrative practices collaboratively?
- 4. SUSTAINING: How might we build resilient and sustainable infrastructure for maintaining empowering narrative practices over time?

In each of the subsections below, we expand on each of the challenge questions and how they served as a call for creating a narrative framework to assist educators in situating and sharing their practices.

CREATING FOUNTATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR NARRATIVE PRACTICES

How might we, as individual educators working in digital learning environments, create a process and practice for storying our change work?

Storytelling is used prominently in all facets of formal and informal learning to connect communities around shared understandings, actions, and values (McGee, 2014). Dismantling the various action steps of crafting a narrative provides a collection of effective practices that educators can leverage in engaging diverse communities of stakeholders and working toward collective goals and outcomes. Independent of the definition used in psychotherapy, narrative practices within this educational context refers to the use of various acts employed in storytelling to support collective understanding and collaborative, goal-oriented work. Leaning into the open educational practice of sharing (Cronin & MacLaren, 2018; Ehlers & Conole, 2010) as a means of improving efficacy and impact, our community turned to narrative practices as a way to collect, disseminate, and encourage a remix of individual and collective stories of digital learning change work more broadly. This required careful attention to the socio-culturally situated understandings of stories and storytelling, as well as inclusive practices for encouraging agentic and empowering storytelling made open to all narrators (as opposed to the dominant voices holding

power and privilege over storytelling). Creating a storytelling framework as an openly accessible, open knowledge product was immediately determined as the critical first step in ensuring that all hoping to engage with the framework could do so, both as a means of furthering progress in their own work but also impacting the work of others in and beyond their communities. It was also determined that the framework should center universally held values for well-being and prosperity as a means of creating linkages between constellating stories of impact within the ecosystem of quality, equity-focused digital learning. As such, the UN's SDGs were chosen as a prominent design element in the framework, engaging users in considering how education advances all 17 of the actions aligned to the development and growth of communities situated across the globe.

ENGENDERING THE NARRATIVE PRACTICES OF SHARING, ADAPTATION, AND REMIX

How might we engender the narrative practices of sharing, adapting, and remixing our work and the work of our colleagues connected to digital learning?

While capturing and documenting our individual stories of digital learning change work is an essential first step in connecting communities, the act of sharing those stories and freeing the findings within to reuse, adapt, and remix becomes paramount in actualizing the power and impact of the stories themselves. In engaging conversations with members of our extended OLC community on the practice of sharing stories to inspire our peers, colleagues have utilized the phrase that "our stories will save us." Indeed, our connections as educators, advocates, and champions of

equity and access in our field are forged through telling our stories in ways that encourage and inspire generative action from those around us. This can be challenging as stories are shared with diverse audiences and risk the conflict of sharing dominant narratives, successes and not failures, as well as stories divorced of sociocultural context. With the creation of the storytelling framework, we leaned into models of narrative that required individuals to examine their stories to make sense of the world around us as a connected and engaged community of learners (Halliday, 1994). We posed reflection questions that would encourage applying digital literacies practices (Belshaw, 2014) and multimodal digital storytelling (Jewitt, 2009; Vasudevan et al., 2010), as well as considering the need to situate the actors within stories across time, space, and place, particularly as related to how our individual identities and lived experiences shape how we work, collaborate, and lead. Focusing on authenticity, transparency, and continuous growth, the storytelling framework encourages those interacting with it to consider what resources and models of effective practices might be shared and broadly disseminated for the good of all learners, regardless of location.

FOREGROUNDING COLLABORATIVE NARRATIVE PRACTICES

How might we break down silos across institutions, regions, and countries to foreground the impact of engaging in narrative practices collaboratively?

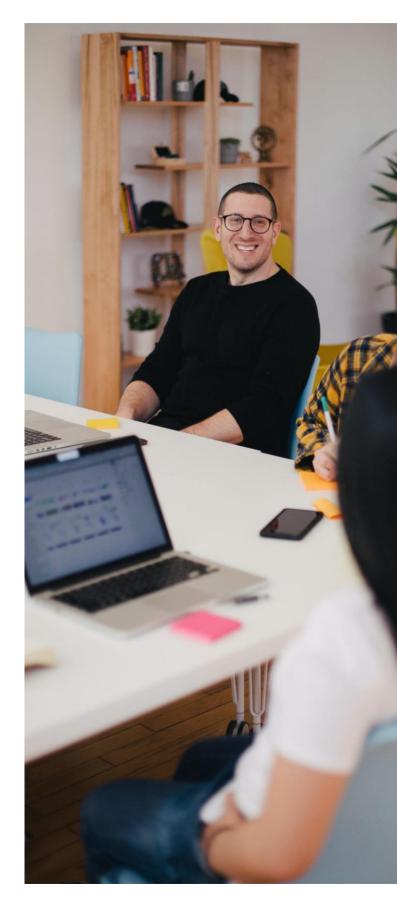
Moving from a progressive model of storying and sharing, the third challenge we sought to address was related to collaboration. In examining the potential impact of the narrative practices centered in our storytelling framework, we quickly determined that a vehicle for telling an individual

story would be limiting and that many of the stories we might collect and share would need to be told through the unique voices of multiple authors. Additionally, we wanted to use the framework to combat the prevalent silos in the field, separating communities by disciplines, departments, institutions, and geographic regions. We also wanted to lean into collaborations that sit at the fringe of the online, blended, and digital learning field, breaking the cycle of remaining in an echo chamber focused on our industry alone. Looking at how the framework might support diverse and pluralistic communities of practice led us to conclude that engagement with the framework would need to center on building meaningful relationships across borders and boundaries, with individuals contributing their respective expertise and perspectives to change initiatives. Utilizing the framework within the IELOL Global curriculum led to the organic construction of these relationships within the cohorts of participants; however, we wanted to take a step further and ensure space for any contributor engaging with the open version of our framework on our website to not only share but connect, extend, and collaborate.

SUSTAINING NARRATIVE PRACTICES TO DRIVE CHANGE WORK FORWARD

How might we build resilient and sustainable infrastructure for maintaining empowering narrative practices over time?

The final challenge question we sought to answer related to ensuring that the instantiation of the previous three solutions would be afforded the fertile ground to grow and thrive over time. Indeed, an issue for many initiatives related to digital learning strategy is the need to determine an ongoing support model to keep practices alive over time.



Quite often, individual advocates and collaborators are faced with the challenge of working toward outcomes that are not directly supported or incentivized by their institutions or organizations. Furthermore, poorly crafted distributed leadership models can result in burnout and the abandonment of initiatives begun in good faith. In creating the narrative framework, we looked to design a model highlighting sources of support that would leverage efficiencies from both collaboration and open pedagogical practices (Cronin & MacLaren, 2018; Ehlers & Conole, 2010). This included the presentation of our own unique partnership models in standing up and facilitating the IELOL Global Program, as well as designing a web interface for the storytelling framework that would allow for networking, connecting, and crowdsourcing allies and supporters on individual change initiatives. Lastly, the situating of stories as ongoing and open to development creates an environment where no single individual is considered responsible for the success (or failure) of an initiative. Rather, participants are encouraged to consider openness more broadly within the context of a commitment to a process and practice of digital learning change work that is aided by collaboration and shared leadership across locations and contexts.

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IMPLEMENTING AND MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK

Moving from the articulated challenges for connecting distributed communities through engagement with narrative practices, the OLC took an action-oriented approach to operationalize the discrete solutions articulated above into a storytelling framework for digital learning change work. Beyond making the storytelling framework available as an open knowledge product, we wanted to make our development process open as well, encouraging other educators to think similarly about how they can advance access to quality education through innovative instantiations of boundless communities of practice. In the following subsections, we discuss the OLC's methods as a playbook or recipe that we encourage you to remix and adapt for your contexts and purposes.

DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

The origin story of IELOL Global broadly began as a series of impactful pivots set into motion by the pandemic. OLC and SARUA had partnered to hold the first international version of IELOL in South Africa in May 2020, but due to COVID-19, determined that it would be best to make the event completely online. In doing so, the organizations were able to expand access to the program to participants who would have been limited in their abilities to attend the event in South Africa due to cost, timing, and distance.

As a result of the overwhelming success of this first cohort of IELOL Global, including the formation of a new curricular model and innovative partnership/sponsorship model, it was determined that it would continue as a completely online institute.

As the planning team investigated opportunities to extend the previous year's curriculum into a format that would be more inclusive and applicable across local contexts, it was quickly determined that the UN's SDGs provided a unique opportunity to weave together narrative practices which leverage metaphor as a means to simultaneously situate work locally and contextualize that same work globally. The team used Marshall Ganz's popular narrative structure, "The Story of Me, Us, Now," (Ganz, n.d.) as a storytelling vehicle within portions of the framework to encourage users to consider how sharing their own stories would create room and space for collaborators to enter into the work as a collective.

PART I - NARRATIVE PLACES

STAGE	QUESTION
Story of Self	What do you consider your work in digital learning (i.e., how would you describe it, what all does it entail, what is "your work") and why were you called to it?
Story of Us	What purposes, goals, or vision do you share with others locally?
Story of Now	What is a local challenge related to your work in digital learning?

Table 1. Part I of the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work

The storytelling framework focused on this simple act of making space for identifying connections and was influenced by Boje's work on ante narrative, or the idea that one can use narrative to place a wager or bet on the future that they seek to bring to fruition (Rosile et al., 2013).

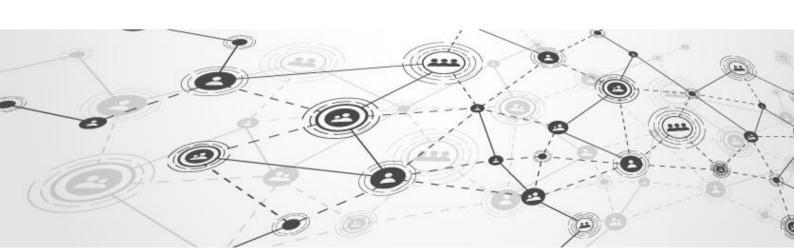
PART II – LIVING FRAMFWORK

Stage	Question
Situate Story	Describe a single event that embodies the local challenge you identified that relates to digital learning.
Define Story	Who are the local actors in this story?
	Who are the global actors in this story?
	What desirable actions do these local/global actors maintain?

Define Story (continued)	What undesirable actions do these local/global actors maintain?
	How are these actions significant in local contexts?
	How are these actions significant in global contexts?
	What motivates you to address these actions?
	Why is new action necessary among the systems you define?
Reimagine Story	What new action(s) might you take to address this challenge?
	What subactions need to be tackled in order to complete each of the actions articulated above? Note : If you listed more than one action above, answer each of these questions below for each action above.
	 What new subactions might you take to address this challenge? How might this subaction prove significant in your local context? How might this subaction prove significant in the global context? What motivates you to undertake this subaction? How can global collaboration support this subaction?
	What resources do you need in order to act? What one new action are you most inspired to pursue? Why?

Table 2. Part II of the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work

The ante narrative also functions in collaborative spaces as connective and collaborative, seeking out the hidden connections between projects, people, and goals through what Boje refers to as "rhizomatic assemblages" (Boje, 2011; Boje et al., 2004, Jørgensen & Boje, 2009). In the same way that a network of plants on the surface of the earth is sustained by a hidden series of interconnected roots, the OLC storytelling framework uses Boje's framing of narrative to unearth potential linkages between synergistic efforts that would remain unknown were it not for a database-driven website offering direct and indirect connections between stories. Through tagging and categorization, readers can see connections made through the website taxonomy and draw their own conclusions around potential shared goals and outcomes held in each story on the website.



PART III – ANTENARRATIVE INQUIRY

Stage	Question
Reflect	Which SDGs connect to this new action you have identified in the final question of Part II (i.e., the one you stated you are most inspired to pursue)? • Goal 1: No Poverty
	 Goal 2: Zero Hunger Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being Goal 4: Quality Education
	 Goal 5: Gender Equality Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
	 Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
	 Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production Goal 13: Climate Action
	 Goal 14: Life Below Water Goal 15: Life on Land Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
	• Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals
	Note: Unsure of which UN SDGs apply to your new action? Reference the OLC Alignment Resource for Storying Digital Learning Change Work offered below on p. 10. This resource document highlights the linkages between the SDGs and digital learning through different real-life examples offered by the authors of this framework.
Craft	List the SDGs that you identified and answer the following questions for each.
	Note : You can engage cyclically in this process as many times as you like but try to start with one SDG and move from there.
	 How might new action bring about the aspirational vision of the world as contextualized by this SDG? Who will be responsible?
	What opportunities exist for collaboration?Who will be affected?
	 Who will maintain the action? What may success look like? What may impede success?
	 How will you collect feedback? What ongoing resources are needed? If desirable, how may new action be sustained?
	What is the optimal artifact (given time, constraints, resources, etc.) that you can develop in support of this action?
	Note: We encourage you to consider how you might collaboratively design and create/build a change-oriented asset. This might be a resource, a proposal, a detailed strategic plan, etc. that you provide as an aid to your community specifically. Also consider sharing this out more broadly with other communities in support of

addressing similar or related challenges.

Stage	Question
Craft (continued)	What testing protocols can be created to collect feedback on your artifact and its efficacy and impact? Who are the specific stakeholders or community members that would be important to provide feedback on your action plan/work?
Analyze	Reflect on the process of using this framework thus far – how did your perspectives or ideas shift and/or become more grounded by reflecting on change work through the lens of the SDGs?
	What new ideas emerged through engaging with this storytelling framework? This might include connections or linkages to other projects, partners, collaborations, and resources.
Share	 Thinking ahead to the point of creation of your artifact, how will you present it to your community and publicly share it as an asset? Where will you share it? Do the spaces currently exist or will they need to be created? How will members of your community be able to access the artifact? What planning needs to occur to maintain the quality, relevance, and impact of the artifact? How will you continuously improve the artifact over time?

Table 3. Part 3 of the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work

The framework was also developed to support a diverse collection of stories from across the world that allows space for myriad entry points into the work. By eschewing perfection and completion as potential outcomes of the work, the framework seeks to elevate change work in any state of development, including work in progress and prospective work. Inflight work is not categorized as "lesser than," but rather seen as valuable in better understanding the contexts of progress and identifying new opportunities for partnership that would not exist were the stories shared only featuring completed work. A common element across all stories, regardless of where they sit in the development lifecycle, is a focus on human-centered design. Structured around design thinking principles (Anaissie et al., 2021; Acharya et al., n.d.; IDEO, n.d.-a; Stanford d.School, n.d.), the framework provides a shared vocabulary and taxonomy for moving from understood needs to ideation, prototyping, and testing change initiatives within an iterative development cycle. Extending from this shared vocabulary, the framework ultimately provided an inclusive space for storytellers of all geographic regions, sociocultural contexts, and levels of expertise to contribute their impactful narratives of growth and change in communities supported by digital learning, as well as build upon the work of others by adapting and remixing the approaches shared by their peers.

DEVELOPING THE DATABASE OF STORIES

While the framework alone had the propensity to address the four dimensions of challenges related to advancing universal access to education through digital learning, we knew that a static document would not achieve the impact level that a database-driven, interactive website provided.

As such, we decided to create a digital version of the framework that would serve several purposes and needs:

- A location to showcase and amplify the projects created by the participants of the IELOL Global program
- An inclusive interface for any educator to share their unique contributions to digital learning change work
- A collaborative, form-based format that would encourage individuals to make connections to the shared stories and lead to collaborations and remixes of those stories
- A way to advance the United Nation's SDGs through increased awareness of the 17 SDGs and their connections to digital learning

The team created a new website, <u>OLC Global</u>, to perform the previous actions as an open knowledge product and a point of connection for a steadily growing community of educators advocating for universal access to quality education.

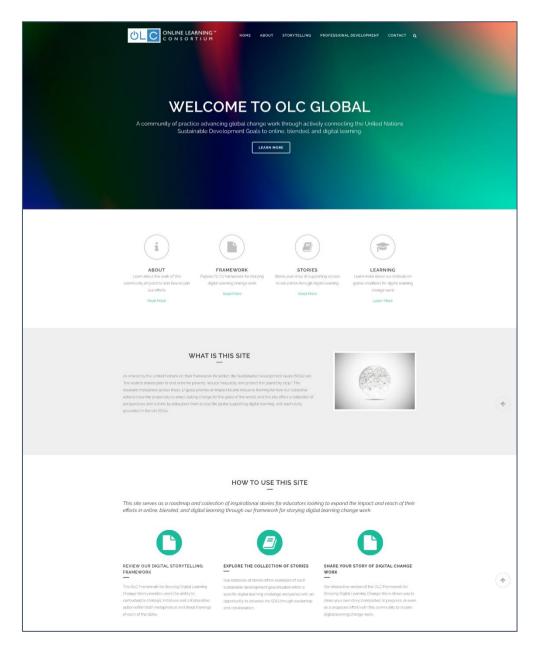


Figure 1. Homepage of OLC Global website

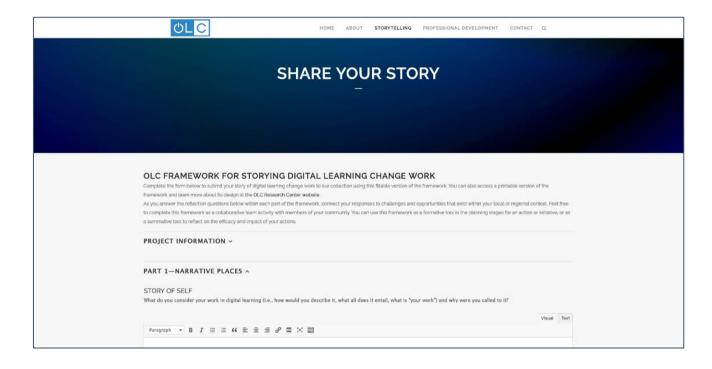


Figure 2. Storytelling Submission page from OLC Global website

Ultimately, through the framework and its design as an interactive, database-driven tool, this project creates space for educators of all disciplines, contexts, and roles to contribute to change work happening at the global scale, actualizing the power of the UN's SDGs through the simple act of sharing one's story.

FIELD EXAMPLES OF IMPACT

ORGANIC REMIXING – IELOL GLOBAL PROOF OF CONCEPT

During the 2020 IELOL Global program, cohort members were asked to work in groups to design and build a "change-oriented asset" in a short (three-week) window. Given that 2020 was the inaugural year for the Core Program, we had not yet developed the Storytelling Framework nor fully aligned the program to the United Nation's SDGs. As a

result, the assets produced by program participants that year were not anchored around the SDGs nor guided by a specific design process. Rather, leaders were instructed to work together to design and develop some *thing*, some resource, some tool, some proposal, or artifact that, if shared, others could pick up and put into practice to support either ongoing or new change initiatives in their local contexts. Due to the international nature of the cohort and the fundamental goals of IELOL Global (which remain the same in the current program), participants were instructed to ensure that their collaborative artifact would support local and global change work.

As they were working, one group decided to design a single resource that spoke to their diverse learning environments. In that way, the resource became not only a general one but a locally contextualized resource as well. You can review their final product here (Mostafa et al., 2021).

The aspect of this example that we wish to particularly story here is what happened next. Though the program was always designed and situated to amplify the work of program participants and graduates, in 2020, we did not yet have the infrastructure to do so (i.e., this was prior to the development of OLC Global). That said, following the 2020 program's end, one cohort member shared the asset with leaders in their institutional context. In doing so, they organically amplified the work of their cohort-mates and situated the asset as an effective practice/resource for supporting digital change work in their local context. In turn, this led to the start of an internal change project related to the asset's focus at their institution.

We highlight this example here to story the power of collaborative storytelling and change-work of the sort that happens in IELOL Global. The asset the group created strategically situated the members' uniquely local challenges in the context of a shared global challenge. As a result of their success in being able to story and therein situate their solution in both local and global change work, the colleague who proposed it at their institution was more easily able to convince institutional leadership to operationalize it within that new context (for their institution was already able to see how the asset could support their locally contextualized change work).

Additionally, we share this example because it, in part, drove the creation of the storytelling framework and the OLC Global website. The 2020 IELOL Global Core Program curriculum demonstrated to us that our proof of concept was successful and already resulted in program efficacy. This was an organic example of coalition building in action and the local leveraging of the community of practice we had developed around digital learning change work. As we reflected on the 2020 program and made plans for programmatic revisions, we knew we wanted to design a

program that resulted in more cases like this and centered this type of amplification and asset operationalization. As a result, we conceived of both developing a storytelling framework for digital change-work and a digital web space where program assets could be freely and publicly shared and remixed, at scale.

SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE WORK AT ALL LEVELS

The OLC is a network partner of Every Learner Everywhere (ELE), a network of 12 partner organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of education technologies, curriculum and course design strategies, teaching practices, and support services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. As part of this partnership, we lead one of the ELE Student Fellows programs, and 2022's fellowship project work expands the IELOL Global ecosystem. Throughout the fellowship, fellows will engage in three related projects.

ELE X IELOL Global Remix Project

Using OLC's Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work as an anchor, fellows will take up a series of resources/tools (i.e., "assets") created by global leaders and remix them. Their remixed assets will be included and published on OLC's webspace for global leadership in digital learning, OLC Global.

A Framework for Centering Student Stories

Fellows will take lead in reviewing and modifying the current Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work to include a series of student-centered assets:

A teaching/facilitator tool for how to use the
 Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change
 Work with and for student development.

- A reflective tool to help leaders and those leading change efforts better assess how, when, and in what ways to include students in their change work (i.e., a better understanding of students as stakeholders in change work).
- A collection of student stories via recorded sessions about/inspired by each of the UN's SDGs.

ELE Student Story Project

As a group, they will use the Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work as an anchor to develop their own story-based asset (e.g., tools and resources), which will be shared and published via OLC Global.

We highlight this example here, first, to show how the framework makes space for leadership at all levels. The ELE Student Fellows range in age and educational level—some undergraduates and some graduate students. Nevertheless, they are moving through and utilizing the framework to story themselves in the landscape of digital learning change work. Additionally, this example demonstrates that the framework can be readily used for purposes of remixing. It also showcases the remixing of assets produced using the

framework (i.e., students will be taking up and remixing assets developed by IELOL Global participants). This example further forwards the remixing of the framework itself (through its tri-fold adaptation toward centering students). In doing so, we hope to show that the framework and the remixing practices it makes space for can inspire additional change work.

Finally, the example of the ELE Student Fellows stories how the framework can be leveraged for locally situated professional development and in support of locally contextualized change work. Core to the structure of the OLC's ELE Student Fellows work is the completion of the storying framework. In and of itself, it has proven to be a useful artifact for fostering dialogue around locally and globally situated change work and, specifically, in supporting not only goal setting, action planning, and change management processes, but the genuine storying of the value and sense of purpose anchoring the change work each of the fellows is interested in. With this in mind, we hope this example shows that even in isolation, the framework is an effective tool for advancing quality digital learning.





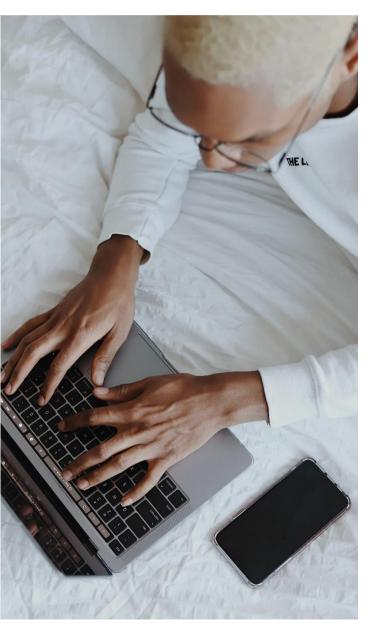
APPLYING THIS CASE TO YOUR LOCAL CONTEXTS

The paths to implementing the findings in this report are myriad. Below, we offer several ways to utilize the OLC Framework for Storying Digital Learning Change Work across a variety of use cases, contexts, and stakeholder groups. Additionally, we invite you to share other locally contextualized uses on our website so we can amplify them across the field.

- 1. **EXPLORE THE FRAMEWORK**: Test the framework on the website as a means of capturing and documenting current and prospective digital learning change work from your community.
- 2. **REMIX A COLLEAGUE'S STORY**: As you find stories on our website that you resonate with, consider how you can resituate or adapt an approach or method to your context, and then share your progress on your recontextualized actions as a new story.
- 3. **IMPLEMENT THE FRAMEWORK AS A COMMUNITY**: Rather than telling your singular story, incorporate the framework in collaborative digital learning change work or professional learning shared with your community.
- 4. **STRATEGIZE WITH THE FRAMEWORK**: Extend the usage of the framework into values-oriented work to support digital transformation by leveraging the framework as a part of creating a digital strategy for relevant local and global contexts.

CLOSURE

As the work of IELOL Global progresses and evolves, the OLC seeks to increase the impact and inclusivity of the educators' community gathered under the banner of advancing access to education through storied digital learning change work. Within the diptych of the connected case studies presented in this report, we hope that educators will illuminate new directions for narrative practices as a sustaining and empowering force for increasing our efficacy in ensuring that quality education is an ethical imperative. In that, remixing has the power to inspire new modes of seeing and doing. This report serves as an open invitation and call-to-action to global educators and advocates to join in the efforts documented here, both in sharing their individual stories and amplifying the stories of those whose wisdom will otherwise be lost.



OLC ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Caring for Students Playbook: Getting Started with Key
 Terms, Challenges, and Approaches
- Caring For Students Playbook: Six Recommendations
- Every Learner Everywhere
- IDEO's Design Kit
- Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning
- Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning
 Global
- Integrate Digital Storytelling in Education
- Equity and Student Success
- OLC Global
- Storytelling as a pedagogical tool in higher education
- The Instructional Value of Digital Storytelling
- The pedagogical power of storytelling
- The power of storytelling
- What Is Design Thinking and Why Is It Important?

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