



How to Innovate: The Essential Guide for Fearless School Leaders

Mary Moss Brown, Alisa Berger

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As the authors state, “Without rethinking how, what, when, where, and why we are teaching, technology will merely be an expensive way of making the existing system faster and flashier.” In *How to Innovate*, Mary Moss Brown and Alisa Berger—founding co-principals of the NYC iSchool—apply their extensive on-the-ground experience to demonstrate a radically different approach to school transformation. They introduce a scalable model of how schools can and should redefine themselves to better meet the needs of 21st-century students. Using a framework built around four critical levers for school change—curriculum, culture, time, and human capital—the NYC iSchool model merges the teaching of big ideas and valuable skills with the realities of accountability, academic preparation, and adolescent development. The book includes more than 20 activities that will help educators begin the process of school transformation, whether they want to focus on a single program, one area of change, or engage in a full-scale whole school improvement effort. This accessible, practical, and inspiring resource is designed to be used over and over again, in any context, despite the constantly changing climates in which schools operate.

“Reimagining school and creating more schools like the iSchool must be our highest national priority. All students need to graduate from high school and college ‘innovation-ready,’ as well as prepared for the complex challenges of continuous learning and citizenship in the 21st century. Time is running short. I urge you to read this book with urgency.”

—From the Foreword by **Tony Wagner**, expert in residence at the Harvard University Innovation Lab, founder and co-director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

“Public education mistakenly relies on a 19-century model to teach kids in the 21st century. Moss Brown and Berger decided to change this by opening the iSchool in New York City and creating a whole new approach to how schools work. They succeeded wildly, and having walked the walk, they now talk the talk so others can follow on the trail they blazed.”

—**Joel Klein**, former Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education (2002–2011)

“Those who strive to create or transform a school will learn much from the shining example of these two fearless principals. As learning contexts change with the rising tides of technology, Moss and Berger focus above all on human and intellectual growth in schools. Their NYC iSchool offers hope for increasing imagination, equity, and depth in the face of the gathering storm of standardization.”

—**Kathleen Cushman**, co-founder of What Kids Can Do and author of *The Motivation Equation*

“Moss Brown and Berger launched one of the first schools to blend personalized instruction and community-connected engaging projects. Anyone interested in a picture of next-generation learning and the inside story of creating a great school should read this book.”

—**Tom Van der Ark**, CEO of Getting Smart

Mary Moss Brown and **Alisa Berger** are the founding co-principals of the NYC iSchool and are currently working as the founding partners in Novare Schools, a consulting group that focuses on school leader coaching, school design, innovation, and transformation.

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