

We participated in the front end of an accelerated design process today: improvs and action collabs where we engaged the process of innovation. The improvisations helped us loosen up, let go of ourselves, and try to make others look like stars. We had to enter each others' personal spaces, which for groups of strangers was both uncomfortable and liberating. The rules helped: no mistakes, no judgments.

In my first action collab, we brainstormed opportunities ripe for change in education. There was a lot of laughter and letting go, as with the improv we'd just been through. In the second session, though, people were led out of their comfort zones. We had to come up with concrete solutions to the high-handed concepts from our first session--not an easy task. Particularly with so much education experience in the room, it wasn't so easy to let go of ideas. But shifts started to happen. Thinking and sharing loosened up. We're half way through; tomorrow we'll create a prototype, and will report out the results.

What I found out afterwards, from those in other action collabs, is that some got wild and crazy, others were more subdued. With all the people I spoke with, though, the improv helped them open up in ways they weren't expecting.