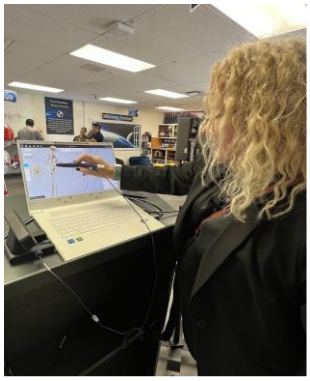
Innovation Library Guideline 101

More than a manual — it's a story and a guide for building with what you have




Throughout this guideline, you'll notice that many sections are written from a personal point of view — with "I," "my reflections," and direct stories from the field. That was intentional.

This Innovation Library didn't begin with a committee or a large-scale initiative. It started as an idea and grew through research, trial and error, late nights, and a deep belief in what our adult learners deserve.

I am incredibly grateful to Mr. William Johnson, Evans Community Adult School's principal during the development and implementation of the Innovation Library, whose support made this vision possible from the very beginning. He stood behind every request, every shift in direction, and every step of the learning process. I also want to thank Ms. Paula Barrow-Howard, the assistant principal during the development and implementation of the Innovation Library, who played a key role in helping plan the space layout, furniture selection, and overall design during the soft opening stages. Her early support helped shape the welcoming and future-focused feel of the library.

Special appreciation also goes to Shawn No and Luis Guzman, our IT Support Technicians, who helped with configuring devices, troubleshooting tech issues, and ensuring everything was ready for classroom use once the tools arrived.

I chose to keep the personal "I" throughout this document to remind anyone reading this: you don't need a perfect roadmap or a full team to get started. Much of this work happened while I was still learning. Some of it happened while balancing multiple roles. And all of it happened with students at the center.

This guideline is meant to be a starting point — not a perfect model. If you're building something similar, I hope it helps you move forward realistically, confidently, and with the belief that you can be successful.

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Guided by years of work in adult education, deep reflection, and the ability to discern what would or wouldn't work in real classrooms. I've walked this path from multiple perspectives: as an ESL student, a classified staff member, a teaching assistant, an instructor, a coordinator, and now a tech advisor. That range of experience shaped how I approached this work — not just through one lens, but with an understanding of what learners, staff, and educators truly need. While I used AI to help organize and refine this document, the vision, values, and voice are entirely my own.

What to Expect from This Guide

This document is both a practical guide and a reflective record of building an Innovation Library in an adult education setting. It combines planning tools, first-hand experiences, real-world case studies, and design strategies to help other educators, administrators, and program leaders envision and implement a similar space.

Whether you're just starting to explore the idea of innovation in adult ed, or you're deep in the process of transforming a room into a creative technology hub, this guide is meant to inform, inspire, and reassure. It's built from experience — one step at a time — and offers a realistic, adaptable path forward.

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Acknowledgments

This Innovation Library would not exist without the support, encouragement, and contributions of several individuals and organizations.

Mr. William Johnson, at the time of the development and implementation of the Innovation Library— for his unwavering support, leadership, and belief in the vision from the very beginning.

Ms. Paula Barrow-Howard, at the time of the development and implementation of the Innovation Library— for her critical role in space planning, furniture setup, and shaping the welcoming design of the library during its soft launch.

Shawn No and Luis Guzman, Evans Community Adult Schoo IT Support Technicians — for assisting me from the moment the equipment arrived, helping with everything from unboxing and setup to reviewing user manuals, configuring systems, and troubleshooting issues. Their support filled a critical gap when I couldn't manage the technical side alone. Their problem-solving, attention to detail, and willingness to figure things out alongside me played a major role in turning this vision into a fully functional and student-ready space.

Ms. Jamie Franklin and her students — for allowing me to pilot different tech tools in their classes for two trimesters. Their openness, curiosity, and honest feedback helped me understand what works in real classrooms, and shaped how I continued to test, adapt, and refine this vision.

OTAN (Outreach and Technical Assistance Network) — for providing the opportunity to showcase and test emerging educational technologies with wider audiences through state conferences and training platforms.

DACE - LAUSD (Division of Adult and Career Education, Los Angeles Unified School District) — for supporting Evans as the first adult school to develop and launch a fully integrated Innovation Library.

And to the many **students, instructors, advisors, classified staff at all levels, and administrators** who stepped up to help — whether it was assisting with set-up, welcoming guests during three separate expos (AR Expo, VR Expo, Innovation Library Expo, helping guide visitors explore different tech stations, or simply showing up with questions and curiosity — thank you. Your support, presence, and collaboration made every part of this library possible.

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What is an Innovation Library?

An Innovation Library is a space where emerging technologies are made available to students and teachers to support learning in new ways. But to be clear, an Innovation Library is not just a room filled with devices. It's a space where students don't just read about ideas — they interact with them. In an Innovation Library, students don't just prepare for tests — they prepare for the world they're stepping into.

For adult education, an Innovation Library is especially important. Many of our learners have never used a VR headset, never seen a 3D printer, or never experienced augmented reality in a book. An Innovation Library is designed to change that — to give students exposure to the tools and experiences that are shaping workplaces, classrooms, and everyday life.

Innovation Libraries may include:

- Augmented Reality (AR) books, props, and mobile apps
- Virtual Reality (VR) headsets and career simulations
- AI tools such as ChatGPT or Apple Intelligence on iPads for tutoring and writing support
- 3D printers and laser engravers for hands-on creation
- Esports computers, gaming chairs, and accessories
- iPad, Chromebook, and laptop carts for mobile access
- ClassVR kits with preloaded curriculum-aligned experiences
- Interactive smart displays and digital signage
- Photo editing and multimedia software (e.g., Adobe or Canva)
- Digital literacy apps and tools for foundational skill-building

At its core, this isn't just a space about the latest tech trends — it's a space about opportunity. It's about helping adult learners feel confident and capable in a digital world and showing them that innovation isn't something reserved for "other people" — it's for them, too.

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An Innovation Library/ is a reimagined learning space that goes far beyond the traditional library in adult education. Instead of only offering books and study tables, it becomes a tech-enabled environment where students and teachers can explore new ways of learning.

In this tech-enabled environment, students and teachers can explore complex concepts through augmented reality, experiencing immersive simulations in virtual reality, manipulating digital 3D models, or receiving writing support from AI chat tools.

These spaces are designed to empower adult learners across ESL, academic, and CTE programs by offering engaging, visual, and interactive tools that make challenging topics more approachable.

More than just a physical room, an Innovation Library becomes a shared resource. Other adult schools within the same district, or even neighboring districts, can explore, learn from, and collaborate with this hub. At its heart, this space is a powerful tool to close the digital gap, offering adult learners' crucial exposure to future-ready technologies, invaluable opportunities for digital skill-building, and a supportive environment to experiment, learn, and grow without fear.

Why Now? The Urgent Need for Innovation

In today's rapidly evolving world, digital literacy and adaptable skills aren't just advantages—they're necessities. The job market is constantly shifting, demanding new competencies, and lifelong learning has become essential for navigating an AI-driven future. Innovation Libraries/Centers/Hubs/Centers are crucial because they directly address these urgent needs, equipping adult learners with the tools and confidence to thrive.

Vision and Purpose of the Innovation Library/

Vision and Purpose of the Innovation Library/

The vision of the Innovation Library/ is to transform adult education environments into future-ready learning spaces where students are not just taught — but empowered. In today's world, where digital literacy, adaptability, and technology confidence are essential, this space serves as both a launchpad and a safety net.

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Whether students are learning English, preparing for high school equivalency exams, or training in medical or career technical programs, the Innovation Library bridges the gap between traditional instruction and the evolving demands of today's workforce.

Its purpose is to foster hands-on exploration, personalized learning, and the confidence to engage with real-world technology — whether that means reading an AR-enhanced book, using an interactive anatomy model, accessing AI-powered tutoring, or simply learning how to operate a Chromebook.

This space also supports teachers, advisors, and staff as they build capacity and develop tech-integrated instruction. By offering opportunities to try tools, experiment, and collaborate in a low-pressure, safe education setting, the Innovation Library strengthens digital confidence across the entire school community.

The Innovation Library/ is not just about devices; it's about access, equity, and opportunity — especially for adult learners who may be encountering these technologies for the very first time. It's a space built to help them move forward with greater independence, education, and career success.

Needs Assessment in Reverse: Curiosity First, Surveys Later

While a formal needs assessment is typically the starting point for developing an Innovation Library/, my journey began differently—and that's just as important to acknowledge. After attending numerous conferences, webinars, professional development sessions, and edtech showcases, I became increasingly curious about emerging technologies being used in other educational settings. I was especially drawn to augmented reality (AR) tools that could engage learners visually and interactively, and I felt strongly that our students deserved access to the same types of innovations. Rather than launching with surveys and forms, I started small by introducing AR books and apps to teachers and students to gauge their reactions. Their excitement and curiosity confirmed what I had sensed: that there was a hunger for hands-on, immersive learning—even among students with limited digital skills.

Later on, as the concept of the Innovation evolved — guided by a shared vision between my principal and me to bring meaningful, tech-enhanced learning to our students and staff — I developed more structured ways to gather feedback. Sample student surveys now ask about

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program enrollment, technology comfort levels, tool access, learning interests (such as AR/VR, digital literacy, or tutoring), and common challenges with tech. Similarly, staff input helped identify readiness for integrating new tools, training needs, and instructional goals. While I didn't begin with a traditional needs assessment, what emerged was a responsive and evolving understanding of what our learners and educators needed most. For those looking to replicate this process, I recommend building in reflection, informal testing, and structured surveys when possible — but don't underestimate the value of simply trying something new and letting curiosity guide the first steps.

Why Needs Assessment is important:

Think of a needs assessment as taking a pulse on where your faculty, staff, and students stand regarding the integration of new technologies into instruction. It's not just about *whether* they know about them, but about how ready they are to integrate new technologies effectively into their teaching and learning.

Why do it?

- To understand current skill levels, comfort zones, and potential barriers (e.g., digital literacy, time, resources).
- To uncover real use cases: Are they more interested in AR for science, language learning, or medical simulations? Or is VR better suited to some classes than others?
- To prioritize support: Which groups need immediate help? Which are already enthusiastic?

What's the benefit?

- You avoid one-size-fits-all training and can tailor workshops or materials to meet different needs.
- You can measure progress over time, showing stakeholders that the program is making a difference.

Program Research:

As I began gathering more structured feedback from students and staff, I realized that understanding their needs was just the first step — the next step was making informed decisions

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about which tools, platforms, and strategies could actually meet those needs effectively. That's where program research came in.

Even though I had already introduced several emerging tools through informal pilots — including AR books, anatomy props, immersive apps, and AI-based tutoring platforms — research helped me refine my approach. It allowed me to compare best practices, evaluate instructional models, and study how similar technologies were being used not only in adult education and workforce training, but also across K–12 systems and higher education — both in the U.S. and globally.

In other words, needs assessment helped me understand where we were — program research helped guide where we could go next.

Why Program Research Matters:

- To discover best practices: What models of integrating AR/VR, AI-assisted tools like chatbots, 3D resources, or digital literacy tools actually support learning in ESL, CTE, or multi-level classrooms?
- To compare platforms and vendors: Which tools are sustainable, scalable, and supported — especially when technology is evolving so quickly?
- To justify funding and guide planning: research-backed decisions made it easier to write proposals, answer stakeholder questions, and align purchases with broader educational goals.

The Real Benefit:

By grounding my exploration in both student feedback and program research, I was able to move from curiosity to confidence — not just trying out exciting tools, but selecting the ones that had the strongest potential to make a lasting difference.

I didn't need to follow every trend. I needed to find what made sense for our learners, our staff, and our setting — and research gave me the lens to do that thoughtfully, whether it was an AR app, a language support tool, a simulated career platform, or a new way to make digital skills more approachable.

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My initial mistake

"I started with AR to demonstrate the capabilities of the technology and get people excited. Then I added VR to expand their experiences. At the time, I wasn't thinking about formal needs assessments or program research — I was simply eager to share what I had discovered and see how people responded. But now I understand how important it is to make sure what I'm introducing truly meets our learners' needs and aligns with best practices."

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Needs Assessment Surveys and Checklists

1. Technology Infrastructure & Compatibility Checklist
   https://forms.gle/VVJ58hNAwnikvEcBA
2. Facility Walkthrough Checklist
   https://forms.gle/yLzta8KG7rM22D3n6
3. Needs Assessment Survey (Students)
   https://forms.gle/cN5SctJ4WzJa1imK6
4. Needs Assessment Survey (Instructors)
   https://forms.gle/qBqZBR9vEYLmdnmW7
5. Needs Assessment Survey (Advisors)
   https://forms.gle/frkuppJnxaQT7qGx6
6. Needs Assessment Survey (Administrators)
   https://forms.gle/tre5KMG5NFUKyyT36

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Planning and Research Phase

The vision for the Innovation Library didn't appear all at once — it grew from experience, observation, and deep curiosity, supported by a school leadership team that believed in thinking ahead. From the beginning, my principal shared my belief that our adult learners needed access to the same future-ready tools being explored elsewhere. His encouragement gave me the confidence to begin shaping something new — even before we had a formal roadmap.

As an educator immersed in adult education, I had long seen the gap between what our learners experienced in the classroom and what the world outside was demanding of them: digital fluency, adaptability, and exposure to emerging technologies. That gap became even clearer after attending several conferences where I encountered tools like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), 3D printing, and Esports. Along with my principal's vision, which emphasized meaningful innovation for both students and staff, I started imagining what it could look like if adult learners — especially ESL and CTE students — could use these tools themselves.

I didn't see these technologies as optional or extra. I saw them as necessary — especially for students who had never had access to them before.

That early exposure, paired with the consistent support of my principal, led me to ask:

- What would it take to bring these tools into adult ed?
- Could we create a space that made learning feel immersive, exciting, and relevant?
- And if so — how would we actually make it happen?

The Innovation Library began not with a budget or a district-wide initiative, but with a vision — one rooted in equity, exposure, and possibility.

Exploring and Curating Emerging Tech Tools for Adult Learning

Before our Innovation Library/ became what it is today, the journey started with curiosity and trial. I didn't wait until everything was perfectly laid out. I acted on what I saw trending at conferences and what I knew would captivate our students and instructors: immersive, hands-on technology that made learning feel real and engaging. Augmented Reality (AR) was the perfect starting point.

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Starting with Augmented Reality

I began by introducing AR tools — using iPads and books — to our students and staff. Not everything was officially approved or perfectly aligned at the time, and that was okay. The goal was exposure. I simply wanted to spark interest and show what was possible. I collected what I could find — even some AR books that were out of print — because I saw their potential. From simple image-triggered animations to interactive anatomy models, these tools opened up a new way to experience content.

Several of these AR tools were piloted in two summer classes I taught — one focused on reading and the other on technology basics. We used a variety of AR books and props to engage students with vocabulary, digital skills, and visual literacy. In addition, four ESL classes (ranging from Beginning High to Intermediate High) had the opportunity to test tools such as ClassVR headsets, AR apps, and physical props. These were guided walkthroughs or trial experiences — just enough to observe how students responded and where additional support might be needed.

I also expanded into our Medical Assistant program and IET (ESL + Basic Medical Assistant) class, where I piloted AR anatomy props along with standalone AR-based apps that didn't require physical materials. These included Catchy Words AR (for vocabulary building), WWF Forests and WWF Rivers (for environmental literacy), and historical storytelling apps like Harriet Tubman and Gettysburg Address AR — all used to support both academic and ESL instruction. These tools allowed students to visually connect with content and practice new vocabulary in meaningful ways.

These early trials gave me valuable insight. The "engagement factor" was real. Even in short sessions, students became more curious, more talkative, and often wanted to try again. In some ESL classrooms, hesitant learners leaned in, asked questions, and even tried to repeat scientific terms as they explored animated anatomy models. That initial spark of curiosity was enough to confirm we were heading in the right direction.

Why AR Before VR

While VR became the buzzword later, AR made more sense as a starting point. It didn't require headsets, expensive equipment, or full immersion — which can sometimes feel overwhelming for beginners. AR acted as a bridge: it kept one foot in the real world while opening a window into the virtual one. It was more accessible, less intimidating, and more practical for classrooms with limited budgets or technical experience.

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Still, as VR technology became more affordable and widely discussed, we began including it as a next step — not because AR fell short, but because we wanted our students and staff to grow alongside the trends and feel confident navigating these tools.

Curation: What to Look For

Over time, I personally curated a collection of emerging technology tools that were not only engaging but also realistic for adult education settings. I tested them myself, invited teachers to try them, and carefully observed how students and instructors responded during early pilots.

Here's what I looked for when deciding what to include in the Innovation Library:

- Educational Relevance – Tools needed to align with learning goals across ESL, Academic, or CTE Medical programs. They had to support real instructional content, not just novelty.
- Device Compatibility – Tools had to work with the technology we already had on hand, like school-managed iPads, Chromebooks, or standard laptops — without requiring high-end specs, constant updates, or difficult installations.
- Ease of Use – Tools needed a simple user interface (UI) that was accessible to English learners and beginning digital users, with little to no complex setup.
- Language Accessibility – Visual, intuitive design and language scaffolds were essential, especially for multilingual learners.
- Classroom Friendliness – Whether used by individuals or small groups, tools had to fit into short lessons, structured rotations, or co-taught formats — not require standalone tech classes.
- Engagement Factor – I looked for tools that made students pause, interact, ask questions, or want to explore more — not because of gimmicks, but because of the content experience.

Examples of Curated Tools and Resources

The Innovation Library/ includes a curated mix of tools that support immersive learning, digital creation, career exploration, and foundational tech skills. These tools were selected based on student engagement, instructional relevance, and classroom fit — with piloting and feedback

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guiding their continued use. Please note that specific tools listed may not be available at any time in the future due to the rapidly changing nature of the industry.

- AR Books and Apps:
  - FarsightXR – AR animal and anatomy books (Tidepools, Reptiles, Human Body)
  - Holotoyz – Colorful AR storybooks with animated characters
  - Curiscope Virtuali-Tee – Wearable AR shirt for exploring internal organs
  - Merge Explorer (Merge Cube) – 3D science/health models that appear in students' hands
  - Journals Alive – Interactive AR journals for building literacy and vocabulary
  - VictoryXR (Victor the Torso) – Detailed AR anatomy model used in health instruction
  - LP Bookspace (Living Popups) – Animated books for ESL and Academic pathways
  - ABC Animals, Animal 4D+, Arpedia – Basic vocabulary and visual storytelling apps for ESL Literacy classes
- VR and Advanced Tools:
  - ClassVR Headsets – Preloaded experiences for science, health, and geography
  - Meta Quest 2 & 3 – Wireless headsets used for exploratory content
  - HTC Vive Focus 3 / Elite – Higher-spec headsets used in CTE and simulated medical labs
  - Careelabs VR – Career simulation platform tailored to adult learners
  - zSpace 3D – Interactive desktop AR/VR system used in Medical and Technology programs
- Technology Exploration Stations (Esports & Devices)
  - Esports Desktops – High-performance computers used for exploring gaming and career-connected technology pathways

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  - Gaming Chairs and Peripherals – Part of a growing effort to engage students in interactive media and tech careers
  - iPads, Chromebooks, and Laptops – Available for AR apps, research, and instructional use
  - Interactive Displays – Touch-based panels used for demonstrations, exploration, and walk-throughs
- Hands-On Creation Tools (Makerspace & Design)
  - 3D Printers – Used for creating models related to anatomy, classroom projects, and STEM concepts
  - Laser Engraver – Supports precision design projects and advanced maker activities
  - Digital Media Tools – Basic photo editing software (like Adobe Express) and audio/video creation apps
  - Creative Workstations – Desktops or laptops equipped for project-based learning

Matching Tools with Programs (So far)

While these tools are not part of formal curriculum integration, I've begun identifying where they can enhance instruction in meaningful ways. Based on classroom pilots and instructor feedback, certain tools have naturally aligned with specific programs — not as replacements, but as engaging supplements that support learning.

- **ESL Literacy & Beginners**
  ABC Animals, Holotoyz, Journals Alive, Catchy Words AR
- **Academic & Health Pathways**
  Merge Explorer, Virtuali-Tee, FarsightXR, LP Bookspace
- **CTE Medical and Career Readiness**
  Victor the Torso, zSpace, ClassVR, Careelabs, VR Headsets

I've also explored several standalone AR apps — such as WWF Forests, Gettysburg Address AR, and Harriet Tubman AR — that don't rely on props or books. These tools work well across multiple

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instructional areas and continue to support vocabulary, comprehension, and real-world context in both ESL and Academic programs.

These resources have been selectively introduced in a pilot capacity to support instruction. These early trials have helped us observe student reactions, understand where technical or instructional support is needed, and guide next steps for how these tools can enhance learning experiences.

VR, in particular, comes with a learning curve. Teachers and students are still getting familiar with the equipment, setup process, and navigation. It takes time for new users to adjust to motion controls, managing headset comfort, troubleshooting apps, and figuring out just what exactly they're supposed to be doing within the apps. These aren't just tools; they're new environments. We're taking a phased approach, offering support to those who are ready, while keeping the space open for gradual exploration.

Identifying and Aligning Funding Sources

When I first started exploring AR and VR tools, I didn't have a dedicated budget or a clear roadmap for funding. I simply began with what I had access to — personal demos, free apps, out-of-print AR books, and a few small props. I wasn't focused on spending; I was focused on exploring, testing, and sharing what I was learning. The goal was to build excitement, gather feedback, and observe how students and staff responded.

But as interest grew and the potential became clear, I knew that sustained integration would require more than curiosity — it would require funding.

Funding Doesn't Always Start at the Beginning

Instead of waiting for approval, I started small — and shared the knowledge along the way. I let students and teachers interact with the tools, documented their reactions, and used those early moments to build a stronger case for why this mattered. That exposure created the momentum and justification I needed later on. The engagement I witnessed gave me the language to explain the tools' impact and eventually request funding with confidence.

Understanding What's Allowable: Matching Tools with the Right Funding Source

Not every tool can be funded through every stream. I had to carefully align each item or resource with the appropriate funding source, based on student population and program eligibility. Especially

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when working across ESL, Academic, and CTE programs, it was important to understand what each fund allows — and what it doesn't.

- WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)
  WIOA funds can be used to support ESL, ABE/ASE, and IET students, which allowed me to align purchases such as iPad carts, Chromebook carts, laptops, printers, and instructional software that promote digital literacy and integrated learning. However, some items like VR headsets, ClassVR kits, and specialty lab tools were not approved and had to be explored through other funding sources.

- Perkins Funding
  Perkins supports CTE programs, so I used it to fund tools directly tied to hands-on learning in medical or technical pathways — including laptops, instructional hardware, and select interactive tools. Items not directly aligned with CTE outcomes, such as VR subscriptions, gaming equipment, or makerspace furniture, were typically not allowable.

- Instructional Materials Budget
  This fund was helpful for ESL and Academic programs. I used it to purchase AR books, classroom apps, and general-purpose technology carts that support literacy, vocabulary development, and instructional access across levels.

- School-Based Accounts
  For items that didn't qualify under the other funding streams — such as VR headsets, esports computers, ClassVR kits, laser cutters, 3D printers, and themed classroom equipment — I worked with site leadership to use tech refresh or local school accounts whenever possible.

Framing Requests with Purpose

When requesting funding, it's important to be transparent, responsible, and intentional. I focused on aligning each tool with instructional goals, student needs, and the guidelines of each funding source. By doing so, I ensured that requests were not just about acquiring technology, but about supporting meaningful learning experiences.

Taking the time to reflect on how tools support actual outcomes — before submitting requests — helped build trust, clarify purpose, and keep the work focused on what matters most: students.

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Timing and Patience

I didn't start with everything — and we weren't trying to change the whole school. Instead, we focused on what was needed and what made the most sense at the time.

While Evans Community Adult School now have several technology carts — including Chromebook carts, iPad carts, laptop carts, and ClassVR carts — there are still significant pieces the school doesn't yet have. We do not have class sets of AR books, props, or VR-ready desktops and laptops. We also don't yet have Esports level computers or a full inventory of high-spec equipment. But that didn't stop us from beginning.

The key was starting with the right tools that matched instructional needs and our students' learning goals. Everything we selected had a clear purpose and was intended to create access and exposure — not perfection. We chose what could be implemented now, while keeping a vision for what could come next.

What started as small, scattered purchases gradually turned into a structured list of needs — which I aligned with the right sources at the right time. I hope readers can relate to this: you don't need to have everything to begin — just enough of the right things, with the right intention.

Vendor Coordination and Quote Collection

Once I had a clear idea of what tools we needed — whether AR books, VR-ready laptops, 3D printers, or interactive smartboards — the next step was coordinating with vendors to obtain accurate quotes and align our requests with district purchasing protocols. This step is critical, especially in large systems where approvals, timelines, and compliance can vary from one school or funding source to another.

Work with Approved Vendors

Rather than reinvent the wheel, I recommend reaching out to your district's procurement department for an up-to-date list of approved vendors. This saves time, ensures compliance, and avoids delays later in the purchasing process. Many districts have long-standing relationships with vendors such as Apple, Lenovo, Dell, CDW-G, BestBuy, and others who already meet district-level requirements and understand educational purchasing.

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When you request quotes, be specific about the student population, program use, and intended funding source (e.g., WIOA, Perkins, instructional materials, or school-based accounts). Being clear on how the tool supports instruction or student access makes it easier to process quotes and aligns your ask with funding policies.

Matching Vendors with Needs

I didn't approach every vendor with the same request. Instead, I aligned vendors to the type of equipment or resource we were seeking:

- Technology vendors for Chromebooks, iPads, VR-ready desktops/laptops, and esports computers
- Specialty vendors for ClassVR kits, 3D printers, laser engravers, and AR/VR peripherals
- Furniture and space design vendors for innovation-themed chairs, signage, and décor
- Educational resource vendors for AR books, Merge Cubes, or app licensing

This helped ensure accurate quoting and prevented misalignment between specs, pricing, and allowable use.

Collect Multiple Quotes with Varying Quantities

To stay flexible with our budget and respond to possible funding fluctuations, I always requested two to three quotes per item, often with different quantity options. This gave us a way to scale up or down depending on how much funding was ultimately available — or if another program wanted to contribute. It also helped us justify pricing decisions during internal reviews.

Anticipating ITS Review and Rejection Scenarios

Even after the quotes were finalized and submitted, some purchases required additional review by LAUSD's ITS (Information Technology Services) team. This is expected — and necessary. Many software platforms, apps, and hardware tools must go through an internal vetting process to ensure compliance with student privacy, network security, and data protection standards.

There were times when tools or apps were flagged due to potential vulnerabilities or lack of alignment with district policy. In those cases, I prepared written justifications explaining the instructional value, how the tool would be used, and any proposed workarounds or alternatives.

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Understanding this process ahead of time helped reduce delays and made it easier to adjust as needed.

ITS Collaboration and Whitelisting

Bringing new tools, platforms, and hardware into a school or district setting isn't just about buying the right equipment — it's about making sure everything can actually be used once it arrives. That's where collaboration with the ITS (Information Technology Services) team becomes essential.

Especially when dealing with AR/VR platforms, apps, software licenses, or custom hardware setups, it's important to factor in time for **approvals, whitelisting, firewall exceptions, app deployment, and network configurations** — all of which are necessary for safe and secure integration into the school environment.

Start Early: Submit ITS Requests During Planning

I learned early on that it's not enough to finalize quotes or choose the best app — if something isn't approved or whitelisted, we can't use it in class. So now, as soon as I identify a tool I want to explore or purchase, I submit an ITS review request. This gives the district's technology team time to:

- Review data security and privacy considerations
- Check compatibility with school-managed devices (like iPads or Chromebooks)
- Test whether the tool functions properly on school networks
- Flag potential vulnerabilities that could impact students or the school system

Being in adult education, I don't typically deal with COPPA compliance, but Network security and responsible access is as important for adult education providers as it is for K12 and college districts, especially when tools require student accounts, cloud syncing, or external communication features.

Whitelisting and Access

Many new technology tools require special access or connections that may be blocked by default, including but not limited to:

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- Syncing AR apps across iPads
- Accessing AI platforms like ChatGPT, which have been used in limited ways to support tutoring and writing assistance
- Using SEL-focused VR apps that connect to external content libraries
- Installing or launching zSpace software environments
- Launching Esports games on VR-ready computers
- Accessing platforms like CareerlabsVR that require login portals or internet streaming

Each of these needed ITS review to enable permissions, unblock URLs or IPs, or confirm that usage aligned with district policies.

Navigating Feedback and Building a Shared Understanding

There were times when tools couldn't be approved — sometimes because of data-sharing concerns, network limitations, or compatibility with school-managed devices. Apps like ChatGPT or Gemini, VR SEL experiences, zSpace software, or Esports platforms often required additional review or raised valid questions from our ITS team.

Instead of viewing this as a setback, I adjusted. I provided additional information, rewrote justifications, or temporarily shifted focus to tools that were already approved. My goal wasn't to force access — it was to protect students, systems, and the district as a whole, while still finding meaningful ways to move forward with innovation.

Over time, this process helped build a shared understanding. I now know what kinds of questions will likely come up, and our ITS team better understands the instructional goals behind what we're trying to bring into adult education. We're not just asking for access to apps — we're making a case for inclusion, relevance, and opportunity for students who may never have had the chance to work with these tools before.

By staying flexible and transparent, we've created space for both caution and creativity to coexist — and that's what keeps progress moving in a realistic, sustainable way.

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Tools Onboarding and Learning Curve Planning

When people see the Innovation Library/ from the outside — the devices, the fancy wall decals, the lighting, the energy — they often assume there's a whole team running the show. But the reality is, much of this was built one step at a time, with limited support, and a lot of personal trial and error. I didn't start with everything. I started with what I could learn — one tool or one category of technology at a time, like AR apps or device carts. I took on technology implementation in manageable chunks by focusing on one type at a time. I began with AR tools, then moved to VR headsets, followed by Makerspace equipment like 3D printers and laser engravers, and later expanded to device carts and Esports setups. This step-by-step approach over time allowed me to test, observe, and build confidence before taking on the next set of tools.

This section isn't about having all the answers. It's about what it really looks like to onboard emerging technology — when you're still learning it yourself.

Learning the Tools Before Teaching Them

Before I could ask anyone else to use a VR headset, test an AR app, or try an immersive SEL experience, I had to figure it out myself. I explored the devices, downloaded the apps, created test accounts, and practiced setting them up. I made mistakes. I lost time troubleshooting. But I gained new knowledge, skills, patience — and perseverance.

I reached out to vendor tech support, watched tutorials, and tested things repeatedly — often with support from my principal and our two ITSTs — to make sure I could guide others later.

This phase takes time. AR apps needed syncing across iPads. VR platforms had different login systems. Headsets sometimes wouldn't connect to Wi-Fi. Some tools were intuitive; others were not. And because this is adult education, there aren't always plug-and-play resources tailored to our learners, which makes hands-on testing even more essential.

While I had consistent support from my principal, I didn't have a a team of teachers or support technicians dedicated to this project only. Much of the day-to-day discovery— what works, what doesn't, what we might need later — came from hands-on, individual effort.

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Not Everything Is Ready Yet — and That's Okay

Right now, I don't have a full set of "Getting Started" sheets, lesson templates, or tutorial videos for each station. I haven't created an onboarding binder or digital or online guide for teachers and students. That's part of my plan — but I want those resources to be grounded in what people actually need, not just what looks good on paper.

That's why I'm still in the observation and testing stage — watching how students interact with tools, seeing where teachers need help, and noting which stations generate the most interest or confusion. These real-time insights will shape how I build support systems in the future.

Planning for Realistic Growth

The Innovation Library was designed to evolve with thoughtful pacing, realistic expectations, and the flexibility to adjust as needed.

I'll continue creating and refining resources based on what I observe in real classrooms and in the Innovation Library itself. Over time, I've built a strong foundation and now have a growing number of students, classified staff, advisors, and teachers who are able to support others. Many have become informal tech ambassadors — offering walkthroughs, answering questions, and helping peers explore tools they've already used themselves.

With their support, I'm able to expand the work without overextending any one person. I'll continue giving workshops, working with more classes, rotating schedules, and even teaming up classes that share similar goals or technology interests. This shared capacity allows us to grow sustainably and responsively — one step at a time.

And through it all, I'll continue to focus on learning because these technologies keep evolving, and each day brings new insights. The learning process keeps this work real, responsive and alive.

Staff and Teacher Engagement and Buy-In Strategies

Getting new technology into a school is one thing. Getting people to feel comfortable using it — especially in adult education, where time is tight, tech experience varies, and funding cycles are unpredictable — is something else entirely.

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This process hasn't been perfect or easy. It's involved late nights researching tools, chasing quote deadlines, and helping admins make purchase decisions quickly just to meet end-of-year spending windows. And on top of that, tools and companies keep changing — some get absorbed into other platforms, others stop supporting the products we already invested in. But despite that, I continue to show/share what we have, teach what I can, and build interest where it matters most.

Because even if the technology is no longer the newest trend, it still has value. Our students deserve the chance to see what's possible — even if that means starting with AR books from years ago, or apps that are now blended into newer VR or AI features. They should still have access, still get to explore, still be inspired.

Respect Where People Are

Our instructors, advisors, and staff bring incredible skills to the table — but not everyone has the same level of tech confidence or experience. Some are excited to try new tools. Others are hesitant or simply overwhelmed by everything they already have to manage.

That's why I approach staff engagement with respect and empathy. No one is required to dive into VR or AI. I start with informal invitations:

"Would you like to try scanning this AR book with me?"

"I have something you might enjoy for your medical students—want to take a peek?"

"You can stop by anytime and just look around — no pressure."

This opens the door without making anyone feel behind or unprepared.

Engagement Looks Different in Adult Education

In our adult ed setting, students don't typically roam the library using AR books or VR headsets independently. Most often, teachers schedule a time to bring their class in, or they ask me to visit their classroom and demonstrate the tools. These moments are structured, intentional, and often guided — because that's what works best in our environment.

But even within those structured visits, something shifts. When teachers see their students light up — when they hear them ask questions, laugh, or try out a new word while holding an AR prop — it sparks curiosity.

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That's when the questions come from staff:

"Wait, what is that?"
"Is this hard to use?"
"Could I try this in my class sometime?"

And when that happens, I lean in — not with pressure, but with support. That's where buy-in really begins.

Pacing and Trust Over Push

I never expect every teacher to become an expert in all these tools. That's not realistic — and that's not the goal. My role is to create a space where it's safe to explore, easy to ask for help, and okay to start small.

Sometimes, just knowing the Innovation Library/ exists — and that it's ready, open, and available — makes a difference. Some staff come in quietly to observe. Others ask questions, borrow a headset, or try something on their own when they're ready. Every step forward counts.

I remind myself, and others, that this is a marathon, not a race — and that technology will keep evolving no matter how prepared we feel. We may not always have the newest tools or the perfect setup, but we can still give our students a window into the world of emerging tech. That window, no matter how small, can make all the difference.

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Professional Development Workshops for Instructors, Advisors, and Students

Since the beginning, I knew this journey wasn't just about building a space or collecting tech tools — it was about helping people see what's possible. I also knew that I couldn't wait for a full PD system or a dedicated team to get started. So I began by showing what I could, sharing what I was learning, and inviting others — one conversation, one demo, one step at a time.

Starting at My Own School

I began by introducing tools to instructors, advisors, and students at my own site. I shared AR props, books, ClassVR headsets, and built-in iPad apps — including how to use the iPad itself — with teachers during department time or even in casual hallway conversations. I visited classrooms with ClassVR or brought iPads into summer reading and technology basics classes. I worked closely with ESL and Medical instructors to pilot anatomy props and apps in Beginning High to Intermediate High ESL classes, as well as in IET Medical ESL and CTE programs.

Even though I didn't have a polished workshop series or formal handouts at the time, I did have working resources — materials I had created and used during demos, pilots, and class visits. They weren't part of a fully packaged series yet, but they were functional and effective. I plan to continue building and refining these resources over time, based on what teachers, students, and advisors actually need.

Reaching Beyond One School

I didn't stop with just our school community. Over time, I've had the opportunity to share our Innovation Library tools and approach with other adult education districts, regional programs, and even university-level stakeholders. One memorable example was at OSH University in Kyrgyzstan, where I presented how adult learners are using immersive technologies to support language development and build career readiness.

I've also presented at a range of statewide, national, and international conferences, including the OTAN-TDLS, ISTE , AI Innovator Summit (ASU+GSV), and CCAE State Conferences. In addition to these formal events, I've conducted outreach to schools and districts across California and beyond.

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Because not all technology can travel — I can't bring a 3D printer, Esports computers, or laser cutter in my suitcase — I created portable toolkits using what I could carry: iPads, a zSpace laptop, AR books, ClassVR headsets, Merge cubes sets, props, and content that spark curiosity wherever they're shown.

Each conference and visit also gave me the chance to learn — not just to share what I've done, but to listen to others, exchange ideas, and better understand the challenges and hopes that are shaping innovation in adult education worldwide.

Still Building the PD That's Needed

As of the end of the 2024–2025 school year (in case you're reading this months later), I've begun developing and adapting professional development sessions, toolkits, and instructional resources to meet the needs I've observed. I haven't launched a formal PD series yet — but I'm getting closer. Everything I've done so far — from in-class visits to conference demos — has shown me what instructors, advisors, and support staff really want: clear starting points, practical examples, and low-pressure ways to explore new tools.

One of the biggest challenges is that most vendors don't offer ready-made materials that directly support adult education. Their resources are often built for K–12 or higher education audiences — which means they don't always reflect the learning needs, pacing, or realities of our adult learners. That's why I've focused on building and adapting materials that truly make sense in our context.

Moving forward, I plan to:

- Revamp "how to get started" sheets for each major tool or station
- Create clearly labeled walkthrough videos and visual guides for tools like iPads and headsets, and make them available on our school website or through a small kiosk in the Innovation Library.
  In other words: I want to build a self-serve, on-demand resource station — both online and in the space — so staff and students can learn how to use tools without needing someone next to them every time.
- Partner with vendors and teachers to co-create lesson ideas that align with different programs and levels, or that can be customized

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- Offer short demos and mini-workshops designed specifically for adult education contexts

My goal is not just to show others how to use a tool — but to help them see its potential to inspire students, make instruction more engaging, and build access to technologies many have never experienced. Rather than handing over fully packaged lessons, I want to involve teachers in the process — so they feel ownership, confidence, and pride in what they're building for their students.

It's still a work in progress — but it's moving. And I'll keep sharing, testing, adjusting, and building until every teacher, advisor, and student who walks into our Innovation Library/ has the support they need to explore, try, and grow.

Student and Classroom Integration Sessions

One of the most important parts of this work is making sure that the technology doesn't just sit on shelves — it has to be seen, touched, tried, and experienced by the students we serve. But in adult education, where time is limited and tech is often unfamiliar, integration doesn't happen automatically. It has to be intentional and guided.

That's why I've focused on offering structured sessions — through classroom visits, Innovation Library/ walk-throughs, and collaborations with teachers who are open to trying something new.

Guided Integration — Not Independent Exploration

In our program, students don't typically walk into the Innovation Library/ and start exploring devices on their own. Instead, I work directly with instructors to schedule guided sessions. Sometimes, a teacher brings their class in to try a specific tool. Other times, I'm invited into their room to demo something that connects with what they're teaching.

These sessions are short, targeted, and always scaffolded — especially for ESL students or beginners who may be using iPads, VR headsets, or AR books for the very first time. I help explain how the tools work, model their use, and provide context so students feel supported.

Class Types and Tools

To bridge our vision with our practice, I've worked directly with a range of classes and instructional levels to introduce, test, and adapt emerging tools in real classroom settings.

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- ESL (Beginning High to Intermediate High)
  These classes explored AR vocabulary books, Merge Cubes, and AR props (such as food, animals, and internal organs). They also used ClassVR to experience immersive environments like museums, underwater scenes, and other real-world locations — providing visual context that supported language development. Some students used the Curiscope Virtuali-Tee to learn body parts, while others used ABC Animals and Animal 4D+ to build basic vocabulary in a fun and visual way.
- Summer Technology Basics & Reading Classes
  These students interacted with multiple AR books and tested stand-alone AR apps on iPads. They also practiced navigating between camera-based tools and touch-based exploration. This wasn't just about using technology — it was about building comfort, confidence, and essential digital skills. Many of our students are digital immigrants, so this gave them opportunities to explore tools they've often never had access to before.
- IET(ESL + Medical Assistant)
  In this co-taught program, students used anatomy-related AR tools to build foundational medical vocabulary and explore career-aligned content. They worked with Victor the Torso, Human Anatomy by Farsight XR, Virtuali-Tee, and VictoryXR's human body modules, along with other 3D props that supported language acquisition through visual and interactive experiences.
- CTE Medical Assistant Classes
  In collaboration with their instructor, I introduced a mix of AR anatomy models from Farsight XR, Curiscope, VictoryXR, and even Catchy Words AR — which helped students practice spelling medical terms in an engaging, game-like way. We also used wearable tools like the Virtuali-Tee and supplemental visuals to reinforce textbook and lab content through hands-on, interactive learning.

These early pilots have shown that even short, guided experiences with emerging tools can spark student engagement, build confidence, and open new ways of learning — especially for those who've never used this kind of technology before. In many cases, these moments also motivated students to keep exploring, asking questions, and continuing their learning beyond the session.

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Moving Toward Deeper Integration

The next phase for the 2025–2026 school year involves building more intentional and repeatable strategies for integrating emerging technologies into adult education classrooms.

Future plans for the Innovation library include:

- Continuing to create "starter kits" tailored to specific programs — such as ESL Literacy, Academic Health, Life Science, Biology, and CTE Medical pathways
- Developing short lesson plans and extension activities connected to the tools being used, so students can continue exploring independently in the Innovation Library after class
- Coordinating co-teaching opportunities or setting up rotation stations in the Innovation Library/ to support classroom objectives
- Collecting more informal student feedback to improve future sessions and better understand engagement levels

By building this kind of structure, schools can begin shifting from simple tool exploration to purposeful integration — helping students not only experience the technology but apply it with intention, curiosity, and confidence across multiple learning contexts.

Sustaining and Scaling the Innovation Library

Opening the Innovation Library was only the beginning. Sustainability doesn't just mean keeping the lights on or making sure the devices stay charged. It means making sure the library remains relevant, engaging, and responsive to student needs as the technology (and the world around us) continues to evolve.

Scaling is more than expanding physically only. It also means expanding what already exists—improving implementation, increasing access, and helping more people feel empowered to use the space and tools available to them.

Keeping the Vision Alive

With limited staffing and shifting priorities it's easy for complex projects like this to lose momentum, but the Innovation Library is about opportunity, not just equipment. I stay focused on that original

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purpose: giving adult education students access to technologies that they wouldn't otherwise experience.

Even when new purchases slow down or daily tasks take over, I continue to build, refine, and share what we already have because exposure, even in small doses, can make a difference. I make it a habit to regularly test, review, and update our tools so they remain relevant and ready for use.

Planning for Longevity with Flexibility

Sustaining this work requires flexibility — especially in adult education. Technology changes, vendors shift, budgets tighten, and student needs continue to evolve. Student attendance is also a factor. Many adult learners are juggling unpredictable work schedules, caring for children or elderly family members, and dealing with housing, immigration, or legal concerns. Some are navigating ongoing life disruptions tied to political conflict or economic instability in their home countries. These realities impact not only how often students attend class, but also how consistently they can engage with new technologies or complete hands-on activities.

Rather than create rigid systems, I try to build adaptable routines that can evolve over time. This includes:

- Maintaining an inventory and tracking the condition of tools
- Keeping notes on which apps or programs are still supported — and which are no longer functional
- Staying in contact with vendors for updates, training, and potential replacements
- Prioritizing technologies that serve multiple programs or can grow with the student

Even when something becomes outdated, it can still serve as a bridge — a way to introduce foundational concepts or spark curiosity before transitioning into more advanced tools.

Scaling with Purpose

For me scaling means continuing to share what has been started with more teachers— with more teachers, students, and visitors who walk through our doors.

Some of the ways I've begun to scale include:

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- Supporting more cross-program experiences, especially where ESL, Academic, and CTE overlap
- Helping instructors find opportunities to integrate AR/VR tools into their own instructional time
- Repeating what's worked — like showing ClassVR or AR Books in ESL or demonstrating AR & VR anatomy tools in Medical — so it becomes more familiar and easier to replicate
- Sharing lessons and strategies at state, national, and international conferences to support other educators working toward similar goals

Scaling can also look like refining what's already in place — making the existing tools easier to access, better understood, and more purposefully used.

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Physical Space, Floor Plan, and Design Considerations

The Innovation Library isn't just a room filled with equipment — it's an experience. From the moment someone steps inside, they should feel like they've entered a different kind of learning environment — one that signals curiosity, imagination, comfort and forward movement.

A Theme that Speaks to the Future

If you're creating an Innovation Library, Center, or Hub, consider choosing a theme — something that sparks imagination and sends a message the moment someone walks in. A thoughtful theme can transform a room with devices into a space that feels alive with purpose.

At Evans, the space has a bold, intentional identity. The galaxy theme — with spacecraft portals showing astronauts in space, cosmic backdrops, and the sun rising over Earth — was chosen to inspire students to think beyond the limits of their current reality. It's not just decorative. It's a message:
"You belong here. You are capable of exploring new worlds, technologies, and possibilities."

One of the most visible messages in the Evans Innovation Library is:
INNOVATE BEYOND LIMITS! — displayed on a vibrant poster featuring a student wearing a VR headset next to a futuristic robot or AI figure. This message isn't abstract — it reflects exactly what happens in the space. Whether students are trying ClassVR, reading AR books, or exploring zSpace medical simulations, they're building the confidence to ask questions, push forward, and imagine new futures for themselves.

Designing for Exploration

The layout combines fixed stations with flexible zones designed to support a wide range of activities:

- AR/VR exploration: iPads, Merge Cubes, Victor the Torso, ClassVR headsets
- Career-based simulations: zSpace and VR apps for SEL and workforce development
- Hands-on creation: 3D printer, laser cutter/engraver
- Device access areas: Chromebooks, iPads, laptops, and desktops

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Innovation Library Guideline 101

More than a manual — it's a story and a guide for building with what you have

- Quiet reading/research corner: colorful and inviting — with bean bags or supportive seating for adult learners, including those with mobility needs
- Open areas: for small group walkthroughs, guided rotations, and presentations

The layout encourages movement and interaction while keeping tools organized and accessible. Most stations are flexible and can shift or grow as programs evolve.

Building Around What's Possible

This wasn't a large-scale renovation or a fully funded makeover. The space came together through careful planning, strategic budgeting, and a focus on student experience. Every item — from posters to tech stations, workbenches to high tables — was selected with adult learners in mind.

Design choices were made with both inspiration and practicality at the core. The galaxy visuals, futuristic posters, and bold messages weren't added just for looks — they are daily visual cues that this is a space where imagination, effort, and learning are welcomed.

Even with limited funding, and without full manpower or dedicated support, the message is clear: *Innovate Beyond Limits — because the future includes you.*
It's a reminder that with thoughtful design, even modest investments can create powerful environments — especially when students are placed at the center.
Bold. Purposeful. Student-focused.

Reflections and Final Thoughts

The Innovation Library was never just about introducing devices or building a themed space. It was — and still is — about creating access, motivation, and lifelong learning. About exposing adult education students to technologies that are shaping the world around them.

This work continues to evolve. It's not always fast, and it's rarely easy — but it's rooted in belief, passion, and conviction: that adult learners deserve the same quality of learning experiences, innovation, and imagination that younger students and higher education students often have access to.

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Many of our adult education students are also parents, guardians, or caregivers of K–12 students. They are part of the same families and communities navigating digital learning, emerging tools, and changing career landscapes together.

That's why this work must be expanded to more classrooms and age groups. There needs to be a bridge — a connection between what adult learners are discovering here and what their children are experiencing in school. When an adult student uses a VR headset, interacts with an AR book, or learns about digital citizenship, they're not just learning for themselves — they're becoming role models. They're sending a message:
"I'm still learning. You can, too."

This is where shared curiosity begins — at home, between generations, and within communities. And the Innovation Library can be one of those rare spaces where both learners and families are reminded:
You're not behind. You belong here. And you are part of what comes next.

Evans Community Adult School is still being built. Still refining. Still learning. But we are doing it with purpose — and with the people who matter most at the center of it all.

Interested in continuing the conversation? Reach out to OTAN to arrange a meeting with Farzana and discuss possible duplication ideas. Email: support@otan.us

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