

Doug Hayman  
Deeper Learning Conference  
San Diego, CA  
3/28-3/30, 2018

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Overall, the Deeper Learning conference was a positive experience. Some of was affirming, especially related to our focus on Personalized Learning, some of was eye-opening, and a small part of it was discouraging as a portion was focused more on politics than education.

## DAY ONE:

MARCH 28

### SESSION 1,

Getting to know each other a little and loosening up a little. Not my strong point. Had to write a poem about what Deeper Learning was like... For a hundred bucks, I will share it with you. John, Trevon, and Tony were more social than I. But it was interesting watching them build social connections.

### SESSION 2,

Conceptualized three elements of professional practice

- Motivate
- Contemplate
- Elevate

To Motivate, first we must recognize everyone has a story that “identifies” them. If we are to motivate someone to “go” somewhere that we want them to, we must first recognize where they currently are and what story brought them to this place.

To Contemplate is to reflect on current reality, truly and deeply look at where we are and ask why we want to change current practice.

To Elevate, at every level (student, teacher, parent, admin) we must recognize how we are each unique, our own stories, and how we want our stories to intertwine. I believe we must start with “why” we believe. Never underestimate what the results may be if we ask the students “why” something motivates them, what they think about a topic, and where they would like to go with it.

## DAY TWO:

MARCH 29

### ALL DAY SESSION

I spent the entire day working with a company called ProtoHack. The objective was to come up with a 90 second pitch to sell a real product that addressed a real problem. This session was worth the price of admission for the whole conference. I have sent John O. the link to the product our team came up with. It won first place in the competition. Probably make millions of dollars with it if we developed further. Seriously.

### WHAT MADE THIS SESSION SO VALUABLE- REALITY

It was not that our product was so great, even though it was, it was to process we used to create the product. Our product was an app that would positively affect student attendance in the grade schools by motivating parents. (see the app that I sent John)

The process was simple and brilliant. The parameters were set, real problem, real solution. Individuals introduced themselves to the rest of the group and included what their own relative strengths were, their passions (not just interests), and their short suits. The short suits were especially important so the teams would know how to create a team that was balanced. For example, ours had experience and administrative, (me), and I looked for someone who shared that their strength was technical, and someone who had urban experience. Our three-person team built an app that accessed large commercial vendors (you got to have money somewhere in the equation or it is just a warm fuzzy) to schools and parents and created an electronic motivation system that motivated parents and students, (win for them) rewarded schools with better attendance and an increased funding source, (win for them) and a loyalty system for local and national vendors (win for them.)

During the development we had access to several professional “pitch” people from companies like Intuit, and our judges were CEO’s of hedge funds, hospitals, and technology company.

Presenting to this type of audience provided the motivation to bring our “A” game.

## **DAY THREE:**

Well, you can’t win them all. I spent Friday morning listening to a lot of politics around urban schools. I did so intentionally, but what I thought would be insightful turned out to simply be a case of folks pulling the race card and literally saying, “It is the white man’s fault.” Well that may be true, but the presentations were so slanted that I felt like a lonely grain of salt in the pepper shaker.

## **OVERALL**

Still, very glad I went to this conference and it will influence how I approach problems and move forward with schools of innovation. The concept of real problems with real solutions should be a part of all curriculum.



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