

Innovating Missions Education:

The Perspectives Course's Innovative Journey

By **PAUL DZUBINSKI**

Paul Dzubinski is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab. He started ministries and churches in Europe and is fascinated with all kinds of innovation.

Over its 50-year history, the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course has integrated various different kinds of innovation. I am in the same organization as Perspectives USA and Perspectives Global and, over the past 10 years, it's been a joy to watch these developments.

Game-Changing Beginnings

Initially, the Perspectives course represented a game-change in the field of missions education. Spearheaded by Ralph Winter, it made advanced missiology accessible not only to professors but also to university students and churchgoers. This approach created a new audience for Christian education, addressing a new group with a simpler, more accessible entry point into missions. This type of change is called a radical or disruptive innovation. Radical innovation is when a new product, service, or technology disrupts an existing market. It creates a new one or considerably alters an existing market. The course challenged traditional views about missions and opened up missions education to a broader segment of the church.

Continuous Refinement

Alongside its radical innovation origins, the course also showed a commitment to continuous refinement by

adapting and evolving. That process is called *incremental innovation*. Perspectives leaders continuously improved the teaching methods, course materials, and operational processes. Over time, the course adapted to changing educational landscapes and student needs, incorporating digital platforms and online learning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These adjustments were meaningful for missions education, although they were not revolutionary in the broader educational realm.

Integration of Innovation Types

In their book *Ten Types of Innovation: The Discipline of Building Breakthroughs*, Keeley, Walters, Pikkell, and Quinn offer an excellent description of types of innovation. Of the 10 types they describe, Perspectives saw continuous refinement in five.

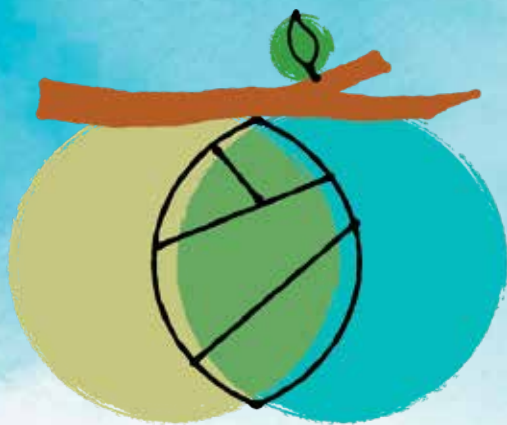
- 1. Process Innovation:** The team worked on improving teaching methodologies and operational processes. Those enhancements guaranteed that the course remained efficient and effective in communicating the four main parts of the course.
- 2. Product System Innovation:** Their development of a complete educational system is particularly impressive. The system includes various teaching materials and

methods, a structure for scheduling and maintaining instructors, and a method to connect interested people who desire to explore missions more deeply. This innovation represents a significant shift in how missions education is structured and delivered.

3. **Service Innovation:** The course has consistently improved its usefulness and value and, therefore, continues to make missions education more accessible and impactful for students.
4. **Channel Innovation:** Like many organizations and churches, Perspectives also went online during COVID-19. That was a channel innovation because they applied online platforms, leveraging digital communication channels to their unique audience. In that way, Perspectives has expanded its reach, making missions education more accessible to a global audience.
5. **Customer Engagement Innovation:** The course fosters deep, meaningful interactions with students,

engaging them in the broader narrative and purpose of global missions. But it goes further than that. The Perspectives team also fosters connections between students and organizations where they can volunteer or start a career.

The impact of these innovations is profound. The course's game-changing approach democratized knowledge in missions education, setting it free from the seminaries and professionals. And its continuous refinement ensured its relevance and adaptability. This blend of innovation continues to enable Perspectives USA and Perspectives Global to be a dynamic presence in Christian education and to meet the growing needs of the global church. The Perspectives course is a model of innovation in educational programming, especially in the area of missions education. As it moves forward, the course inspires and equips new generations of believers, ready to engage the complexities and opportunities of God's mission in the world. MF



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