

Creating An Innovation-Capable Workforce

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Education, the Economy and Society

The charge to Team 2 is to exploit the new alignment of education, the economy and society to produce high school and college graduates with the expert thinking and complex communication skills needed to be innovative workers and effective citizens. And to enable existing workers and adult learners of all types to learn innovation skills, especially through learning-through-problem-solving on the job.

Team 2 is exploiting a new convergence between the goals of educators to inspire life-long learning and self-actualization, the needs of a rapidly changing economy for innovation-capable workers from the front line to the corporate suite, and the needs of a diverse and complex society for engaged citizens.

10 Storytellers in 30 Days

In June, ten members of the Reinventing Stamford community will share their life stories with students at Dolan middle school to open the minds of the students to a wider range of possibilities for their future.

This June initiative will serve as a pilot for a partnership with the Stamford Public Schools to bring Stamford innovators into the enrichment hour of each day of the middle school experience. The team will be organizing and structuring the initiative this summer, informed by the June experience, for implementation in September.

To illustrate the anticipated Dolan School experience, Team 2 did a skit at the June 2nd Town meeting. Sue Rigano played the role of the Storyteller and Eva Weller played the role of the teacher trying to guide and engage the students, who were played by Reinventing Stamford members: Sue Paley, the unruly student, Clif McFeely, the squirmy student, Rod Frantz, the quiet student and others who were more 'behaved'.

Thanks to the skit, ten Reinventing Stamford attendees, ranging from a recent Stamford Public Schools graduate to a Senior Vice President at UBS, were inspired to volunteer as storytellers at Dolan in June. The group will be meeting shortly to debrief the experience and learn from its successes.

From Tiny Acorn to Mighty Oak

These storytelling opportunities are a low intensity mechanism to begin to connect the schools and the community, which will lead to more intensive interaction over time. The goal is to ignite a passion for innovation, and to help develop through experiential learning the pattern recognition skills of expert thinking and complex communication that enable it.

Here's how this little acorn could grow into a mighty oak...The adult who begins with spending one hour in a classroom, may decide to spend many more hours in a classroom. They might then commit to be an online coach to help a high school student navigate the path to their future (for example, through the *Future Five* program which links a high school senior with five online coaches). That might grow into a commitment to become a full-fledged mentor, and ultimately to be the sponsor of a mentored internship for a high school or college student.

Likewise, the experience for the student could intensify over time. One of the storytelling experiences in middle school might spark an interest that could lead to an internship in high school and college, and begin a relationship with a coach or a mentor. It is through these interactions that we will develop the problem solving skills in the next generation that will enable them to create their future, as we scale the first 10 storytellers into thousands of storytellers and hundreds of coaches and mentors.

A Two-Way Street

The experience will be equally transformative for the adults as for the students, because storytelling, coaching and mentoring are some of the best means to sharpen one's own innovation skills. Team 2 plans to convene the adult storytellers, coaches and mentors as a peer group to inspire each other as innovators, whether at work or in civic action.

