

BIG PICTURE LEARNING

NETWORK NEWS

October 9, 2011

Students from the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship at the New York Stock Exchange on Monday, October 10th - ringing the opening bell. Two students from MET Providence are among the students chosen for this exciting honor!



More and more great news!

Check out all the great news this week - our students and staff are doing amazing work!

In the news this week:

- Students at Big Picture South Burlington raise funds to help the victims of the flooding from Hurricane Irene in Vermont. Great job! <http://www.otherpapersbvt.com/rebel-relief-offers-support-to-flood-victims.html>
- New feature article in TECHNIQUES magazine by BPL's Charles Mojkowski and Elliot Washor. Why are students unprepared for the workforce? What are the solutions? This article addresses these issues with solid answers to this growing problem. <http://www.bigpicture.org/2011/10/what-employers-dont-know-about-their-new-hires-and-why/>
- MetWest Alumna LaStarr Moore shares her internship experiences and how honored she is working with students today! <http://www.positiveimages411.com/2011/09/metwest-high-school-portrait-of.html>
- Anthony Defilippo and John Novas presenting their business plan in the finals of the 2011 National Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. <http://vimeo.com/30212618>
- Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) visits the NYSE. Two MET Providence students were among the student finalists representing the NFTE program! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTOcqXbcsVI&feature=share>

Mark your calendar!

Principal Retreat in
Sunny San Diego California!
February 8-10, 2012
More details will be coming soon - but
hold the date!



Students from South Burlington Big Picture during a recent volunteer day of service to support the victims of the recent Vermont flooding.

Keep sending pictures and news and we will share with the network!

Have a great week!

Co-Corner: D to the E

From Doc

“Most founders are dead.”



A new 9th grade student at The Met kept bugging his advisor about wanting to meet me. He was a bit obsessed, his teacher said. So I set up a lunch for me and him. It was so cute. He wore a beautiful tie and dress clothes for his meeting. I am always impressed when young kids care enough or think broadly enough to ask questions like, why did you start The Met? or that they even know who we are. We talked for ½ hour and then I asked him why he wanted to meet me so bad. He said, “most founders are dead and so it was cool to find one alive who I could meet.” Yes, I felt old and thankful that Elliot and I are above ground.

Just returned from the Board of Regents hearing on the new career and tech regulations. It has all been a little strange.

As usual, it is the work behind the scenes and good connections that win in the end. So many people had approached the Commissioner about The Met- that the message came across loud and clear about our support.

We did our homework and turned in our version of the regulations that included innovative programs and schools. The combination of support and concrete alternatives (even written in legalese) did the trick.

The new reg's look like The Met is included. Now we must work on designing how we think we should be evaluated i.e. work-ready skills, college attendance, graduation rates, etc.

We had 15 students with Met shirts, a teacher, our lawyers, administrators, our Board Chairman, a parent, and 2 students speak on The Met's behalf. But you never stop, you always keep talking, testing, making sure no one takes your school down. We will keep people posted.

It is a shame we can't spend our time educating as opposed to politicking.

Steve Jobs death

I really appreciated his total commitment to design excellence. Apple started out caring more about design than profit...and that brought profit.

Obama said, “...there may be no greater tribute to Steve's success than the fact that much of the world learned of his passing on a device he invented.” Powerful. I had shown his Stanford graduation speech a month ago to the college students. Last night the

news was showing parts of his speech. What made me feel good was that some of our adult learners felt “smart” because they had seen the tape before now.

Organization, organization, organization...

I've said it before- organization is so important for all of us- whatever our methods are. An advisor can't be good if they aren't organized- each has 16-20 mentors and 16-20 different projects. Whew.

In all areas of life, it is the people who are organized and control their schedule that seem to get things done. We as teachers, or good organizers, sometimes take our “organizing skills” for granted. We must teach it and coach it. I've worked with young teachers that had no clue after college, hard to put time aside for work, pleasure and chores. I actually laid out schedules with there staff. So don't assume that your students know how to organize. Help them learn- this work upfront can save a lot of aggravation.

Handwriting

Its weird that often I can't read my own handwriting, but Tara can.

Peace,

Dennis

From Elliot

I'm about as far away as I've ever been from where I was born, and yet I'm right off shore of a major ecological disaster just a few miles off the coast of where I am in New Zealand. The hotel I'm at is right on the water and is filled with engineers and biologists here to remediate the disaster. How did this Liberian registered ship hit a reef and run aground where it had no business being? Why with all the latest barcode data and tracking devices, no one really knows what cargo this container ship is storing? These are the questions that I'm drawn to because they are the same questions about personal journeys and data that I'm asking about the lives of students while I'm here in New Zealand. In the end, it is always easier to connect the dots looking back and coming to some rational conclusions about why things happen. It is much, much harder to predict the future to support and/or make the connections whether it is something good or bad that is going to happen.



The last few days, I went with students to their internships. As usual, I could see the triangulation of advisor, mentor, and student. In these cases, I could

see how students were drawn to their interests through relationships that started in their homes - continued through the support of their advisors and fused through an internship. In retrospect, it all becomes quite apparent. It's what I'm pretty good at. I can pick it up much quicker than most people around me. What I can't do is tell you how a person's life and their little strands of DNA will react to the environment and move them down their journey. This is the interesting part, and put very simply, we really don't know how each and every one of us figures this out and makes their way in the world.

At the LTI's I went to, I saw many of the same patterns I always see. The mentors and advisors said the students were shy. They lacked a voice. They were withdrawn. They had ADD or Asperger's. Then, a miracle, and all of a sudden they could not stop talking. The students were engaged with people and the materials around them. They were figuring things out on their own, and they were learning from people they now know who have the knowledge and wisdom they want. Back at the schools they left, these students were ridiculed or bullied and withdrew by leaving or acting out or both. Once they have the environment our schools provide, a school-like algorithm kicks in where students are assessed on certain tasks and proceed down a very linear roadway toward getting a credential and diploma. The certification counts, but the way they actually got there is ignored or is hardly noticed.

My interest has always been around how we all get there, not in following the algorithms. Following the linear pathway is not a bad thing at all, it's just not what interests me. I get interested in the turnoffs off the algorithm. If we can continue to make schooling a place where students can figure out their way in the world and support that without pushing them into places they don't fit then, we've done something extraordinary.

Below are examples from last week's New Yorker about how this is done by two people who were featured in articles. Both young people come to their passions through negative experiences that turn positive, but the latter shows a school actually getting in the way, and in the end achieving the right outcome. This type of reverse osmosis draws out a student's self in negative ways, and unfortunately, happens way to often.



Dr Don 9/26/11 – Peter Hessler

“By the time Don Colcord was eight years old, he knew that he wanted to be a druggist. He grew up in Uruavon, a mining town near Nucla, and his mother was a clerk in the pharmacy, where Don liked to hang around and watch the druggist. As a teen-ager, he began breaking into the place. Along with some friends, he stole beer, Playboy, and condoms. (“The condoms went to waste.”) When the boys finally got caught, they were forced to pay for the goods by working at the store for twenty-five cents an hour. “Everybody knew why you were there,” Don says. “It was probably the best thing that happened to me.”



“The insults did indeed come, at school, where Gaultier was the misfit kid who wasn't good at any sports and felt rejected by the boys in his grade. Then he got caught doodling in class. After smacking him with a ruler, the teacher pinned the drawing to the back of his shirt and made him walk through all the classrooms as a shaming punishment. This discipline strategy had one fatal flaw: the drawing was of women in bras and fish-net stockings, inspired by the Folies Bergère shows that Gaultier had watched at his grandmother's. Instead of being the object of ridicule, he became the object of great admiration among the boys. “It was like a passport,” he says. “I realized if I sketched, people would smile.”

