

DEEPER LEARNING
Immigration 2018

JEFF BUSH
Facilitator – Innovation High

As far as I'm concerned, this space is Mecca. Like, it's – it's holy ground, because this is one of the very first places to do it intentionally and to do it across the entire system. And the connections that they've made with community and really the ripples that have gone not just across the nation, but across the world, like, they have made – truly made a difference in education. And just - there are educators that want to change the world. There are educators who want to revolutionize what the classroom looks like for the sake of their students, for the sake of their communities, and for the sake of their own sense of personal and professional satisfaction in the classroom. 00:01:25

There is incredible things that are happening, and I think that those have largely been missed in the national dialogue. This is probably the best example, this conference, of the positive ground swell that's happening. 00:01:37

BEN DALEY
Provost, High Tech Graduate School of Education

High Tech High now has 5 high schools, 4 middle schools and 4 elementary schools. We just started with one high school and then grew from there. 00:01:50

High Tech High was founded with the idea that kids can do real work for a real audience and that that is going to be more engaging than kind of sitting and receiving information and then regurgitating it for a test on Friday. 00:02:03

When we started High Tech High, we thought about it as a series of concentric circles; and the center was, we need to serve students well who go to our schools. But we also felt like – and also, we want to save the world – and so both ideas exist, you know, together, so there's just the kids at our one high school, now 13 schools; but then there's the region, there's the state, there's the country, there's the world. 00:02:29

And, not to be hubristic, but we are trying to help improve the quality of schools everywhere. It's not a competition, we all want to have really great schools for every kid, everywhere; and that's what we're trying to get after.

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The Hewlett Foundation decided that they wanted to promote the idea of Deeper Learning, these competencies that every student ought to have that are a broader range of competencies; and they went out and said who are people who we think are already trying to do this? And they approached High Tech High, New Tech Network, Envision Schools, Expeditionary Learning, and others, and said, we think you're doing Deeper Learning, do we have that right? You're trying to do Deeper Learning? 00:03:06

And a group of us said, yeah, that is what we're trying to do. And so, we started getting together as senior leaders in these different organizations a few times a year, learning from each other, thinking together, working together.

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And so we launched this Deeper Learning conference as an effort to kind of have a broader range of people from around the world who can come together, who are – we're all trying to do this Deeper Learning thing, let's learn from each other; because it's like a – it's a never-ending journey, there's always more to be done, always more to get better at, so that's what we're trying to do. 00:03:31

LARRY ROSENSTOCK
Founder – High Tech High

I would say that we have had far greater success than we imagined and I think it's only appropriate when you're in a position like this, with the complexity of what we're doing, to say we're not there yet; but we've gotten pretty far.

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I think that we are getting traction in certain ways, quite clearly. We decided when we opened that we would live or die based on our college entering and college completion rates, and some people today quibble at that. You know, is it really important to go? Yeah, some people can really break into tech without it and stuff like that; I get that. 00:04:15

But for our demography, it's safer to be in college than be on the street, you've got more opportunities there, it's what I wanted for my kids and what most people want for their kids. We also wanted kids to be doing work that was worth doing; making, creating, publishing all the hundreds of books they've published, the patents they've got, the inventions they've made, all the excitement that's gave them that's really turned on to learning. 00:04:39

You know understanding that kindergarten is really what gets it right, its fuzzy logic based on the intrinsic interest of the learner, and that High Tech - high school should look more like kindergartens in a certain type of way and that they kind of feel that way. 00:04:51

And we have very few rules and it's a happy place, and people don't fight, and we just have very little of those issues. We – you know, it's not perfect again, but we've created a place that's a safe wonderful place to be. 00:05:06

There have been several movements over history that are repetitive about doing this type of work. This – we have seen this before. They – they rise and they fall. So, this is another moment that there is movement that's parallel to ones that we have seen at other points in our nation's history. 00:05:29

As far as the names of them, they're so scattered that it's really kind of hard to hang – hard to hang on to them. I think that there is a dissatisfaction clearly, but that's also been very typical for some time of parents and students and others about the lack of quality in a lot of education in America. 00:05:49

There is another far more profound and challenging question, which is the fact that every one of us right now has a device in their hand in which they can in seconds get almost any piece of information that they want; if they know the question to ask, however. 00:06:07

And so, does that suggest that that narrow learning and memorization might not really be as important anymore, if I can just find it right there? I think it probably does. There's far more people looking and they're looking because they're dissatisfied with – with what's out there and they're seeking satisfaction; and there's a lot of us, not just High Tech High, that are providing a lot of the indicators of how to look for that satisfaction. That's really promising. I wish it was bigger and faster, but it's still promising. 00:06:44

Or to put it another way, the world is changing; schools ought to be too.
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We are first and foremost an equity project, from – coming from our roots of all the struggles in this country over the last 100 years; this idea that the have-nots are going to accomplish at the same level that the have's do and that we're going to try to the greatest extent possible to equalize our offerings. 00:07:11

So, how do we select kids? That's an interesting question, because we have a lot of people in the lottery still, after 19 years we still have a lot of people trying to get it. It's also sad, because everybody can't get in it; there's not room. And it's a blind lottery, there's no – nothing meritocratic in that lottery; anyone can go on line and see that that is the case. 00:07:34

In terms of the quality of work that we're doing, it's all about engaging kids. It's – it's really kindergarten gets it right. I mean – and what we're trying to do is have an institution where kids are making and doing and building and shaping and publishing and sharing and – and collaborating and learning how to work with others. 00:07:52

All those qualities you see happening in our schools. Not all the time, because sometimes you've – you've – sometimes it's not – it's not nothings all the time, but most of the time it's working really well. And then where are they going? 00:08:06

(NOTE-GREEN HERE IS REPEATING FROM ABOVE)

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All those qualities you see happening in our schools. Not all the time, but most of the time it's working really well. Having just graduated 5 high schools in the last week, I love it. Watching those families, watching their pride, watching those kids, watching them go forth, watching them be thrilled, I'm thrilled to be leaving high school too; and a little bit scared and to be going out into the world to do something, which in many cases is better than what might have happened had they not been offered that opportunity. 00:08:57

ROB RIORDON
Co-founder of High Tech High

So, when we got a chance to start High Tech High, we knew all our kids were going to do internships. We were going to be a diverse population and untracked. We would not separate kids out into the smart kids, the dumb kids; every one of our classes would be as diverse as the school itself was. 00:09:20

And, finally, we knew we wanted to end teacher isolation. We wanted teachers working in teams with each other and modelling that kind of collaboration. If we are asking our teachers to model and foster 21st century skills for the students, we need to put them in a 21st century work environment. 00:09:40

We guarantee to parents, yes, all the subjects will be covered. Our aim in the beginning – when anyone asked a kid what are you doing in school, we didn't want them to be saying well at 9 o'clock I go to math, 10 o'clock I have history. And so, we wanted them to talk about the one thing that they were working on. We wanted an integrated – a sense of – of an integrated day and an integrated experience. 00:10:02

So, we're still working at that, and that's a hopeful project for us. We're still trying to move, they're still trying to grow around the integration. 00:10:10

One of the primary impediments to change in schools is the subject matter organization of the curriculum and the subject matter loyalties of teachers, who see when we asked them to integrate and to do something to connect with the world, their first impulse often is to protect their subject matter, to make sure their subject matter gets in. 00:10:33

The major problem in schools today is engagement. We need to find ways to engage our kids and, in order to do that, we need to reach them where they are, where they live, and we need to help them connect to the world beyond school. Projects are a really powerful way to do that; not necessarily the only way, but a really powerful way to do that. 00:10:56

MARI JONES

Project Co-Director of Deeper Learning Hub

At High Tech High Graduate School of Education

Well the reason why I stepped out of the classroom or tried to do something more was because the whole time I was working at High Tech Elementary Explorer, I had both a sense of privilege that I get to work in an organization that allows me to do this work that gives students the opportunities to dig into real-world problems and actually develop as learners, and this guilt that I had left behind a population of students that really needed this. 00:11:25

And so, when I changed my role, I thought about how can I change the system rather than just changing the lives of these 24 students at a time. 00:11:36

The great thing about being a Deeper Learning hub is that we are not trying to be the one organization that's doing it all; we're just trying to connect everyone who's already in this work. So, one of the things that is a main role of the Deeper Learning hub is essentially to take these organizations that are so innovative and pushing the boundaries about what education can be and giving them a platform to connect with one another so that we're not just innovating in these small pockets and changing the lives of the children there, but that we can actually move what education looks like for all students. 00:12:17

Our biggest project in the Deeper Learning hub right now is a campaign called Share Our Learning, and it's a national movement to get educators to allow their students to publicly share their learning with an audience beyond the classroom. Our aim is to get 5 million students to publicly share their learning by 2020. So, that equals about 300,000 educators who sign up as committed people ready to do things like exhibitions of learning, where students are sharing what they've done in a class project or in a school project with a local community or community experts. 00:12:54

Also, student-led conferences, where students are the ones that are leading the conference. If you think about your traditional parent-teacher conferences, one of the big problems with that is, the teacher is telling the parents here's how your student is doing, the parents saying oh what can we do at home; and the kid is essentially left out of that whole conversation, and they are the ones that are doing the learning. 00:13:13

MICHELLE SADRENA PLEDGER

Because we know that when students share their learning, it not only increases their motivation and their engagement, but it also increases the quality of work, it really improves when there's a public audience that they're sharing it for. 00:13:29

The mission of the campaign is based on a number of Deeper Learning partners coming together to identify what are three pivotal practices that can be scaled across the country that lead to Deeper Learning. 00:13:45

Having students have exhibitions, student-led conferences, and presentations of learning; because that is almost like a backdoor entry into getting to Deeper Learning, because you're not going to have students share on something that's shallow. 00:13:59

One great example is a middle school that we've been working with that first started with just one teacher having one exhibition where that – that one class was sharing their learning; and invited other teachers from the school to see what happened – right – what happens when we let kids talk about their own learning. 00:14:18

And then that one exhibition grew to the entire school doing an all-school exhibition. And then they decided, hey we're doing this, why don't we move toward student-led conferences next. 00:14:29

And they had the backing of their principal, who was really on board with this and the backing of the assistant superintendent. So, it really comes down to the support of everyone in the community and the parents. 00:14:39

Everybody wants the best for our kids. It's not – there's not one stakeholder that – that doesn't want something positive and a great future for their kids, it's just how do we work together to make that actually happen. 00:14:51

In terms of research, what we're trying to do now as we develop more partners, is connect with researchers who can track what's happening; and we're collecting data now too. You can talk to any teacher in any of these networks who

are doing these practices, and they can tell you how its changed or impacted the lives of their students. 00:15:11

We are really interested in these particular practices of the Share Your Learning Campaign, and how we can collect data around that. I think what has been most powerful for me this first year in seeing the fruits of our efforts is, when we started finally hearing stories back. 00:15:31

And so, we have numerous school districts and schools involved in rural areas, in urban areas; great examples to share. And what's also awesome is that when you go to the community page, you can look at examples from different areas and know that this is not just only isolated – just certain pockets of the United States. 00:15:50

The great news about the Share Your Learning Campaign is that it is open to every type of school that you can imagine. It is for private schools, charter schools, public schools, independent schools, comprehensive schools, district schools; it doesn't matter. There is no reason why any educator cannot access this content. Everything is free, all the tool kits are free, all of our support is free. 00:16:16

So, we really want to see students in all districts, in all demographics, sharing their learning; because it matters. 00:16:25

RON BERGER
Chief Academic Officer, EL Education

When a student is finished with her schooling and she graduates and enters her adult life, she'll be judged for the rest of her life by two things; the quality of her work and the quality of herself as a person, the quality of her character. She's not going to be judged by test scores anymore. 00:16:44

And in our lives and in our businesses, in our non-profits, our organizations, we care about the quality of work that people do. And so, it's a little crazy that the only way we look at schools and teachers and students is by test scores. Not that test scores are wrong, I mean tests can certainly be a part of assessment, but as the only part of assessment that's respected; it's not actually measuring what we expect people to do in the world. 00:17:07

And so, Project Base Learning is sort of making clear that the work that kids do in the school and the ethic of work, the craftsmanship they build, the skills they build of how to work alone and together with others collaboratively, is what's going to determine their success in life, as workers, as citizens. So, we'd better be taking it seriously. 00:17:25

Just the acquisition of content the way I was taught growing up is no longer the most important thing to focus on, especially since content is so readily available to all of us through mobile devices. In contrast, the kids in the schools that I work with in EL Education or schools like High Tech High, kids are deeply proud of doing important, significant, sophisticated work; the kind of work they'll be doing in the real world, already, and they're building skills along with it. 00:17:52

So, what's important now I think is not just how to get knowledge, because we know how to get content, but how to apply that knowledge to create things of value. So, it's using knowledge versus memorizing knowledge that is - is becoming the new focus. Basic skills matter, test scores matter, and building kids with an ethic of craftsmanship and hard work and perseverance to do great work individually and – and collaboratively is equally important or more important for our success in life. 00:18:18

There are many fingers of the Project Base Learning movement, the PBL movement, all over the country. My particular mission with my organization is, I think that there is a misconception that PBL, Project Base Learning, is only effective and worth risking with students that are already doing fine, students of privilege, students in middle-class communities, suburban students. PBL is okay for them, however, low-income students, rural students or urban students who are struggling with the basic skills, we have to keep Project Base Learning away from them because it's too risky. 00:18:53

I fully understand that concern, because basic skills really do matter. But, I am also convinced that it's not true, because if you can build basic skills into the projects kids are doing, they enter those projects with excitement and pride and engagement in a way that makes them learn their basic skills in a deeper way. 00:19:13

When people don't trust me in saying that, I bring them to schools like the one I'm sitting in now, or schools that I work with in EL Education. So, we have dozens of schools, public schools across America that use Project Base Learning and Deeper Learning where every graduate is getting into college, every single year. 00:19:32

This is an approach that works with all students. The key is for people to see settings where students that are all low-income students, rural students, urban students, are having profound success with this, where they are getting into college, where they are succeeding in college because of that ownership of their work. 00:19:49

JEFF BUSH
Facilitator – Innovation High

The Deeper Learning conference has been spectacular. Probably the biggest takeaway with it is just the intentionality and the purpose that they've used in this conference. It's really inspiring to watch an organization, a group of people that take the 'why' – they have asked their 'why' and then they have applied it to their 'how' and they have just built everything around who they are as educators, who they are as people, and who they want to stand for. 00:20:18

One of the things we really need to do in education is to make learning deeper and really to connect at the student's core values, so that students can connect the dots for themselves and connect their core values to the learning that's happening in the classroom. 00:20:36

We live in interesting times right now, right? The – the - the politics and the national dialogue can be so toxic, it's really just rippling into our community organizations and educators really are struggling that – with that right now. There are students that are struggling with that, and it can be quite a challenge for communities and for organizations to try to figure out how to meet that challenge head on. 00:21:04

When you think about the topic of immigration right now, it's very real-world work, right? This is a topic that people are struggling with within their community, it's very centered in the community right now. We're essentially asking who our community is, what is the essence of our community, right? And

as far as the relevance to students, like it's highly relevant, right? Like, these – these topics have been discussed at kitchen tables, they're being discussed in hallways in schools, they're being discussed outside of the schools. Like, it's – it's all of those pieces, and so, connecting immigration to Project Based Learning really just makes sense. 00:21:39

The immigration debate has changed. How we think about people in different communities has changed and our – our civic sense of responsibility and actions and values have changed, and educators really have to – have to meet that; they have to meet it head on, they have to think about that because our core values of the country have not changed. 00:21:59

We – we still will know what it means to be an American; we still know what those core values means. And I have all of the hope in the world that our country will survive the current era that we're in and that our values will come out on the other side stronger; but we have to meet those challenges head on. 00:22:16

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