

Keeping the Spark Alive Session Overview

As a design and innovation consultancy, IDEO is helping others apply design philosophy to social issues like education. One example of this is their current work with Target, helping them figure out the best way to scale up a school library makeover project, bringing it to even more schools.

Working in education often means dealing with high pressure environments or constraints. Blaise Bertrand and Sandy Speicher helped participants think through ways to stay inspired and continue to innovate within their work. After listing out some of the constraints participants feel they face—fear of change, politics, time, work/life balance, an in-the-box mentality—the group symbolically destroyed those constraints by ripping them up, and then discussed examples of innovation. For example:

- When hiring, start with people who will not only perform well, but will also inspire you. Don't just focus on candidates' depth, screen for breadth.
- When you spot something cool, make sure to share it with your team—and have them do the same. What are people seeing and learning? Create formats for sharing information whether or not it has direct application to the work at hand.
- Keep learning from people younger than you. Mentors tend to be older, so make sure you have a reverse, younger mentor as well.
- Design soulful workplaces that immerse teams in the questions they are exploring.
- Release your boundaries: engage a large community in the questions you are facing; they might have helpful insight.

What are the steps you can take to apply these things tomorrow?

To go deeper into this work for educators, visit www.designthinkingforeducators.com, a new project for IDEO.