

# A MANIFESTO

# SCREW IDEAS

## FOR ENGAGED AND EMERGENT INNOVATION

How we teach students innovation is artificially shaped by the context of schooling and what can be done well in a classroom over the course of a semester. The emphasis on abstraction, ideation, a linear week-by-week series of steps, and a neat deliverable, is antithetical to entrepreneurship and innovation. **How, where, and what we teach needs to change.**

The first step is to recognize that our love affair with ideation is the primary issue. Ideation is a fundamentally conservative practice that will not lead to novelty and allows for an inflexible attachment to abstract solutions. The result is idea-driven projects that have limited relevance to, and impact on, the world. We propose an alternative approach.

### Screw Ideas:

#### 1. Learn from the world:

We are all limited in our knowledge and experience. Students come to us with limited experiences of the world, so diving into ideation leads to narrow, worldblind solution thinking. Immersive engagement in the communities and spaces where change is sought is a necessary component of meaningful innovation. Problems emerge from this process of collaborative engagement.

#### 2. No ideas, but in making and doing:

All ideation relies on existing concepts and is thus conservative. An engaged, worldly and collaborative practice, allows for context-relevant novelty to emerge from experimentation, which will inherently exceed existing ideations. Assess the opportunity, determine what is actionable, and then co-evolve, co-create and validate meaningful outcomes. Timeframes emerge after experimentation, not before.

### Nail Process:

#### 3. Engagement invents its own process:

Design and hone a dynamic and emergent process that is neither hampered by artificial semester-dictated deadlines nor grades; make it replicable by others, and co-evolve the process with your community.

#### 4. Foster student competency in the process:

Grade the process not the outcome. If students can nail the process, they can get to successful outcomes, and the processes learnt can be used repeatedly across different projects.

### Shape Emergence:

#### 5. Calibrate externally; create collectively:

Start with team-based, community-grounded areas of interest. Use the classroom strategically as a collective for calibration through design reviews and sponsor feedback. As students and their projects evolve, encourage them to identify and engage with affinity networks of partners, collaborators and champions.

#### 6. The goal is not a "solution":

Focus on a meaningful, transformative impact that can sustain itself. Systems, habits, practices, environments, tools, and concepts all need to be changed in concert with each other in a holistic manner. Outcomes that work are living processes that a community is invested in and lives.

#### 7. Support the student journey from embedded learning, to theory, to practice, to expertise:

With your support, students can move in and out of ongoing community collaborations, and develop theoretical frameworks and expertise in practice, to fold back into their efforts as innovators, collaborators, and supporters of others.