

The Crescendo of EML

Update 3.0

*mini-workshop experiences designed to **delight** and **surprise***

The science of student attention, the curious power of curiosity, the student perception of value — these are part of what is known as **Entrepreneurially Minded Learning (EML)**. Join national speaker and Kern Family Foundation Program Director Ranen McLanahan for novel, engaging, and transformative mini-sessions for your faculty and staff. This curated selection of topics is designed to **surprise** and **delight**, offering adaptable ideas to transform the classroom experience with unique, innovative methods you won't see anywhere else in the world.

How this works

- Contact Ranen McLanahan (rmclanahan@kffd.org) to schedule in-person or virtual mini-workshops on your campus, complimentary through The Kern Family Foundation.
- Mix and match up to 5 topics from our modular 50-minute topical collection.
- Want to dive deeper with more audience co-creation? Schedule any of these sessions for 75-90 minutes.
- Invite instructors to participate according to their availability and interests.
- Watch instructors be **surprised** and **delighted** by a selection of sessions that are 100% unique, engaging, and impactful.

How many people do you need for this program? The average audience size has been around 20-30, and the largest audience (thus far) has been over 200. Remember, for smaller groups, virtual options are available, too!

Sample Crescendo Schedule

9am	Finding your EM Resonance <i>All are welcome at this interactive session featuring unique perspectives, ideas, and methodology for what EML is and how it is so transformative for students, classrooms, and universities.</i>
10am	The Curious Power of Curiosity <i>Explore the two unique types of curiosity through interactive experiential learning activities and try out actionable classroom techniques that greatly engage students.</i>
11am	The Science of Student Attention with EML <i>A visual exploration of the neuroscience of human attention with experiential activities and EML intervention ideas that are applicable to any classroom.</i>
1pm	The Instant Innovator: AI and EM for the Classroom <i>Explore the AI space with ideas and techniques from conversations all around KEEN.</i>

Section I - Crescendo Essentials

Unlocking Engagement, Curiosity, and Transformational Learning

The Crescendo Essentials section is all about **curricular continuous improvement**, **student engagement**, and **teaching transformation**—sessions designed to give faculty practical tools to inspire students and enhance learning experiences.

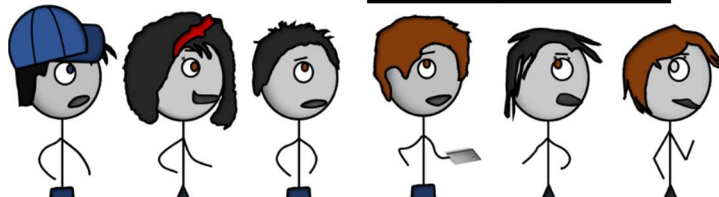
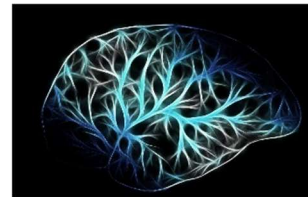
Finding your EM Resonance

The KEEN network comprises over five dozen universities committed to transforming education through entrepreneurial mindset (EM) and entrepreneurially minded learning (EML). Since no university makes this commitment out of an overabundance of time, what makes these ideas so compelling? Identify your own reasons why EM is already an integral part of your success. This session is appropriate for participants at all EML experience levels.

- **Identify** and **prioritize** the elements of EM that resonate most with your personal and professional goals.
- **Develop** a short, 10-minute classroom innovation, rooted in EM, that can transform a student's entire career trajectory.
- **Explore** the transformative potential of EM through compelling examples that engage and inspire students.

The Curious Power of Curiosity

How often do we recognize the transformative power of a single curious question? This **premier session** offers actionable classroom techniques to nurture student curiosity. In this session, you'll engage in hands-on experiential learning activities to better explore your brain's mechanisms of curiosity and elevate your teaching by fully tapping into this essential human drive.



- **Explore** the brain's natural mechanisms for engagement and curiosity, including dopaminergic and opioidergic systems, and how their activation can change everything for student drive and engagement.
- **Apply** novel, practical classroom tools to uncover the novelty within any topic.
- **Experience** curiosity directly through various means, building meta-cognition and self-awareness about its transformative potential.

The EML Intervention Creation Workshop

How do you change the way students think (i.e., enhance mindset) while teaching technical skills? This highly interactive session will present rules of thumb, ideas, and methods for creating your own EML interventions.

- **Identify** opportunities in your courses to spark deeper student engagement.
- **Discover** how to leverage curiosity and foundational concepts to create instantly compelling learning moments.
- **Combine** resonant EM mindsets with adaptable engagement techniques to design brand new and never-before-seen learning interventions for yourself.

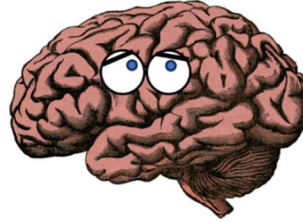


The Science of Human Attention

Student attention can be slippery to pin down. It flows and ebbs throughout the day, week, and semester. Sometimes, when we need to capture it the most, it becomes the most elusive and difficult. What are the mechanics behind human attention, and are there ways we can capture it consistently through EML? This highly experiential session explores the science of human attention in a variety of ways.

- **Analyze** one of the most significant, evidence-based obstacles to student learning that often goes unaddressed or overlooked.
- **Implement** a versatile tool to enhance student attention.
- **Design** an intervention to effectively increase attention in your classroom using this session's tools.
- **Synthesize** insights from experiential activities to deepen meta-cognitive awareness of attention patterns.

Without these Elements, we get Mind Wandering



Mind Wandering...

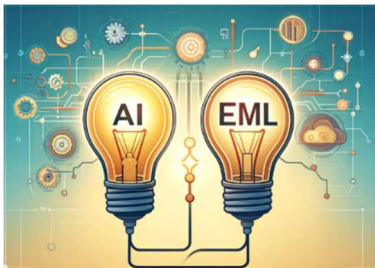
"...[is] in fact quite vigorous and consists of a mixture of freely wandering past recollection, future plans, and other personal thoughts and experiences that appear to be loosely linked."

Andreasen, N. C., O'Leary, D. S., Cizadlo, T., Arndt, S., Rezal, K., Watkins, G. L., ... & Hichwa, R. D. (1995). Remembering the past: two facets of episodic memory explored with positron emission tomography. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 152(11), 1576-1585.

The Student Perception of Value

If different students care about different things, what does that mean for creating value in the classroom? Learn about the student perception of value and how we can use it to create teaching leverages for ourselves and our topics.

- **Experiment** with the **multiplex** approach, designing learning experiences that give students multiple reasons to engage.
- **Put your instincts to the test** in *But is it EML?*, an interactive gameshow where you'll debate what makes a learning experience truly entrepreneurially minded.



The Instant Innovator: AI and EM for the Classroom

This workshop explores AI classroom innovation methods. Explore our "poor man's" AI training prompts to generate deeply compelling questions for any discipline. Experiment with our Entrepreneurially Minded Learning (EML) combinatory methods to create instant, novel teaching innovations that show students the opportunity, impact, and value for any topic. Discuss the

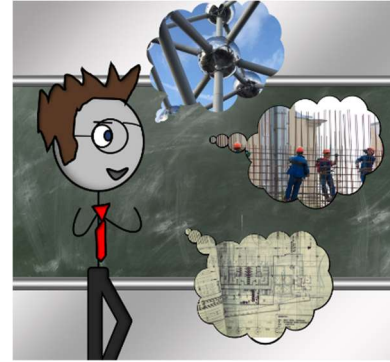
critical role of adaptability in higher education as new and ever-more-powerful AI tools are released. For this workshop, you'll need access to a current AI platform, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Llama, etc.

- **Experiment** with AI-driven techniques, including "poor man's" prompts, to generate compelling, discipline-specific questions that engage students.
- **Apply** Entrepreneurially Minded Learning (EML) methods to design innovative teaching strategies that emphasize opportunity, impact, and value.
- **Evaluate** the evolving role of adaptability in higher education amidst the rapid advancement of AI tools.
- **Survey** a wide range of free AI tools, extending beyond text and image generation, to identify novel applications for classroom innovation.

Adaptable Teaching Innovations from KEEN

KEEN is a highly collaborative network working to transform education. What are some of the biggest ideas, and how can we adapt these for our own programs and classrooms? Explore some of KEEN's best ideas and learn practical strategies to implement these adaptable teaching innovations.

- **Synthesize** insights from multiple KEEN strategies to develop an adaptable approach to educational transformation. For example:
 - **Experience** the transformative power of Story Driven Learning through hands-on activities that build student resilience, initiative, and sense of agency.
 - **Explore** innovative methods for fostering student academic honesty by strengthening their sense of professional identity.
- **Adapt** these and other KEEN-driven teaching innovations, ideas, and techniques to enhance learning in your own discipline.



The Less-Stress Grading Structure

Want to get a little contrarian in your thinking around assessment? Also, does the grading structure you choose matter? For example, can the choice of a grading structure:

- Emphasize learning rather than merely passing tests, quizzes, and exams?
- Improve general assessment accuracy?
- Increase the percentage of on-time student submissions?
- Substantially reduce the instructor's grading workload?
- Easily provide students with useful, instant feedback?
- Get the lower quartile to *actually look at* where they made a mistake on homework?
- Reduce student stress throughout your entire course?

Come learn about a novel method, the theory behind it, and the lessons learned from its implementation. This technique is the result of applying the EM elements of opportunity recognition, “customer/student” awareness, and constructive contrarian thinking directly to our own academic processes.

Section II - Developing Ourselves as Entrepreneurial Thinkers

Sharpen Your Thinking. Expand Your Capacity. Lead with EM.

This section highlights the **faculty journey in EM**—developing mindset and leadership skills in our own academic lives. These sessions make **you the experiment**, helping you to refine **your decision-making, metacognition, and ability to navigate ambiguity and change**. Each session provides ideas for **applying EM directly in our organization**, including both inside and outside the classroom.

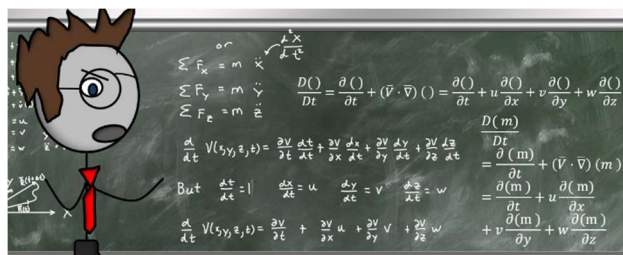
The Art of Ambiguity: Increasing Our Comfort with Uncertainty

Uncertainty often feels like an obstacle, but it's also a key driver of innovation and creativity. How can we teach ourselves—and our students—to navigate ambiguity with confidence and clarity? This session explores practical strategies to foster comfort with the unknown, helping participants reframe uncertainty as a springboard for discovery. Through hands-on activities, you'll practice techniques that encourage decision-making with limited information and learn ways to incorporate ambiguity into your classroom to prepare students for real-world challenges.



- **Train your brain for uncertainty**—reframe ambiguity as an important constraint that you can use to fuel your creativity, problem-solving, and ability to deliver value.
- **Master decision-making in the unknown**—develop strategies to take action with limited information.
- **Experiment with productive ambiguity**—practice tools to build adaptability and confidence in uncertain environments.

Resiliency: Fortifying Grit and Persistence for Yourself and Students



Resilience is a cornerstone of success—but how do we develop and nurture it, both for ourselves and our students? This session dives into grit and persistence, exploring actionable strategies for bouncing back from setbacks and maintaining progress in the face of challenges. Participants will engage in hands-on activities designed to

build mental toughness and explore classroom practices that encourage students to persevere through obstacles. Learn how to turn failure into fuel, model resilience, and help students cultivate a growth mindset that supports their long-term success.

- **Strengthen your backbone factor**—turn setbacks into fuel for growth and momentum.
- **Cultivate an unstoppable mindset**—develop mental toughness and persistence for long-term success.
- **Lead by example**—model resilience and grit to inspire those around you.

The Surprising Consequences of Self-Awareness

Did you know there are two distinct types of self-awareness and that these can be understood entirely independently of each other? Does an increase in expertise and power make someone more self-aware or less self-aware? Learn about the four categories of self-awareness, how they can change the trajectory of a career, the surprising consequences of expertise and power, and data-driven recommendations for what this means for you and your students.



- **Distinguish** between two types of self-awareness and their unique effects on growth.
- **Apply** effective strategies for giving and receiving feedback to enhance self-awareness.
- **Explore** how experience and power can paradoxically strengthen or weaken self-awareness.

The Reluctant Disruptor: How We Can All Be a More Helpful Contrarian



Disruption doesn't always come naturally—but thoughtful, constructive contrarian thinking can be a powerful force for innovation and change. In this session, explore how to identify opportunities for disruption in your own work and teaching without becoming adversarial. Through engaging exercises, participants will discover techniques to challenge assumptions, question norms, and foster a culture of helpful dissent that sparks creativity and progress. You'll leave with strategies for yourself and your students to take the right kind of risks, explore alternative perspectives, and embrace disruptive ideas to solve complex problems.

- **Unlock the power of dissent**—challenge assumptions and spark innovation without creating friction.
- **Learn the art of constructive disruption**—find opportunities to push boundaries in ways that inspire, not alienate.
- **Develop fearless creativity**—experiment with risk-taking and unconventional thinking to drive meaningful change.

The Science of Solidarity: Exploring Metacognition and Implicit Bias

Want to stop underestimating the role of personal bias—forever? Want to gain deep insights into patterns of human nature that others overlook? This session explores how our thinking shapes our interactions, decisions, and influence. Through metacognition, social mindfulness, and simple (but not simplistic) mental models, you'll uncover how to create more visible value for those around you—while also gaining a sharper awareness of how you're perceived by others.

- **Understand your own mind**—sharpen metacognitive awareness to identify personal biases before they shape your decisions.
- **See what others miss**—decode subtle patterns of human behavior to build deeper connections and influence.
- **Elevate your impact**—develop social mindfulness techniques that make your contributions more visible, valued, and trusted.



Increasing Your Luck: The Subtle Power of Small Decisions

Success isn't always about dramatic breakthroughs—it's often about the small, intentional decisions that increase our likelihood of success over time. This session explores how recognizing opportunities and taking action, even in small ways, can profoundly impact our long-term outcomes. Through interactive exercises and simulations, participants will experiment with "living multiple lives," exploring how small changes compound over time to create significantly different results. We'll also discuss the role of intellectual humility in understanding our own biases and blind spots, as well as strategies for fostering opportunity awareness in students. Walk away with practical tools for helping students (and yourself!) cultivate the habits of seizing opportunities and designing a future with intention.



- **Simulate alternate futures**—experiment with decision-making strategies to explore multiple possible outcomes.
- **Stack the odds in your favor**—recognize hidden opportunities and take small actions that lead to big wins.
- **Build an opportunity mindset**—develop habits that increase serendipity, adaptability, and long-term success.

Section III – Half-Day Workshops from Team Crescendo

Coming soon!

Crescendos don't have to be a one-time event. More organizations are scheduling **multiple Crescendo workshops over multiple quarters/semesters** to dive deeper into the full catalogue of offerings.

To support this growing demand, **Team Crescendo is expanding!** Starting in Fall 2025 or Spring 2026, new facilitators will bring half-day workshops to the Crescendo's lineup. These sessions will be **completely complimentary for hosting organizations** and will offer fresh perspectives on Entrepreneurial Mindset and Entrepreneurially-Minded Learning. Stay tuned!



Khaled Adjerid
Tulane University



Andy Gerhart
Lawrence Tech



Reva Johnson
Valparaiso University



Sid Gunasekaran
University of Dayton

About the Speaker

Dr. A. L. Ranen McLanahan, Program Director and national speaker for the Kern Family Foundation, started his career in 1999 working on a floating factory ship in Alaska. After that, he researched CFD and then MEMSs at Washington State University before serving as faculty for 12 years with the UW-Platteville Engineering Partnership. During that time, McLanahan co-founded a community R&D innovation center, 3DC, to develop intellectual property with students. In subsequent years, his consulting company, Critical Flux LLC, collaborated with industry on research endeavors and professional training. In 2016, Ranen was invited to give a workshop to the Wisconsin State Legislators at the state capitol. Topics from this workshop became his 2019 book, *The Science of Solidarity*.



Throughout his career, Ranen has earned multiple awards, honors, and nominations for his teaching, outreach, and innovations.