

May 1, 2011



Randy (left) a student from Lafayette Big Picture (New York), joins a student and staff member from East Bay MET in Newport for a PMU Jam Session.

Network Support Abounds!

One of the best parts of being a Big Picture School is the opportunity to learn from, and support other Big Picture students and schools throughout the Network. This week, East Bay MET hosted some East Cost schools for a focus on Senior Thesis Projects. Look for more information to be shared in upcoming Network News.

Big Picture Fresno needs your support. Mark your calendar for May 14th (don't worry, we'll remind you again!). This is the day that you can vote for Big Picture Fresno in the Toyota 100 Cars for Good program. Fresno is one of 500 finalists for this opportunity - and if they can get the most votes on May 14th, they will win a car from Toyota! So - mark your calendar, watch your email and Facebook accounts for more information - but please support Fresno with this amazing opportunity!

This week in the News:

- Alfie Kohn highlights Big Picture Learning schools in his recent EdWeek Editorial. You can read more here: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/04/27/29kohn.h30.html?tkn=OVXFdfnAL1ydr6JM/9rcLPBaAy7ge9ixblkk&cmp=ENL-EU-VIEWS1>
- The Principal Center Collaborative, a Big Picture School in San Francisco, was featured on the front page of the Sunday San Francisco Chronicle - highlighting the success from their school year and BP implementation. Read all about it here: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2011/04/29/MNQR1J7UQP.DTL>

Have news to share? Send it our way! Have a great week.

Send us your Graduation Information so we can publish in the Network News. We have lots of fans across the country that enjoy attending graduations, and we want to make sure we have accurate information! A list will be printed beginning with next week's Network News!

2011 Graduations

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| May 19 | Nashville Big Picture
First Graduating Class!! |
| June 9 | MET Providence/Newport |



Co-Corner: D to the E

From Doc

I'm in Chicago with Elliot, Stanley, Ron and Peter Karoff who are all on the BP board. We are trying to figure out how to get big bucks for Big Picture, how to relook at the board? Their roles? It should be a productive time.



I get back around midnight tonight and then I'm off Saturday with the college students to an afternoon at my cabin and then an evening and a day studying science and the outdoors in New Hampshire. Saturday night, everyone will see owls come down to see how they are being called and then we will hike Gap Mountain the next day.

Use of Technology

We all must use what is available to make us better teachers and learners. There is too much out there to ignore. Much is not great, but there are so many helpful parts. I say this for all of our students-high school and college.

We are probably the only schools in the country that have a flexible enough schedule to really capitalize on what is available and have the opportunity to develop ones own curriculum.

So, Monday Anya Kamenetz, who wrote DIY U (Do it Yourself University) and is doing a 70 page piece for Gates on all the different students of good programs available in high school and college.

She wanted to test the materials on our students, to see which are easy, helpful, etc.

The students looked at the following websites- Learning Counts, Open Study, Creative Commons, Open University, Open Learn, Khan Academy and P2PU as a start.

Each student took their area of study, from architecture, to nonviolence, to African American boys and searched for information and references. This could be a first step in developing a learning plan. Send the student to find information, books and then come back together with the advisor. It's all out there.

Peer to Peer allows students to do book groups without us- but you can see the student's contributions. We have a student that is discussing a book with 20 people around the country.

Then each student was asked to find a mentor online in their area and contact them. Again, people are out there.

I could go on and on. To be great and more efficient, we must take advantage of our access. As Elliot has said, our job is to get online to get off...and use the knowledge.

Tuesday night we went to the final class of a marketing class that spent the semester working on a marketing plan for College Unbound and Big Picture. This was their final exhibition. They did an incredible job starting from knowing nothing. For us, it was a good way to get things done for nothing.

Legislation proposed to ban cell phone use in schools- the reasoning is that students could use their phones to email answers to tests to each other. Lets figure out how to use them to find information- get questions answered.

As of last night the law has been tabled. Yea!

Last week The Met had a day-long staff development day with an interesting educator, Barry Lane. He sent me this email afterwards.

Dennis,

It was a true joy to interview you and visit the Met school . It has given me new hope for education in America and a vision of Dewey reborn.

After spending some time with your teachers I can say that you have created something marvelous. The trick now is to keep moving forward without giving in too much to the "creeping meatballism" of mediocrity promoted by the testing industry and the standards movement. When Steve Jobs returned to Apple in 1997 the company was almost bankrupt and had spent years trying to make computers like the other guys who were beating them. He realized that the only way for Apple to succeed was for it to return to it's innovative roots and start creating products that had not been invented yet. "Apple did not have to beat Microsoft. Apple had to remember who it was to succeed." Only then could they create Itunes and Ipod, etc..

I think BP is in a similar paradigm within the American School system. If the BP Schools have to beat the testers they will always come up a bit short, because the schools promote something very special which is off the test charts. The BP school, like Apple, must continually remember its true mission and get better at THAT.

Best regards,

Barry

From Elliot

This week I went to a class at the School for Visual Arts where the adult students presented their ideas on how College Unbound should be marketed. There were some really fine insights into how to brand College Unbound. These students were sharp people.



Marketing is a hard sell for me because it is so one-sided. Many times, we take marketing to be more truthful than it actually is. When something is marketed, there is really no discourse about the ideas being presented. That's not the purpose. The purpose is to make your point and sway others to buy it or buy-in. My evening there reminded me of something I wrote fairly recently about the life of Stan Getz.

American jazz saxophone player, Stan Getz, was quick to note in his biographies that he received straight A's in school. He was very proud of being near the top of his class in 6th grade. As a child, he played sax nearly 8 hours a day. Getz was accepted into the All City High School Orchestra of New York City and received private, free tutoring from the New York Philharmonic's Simon Kovar, a bassoon player, but still he dropped out of high school. It was not easy to drop out because he left at an early age. On his attempts to leave, he was sent back to the classroom by the school system's truancy officers. Eventually, he became a ward of bandleader Jack Teagarden and left for good.

Even though school was offering music both as classes and extra-curricular and there was tutoring from a master, like many students, the pull of his passion was just too great. What was needed was an authentic experience that was validated by a true mentor. Being great at something is more than an occupation, it is a way of life and most often schools fail at understanding this concept. But they

aren't the only institutions that fail at understanding what mastery means. For years, an artist like Getz was not known as a recording artist because what musicians and others originally used recordings for was documentation. They recorded not to sell records but to have a record of their playing. They weren't interested in making money off the recording. They were interested in getting better. It took another type of mind to figure out and in many cases rip-off artists who still only cared about mastery and not money.

There is a lesson here. Today's world is so much about marketing to make money, not marketing to show mastery. In many cases marketing uses techniques that get an unsuspecting and yet highly educated public to watch and believe that what is being marketed and sold is real. Right now, marketer's biggest products are brands and information. It doesn't matter if what is said is factual or more importantly truthful. The only thing that really matters is that more people hear the message and that the people on top of the marketing pyramid make more money. We see this in medicine, law, music, and education, which have now all become businesses.

Like many musicians it could be argued that Stan Getz never got what he deserved and monetarily, this may be so. He didn't leave millions behind. But like so many other performers of his time who were world class athletes, musicians, actors, dancers, doctors, teachers and scientists, what he did leave was a wealth of memories of performances both live and recorded made to get better at what he did and that made us all richer. Go figure!

Next week, I'll be in Providence with our Dutch friends and then back in LA for meetings to set up our work both in Los Angeles and Texas over the next years.

Enjoy the weekend!



Above: Mike, an Advisor at MET Providence, meeting with Lexi, a student from Big Picture Lafayette.

Center: Students from East Bay MET working on their Senior Thesis Projects

Right: Tulsa MET Lombard made a beautiful Recycled Birthday Cake as part of their Big Picture Birthday Bash!

