

Design for Aging: Engineering, Accessibility, and Intergenerational Partnerships (held March 3, 11:00am-12:30pm (online))

This session explored outcomes and challenges of intergenerational design and engineering projects with and for older adults. **Dr. Caitrin Lynch**, Dean of Faculty and Professor of Anthropology at Olin College of Engineering, was joined by **Ela Ben-Ur**, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Design at Olin and founder of InnovatorsCompass.org. A student team and their older adult community partner shared stories from their participation in an intergenerational design class called Engineering for Humanity (<https://courses.olin.edu/e4h/>). Audience members were invited to participate in a small group quickfire design activity.



Dr. Lynch is Dean of Faculty and Professor Anthropology at Olin College of Engineering. Her research and teaching passions include examining the dynamics of work and cultural values (with a focus on aging and gender) as well as the cultural dimensions of offshore manufacturing, plus a commitment to understanding social behavior in global contexts and a devotion to encouraging students to use qualitative methods to think critically about the world around them. She especially strives to expose engineering students to critical analysis and identification of the needs and opportunities in our aging world. One outlet for these efforts is in her interdisciplinary service-learning course “Engineering For Humanity: Helping Elders Age in Place through Partnerships for Healthy Living.” She is the author of two books—[Retirement on the Line: Age, Work, and Value in An American Factory](#),

and [Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry](#)—as well as producer of the documentary film, [My Name is Julius](#).

Her professional experience includes an assistant professorship at Drew University, as well as several fellowships, including a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship at Johns Hopkins University. She has taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago and is currently a Visiting Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology at Brandeis University. At Olin she teaches in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences program. She is the secretary of the American Ethnological Society (of the American Anthropological Association) and past treasurer of the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies. Dr. Lynch received her Ph.D. and M.A. in cultural anthropology from the University of Chicago and her B.A. in anthropology from Bates College.



Ela Ben-Ur has worked and co-experimented deeply with organizations and educators interested in design thinking since 2012. The focus of her present experimentation is Innovators' Compass (<http://innovatorscompass.org/>): 5 questions that move us forward, distilled from many different practices, which have been used from preschools to global conferences and rural communities. Ela worked 13 prior years at renowned innovation firm IDEO. Her design practice and leadership at IDEO spanned diverse industries, geographies, and sectors. She went on to co-found IDEO's Leadership Studio for developing project leaders, coach teams, and facilitate for clients.

Ela has taught courses from product design to life design at Olin since 2007. She has offered workshops and keynotes through MIT (her alma mater), Sloan, Babson, Dartmouth, and Harvard, and at venues from SXSW EDU to the National Science Teachers' Association, New England Association of Schools and Conferences, AIGA, International Development Design Summit, Front End of Innovation, and US Conference on AIDS.

Ela earned BS (1997) and MS (1999) in Mechanical Engineering from MIT. As a research assistant in the MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory Haptics Group, she developed a force-feedback laparoscopic surgery simulator that has been patented and displayed at the MIT Museum.