

As a researcher, when I hit a wall in my thinking, I step outside of my cube and grab a colleague. We sit at the flip chart and draw and wrestle with a problem. Sometimes I look out the window or take a walk to catch a glimpse of the ocean (I am lucky enough to work in Half Moon Bay). Doing this always gives me fresh eyes. It helps me make new connections, and I go back to my desk a little wiser and more creative about the wall I am trying to move past.

I'm seeing this process embodied and pushed further at the Fest. The first day we moved from a personal storytelling exercise about an educational experience that influenced our lives, to discussing challenges of education and areas that we as educators, policy makers, foundations, nonprofits and others need to think about in moving things forward. We listened to an artist playing his piano, while sitting next to a piano he had deconstructed. We watched a silent dance where we could let our day's thoughts wash over us. During the breaks, I talked to a couple of participants who helped to create meaning around this process. They said that for them innovation is about creating new ideas by making connections between old ideas. It's about stepping outside our old ways of thinking. It's about waking up, and art helps us to do that. Time to put these thoughts to the test in the action collabs, which start now...