

Big Picture
EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

ONE STUDENT AT A TIME IN A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS...

Stories out of school

2014

The advocates for school change place great store in the idea that schools can replicate the apparent success of others. When the My School website was established, school principals were encouraged to learn from those schools that were registering high student test scores. It was assumed that successful ideas and breakthrough strategies could be transplanted from one school to another; that a successful design could be replicated in a variety of schools.

Some of this does happen. Principals and teachers interested in establishing the Big Picture learning design have visited other schools and talked to students, teachers and parents about the ingredients for success. Our research has also done this in a formal way.

We know that the more successful Big Picture schools are those that adopt all the distinguishers of the design. But our evaluation also shows that each school is unique and even a proven design for learning may not look the same in all schools. Big Picture Education Australia (BPEA) has needed to deal with this complexity - while rightly insisting that schools implement the whole design.

Despite the diversity across schools there is a common thread of optimism and achievement in the stories that come out of Big Picture schools. Amidst all the data and information from surveys these stories have an important place in the evaluation of Big Picture. They reveal the human faces behind the design; the people you meet if you visit a Big Picture school. Their stories are our stories, part of our success.

To illustrate our diversity this document shows how some of our Big Picture schools began and evolved. To demonstrate our success we include narratives from students and teachers. Some of these are in written form; others as filmed accounts accessible through the URLs listed in this document.



Stories out of school

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HOW IT BEGAN...

The following snapshots include schools that:

- operate Big Picture academies within a mainstream school.
- have entirely converted to the Big Picture design.
- have been established from the start as Big Picture schools.

1

St Johns Park High School, New South Wales

St Johns Park High School was founded in 1978. It is a large comprehensive co-educational high school in south western Sydney. Since its foundation, the school has developed an admirable reputation in the region as a provider of quality educational services that reflect the needs of a multicultural community.

Since 2011, the school received funding through the Low SES School Communities National Partnership. This has ceased from the beginning of 2014.

The student population is 88.2% language background other than English and students come from about 60 different cultural backgrounds. Forty-one different language backgrounds are identified for the current student population. The school offers special programs for students from language backgrounds other than English and students with learning difficulties as well as an innovative program for gifted and talented students. An after-school homework centre, staffed by qualified teachers, is provided free of charge and is available to all students.

The Big Picture Program at St Johns Park High was established in 2012 for Special Education students. The school has four Special Education classes for students with intellectual disabilities designated as IM (mild) and IO (moderate), from year 7 to year 12.

The school was concerned that very few students from Special Education achieved any work placement after school, but more concerning was a general attitude that they did not aspire to working in the community in any capacity. In addition, there was inadequate development of social

and community engagement skills and work skills to prepare students for life after school. There was also inadequate engagement of parents in the development of student individual education plans.

Big Picture Education provided an explicit framework and principles to change the way school is done for our Big Picture students. Parent involvement has increased, individual learning plans are more responsive to student needs, students are acquiring skills at a much higher level than ever before and their confidence and aspirations are well developed.

2

City Campus, Inveresk, Tasmania

In 2009 several Launceston high school and college principals and leaders in Learning Service North commenced what became the Future Schools Design (FSD) network. A common desire for the principals was to explore 'how to be more successful with more students.' The first strategy planned by the FSD network was to establish a small-scale demonstration of a new learning environment; one that all could learn from, with the goal of transforming secondary education. The idea of City Campus Inveresk was developed. The Big Picture Education design was adopted because it encapsulates many of the elements common to 21st century learning environments.

A combined funding agreement including local schools, a state government Innovative and Flexible Learning grant and Big Picture Education Australia, enabled a leadership role to be in place from 2011 to 2013 inclusive, to support the

implementation of City Campus and continue the leadership of the FSD network.

A formal partnership was established with Big Picture Education Australia in 2010. Tasmanian Department of Education funding enabled key leadership roles to be established through 2010 to lead the planning and implementation. City Campus Inveresk commenced with 90 grade 9 to grade 12 students and their families in February 2011. Stephen Walley, the Secondary Renewal Project Leader noted:

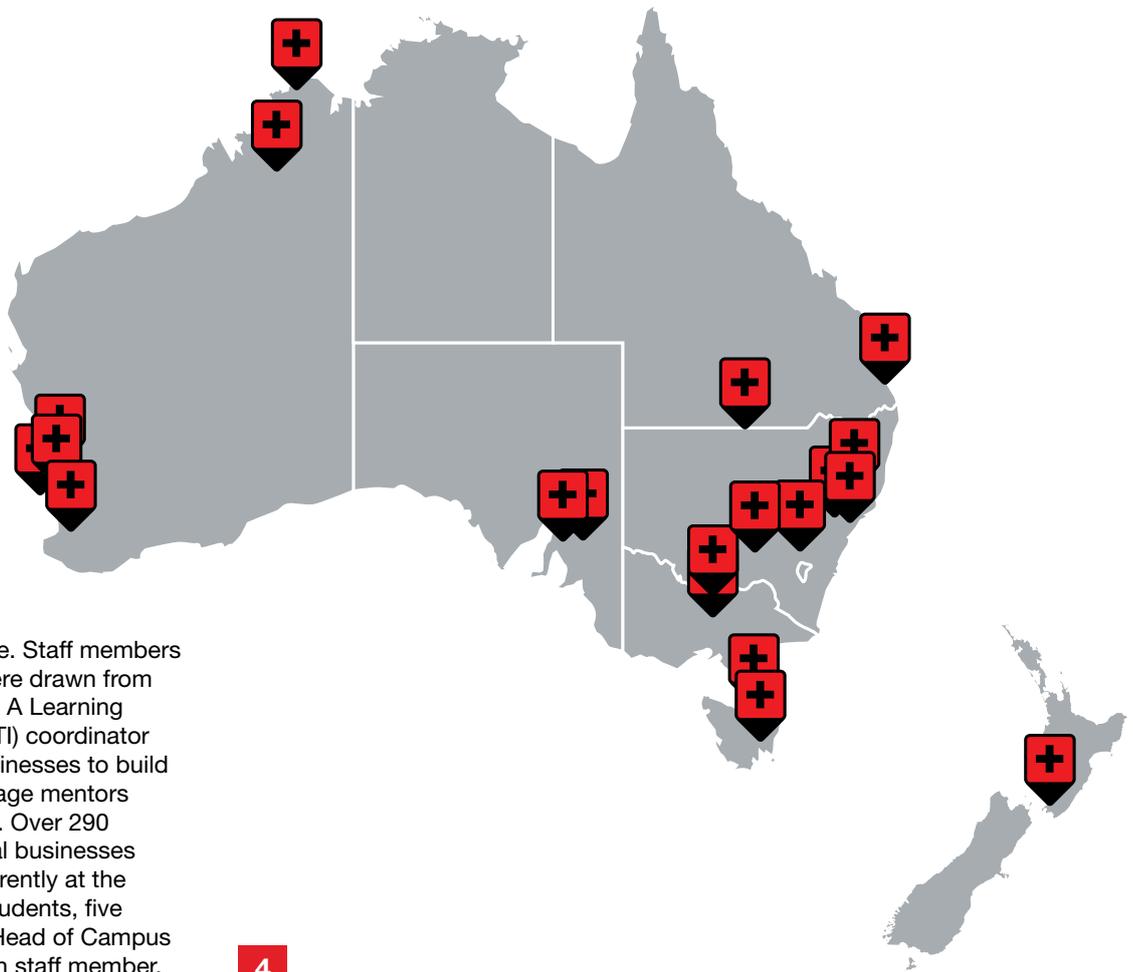
"There is no doubt that a real strength of the early implementation of City Campus is the ongoing support of the FSD principals (many within the Department of Education), the Big Picture Education national network, the University of Tasmania and the local community."

In 2012, the 120 grade 9 to grade 12 students enrolled at City Campus were organised into 8 separate advisories of approximately 16 students, each with one teacher/advisor.

3

Montrose Bay High Big Picture School, Hobart, Tasmania

Montrose Bay High Big Picture School grew from the merger of two local high schools, Rosetta High and Claremont High. Having identified Big Picture Education as a means to connect and engage a group of students more effectively in their learning, both schools had conducted Big Picture inspired programs. In 2010 just over 100 students from both schools moved to the new Montrose Bay High



School Big Picture site. Staff members for the new school were drawn from both merger schools. A Learning Through Internship (LTI) coordinator worked with local businesses to build partnerships and engage mentors to work with students. Over 290 partnerships with local businesses were established. Currently at the school there are 80 students, five advisory teachers, a Head of Campus (AP), an administration staff member, an LTI coordinator (2 days per week) and a cleaner.

All staff members undertake the Big Picture Education foundation training prior to commencing in their role. Acquiring and retaining advisory teachers who are able to work holistically with a group of students continues to be a challenge. The advisory teacher's role is varied and very demanding, necessitating a diverse skill set.

A significant strength of the Montrose design is the staff learning that occurs between the two campuses. When returning to the main school campus from the Big Picture School, staff members have taken with them a variety of skills that have improved their practice. Many practices influenced by the Big Picture design have since become standard procedure in the main campus.

It is our desire to extend the Big Picture program to include years 11 and 12. Big Picture learning has been designed for years 9 through 12 and we believe that our students would gain much more if the program covered all those four years of their schooling.

4

Ogilvie High School, Hobart, Tasmania

Ogilvie High School is a government funded all-girl school in New Town, Hobart. It is a large high school, although over recent years it has been downsized from over 1000 to 800 students. It is well known in the community for high academic standards, music and sport. As the world moved into the 21st century, a school this size and with such a strong reputation faced a number of challenges: administrative, technological, social and pedagogical. Introducing Big Picture at Ogilvie was in response to some of those challenges. Primarily, the school was looking for ways to personalise learning and engage students. The personalised approach to learning and the emphasis on quality relationships were the key philosophies that drew the school towards the Big Picture Education design. There was also the hope that some of the pedagogy would transfer through the school.

The greatest need was with students who:

- had become disengaged and were often disruptive in mainstream school,
- were not satisfied with a traditional high school structure and/or
- felt disconnected and “lost” in such a large school,
- were, and wanted to be, more individual.

It was acknowledged that these students did not feel connected to, or were not particularly valued members of, the school.

Ogilvie's initial introduction to Big Picture Education was in the summer of 2007 when a small group of teachers attended the foundation course. Within one Grade 8 Home Group, a ‘one timetabled line’ program with the Big Picture features of a Learning Journal and a form of Exhibition was trialled and the teachers introduced some of the pedagogy into their teaching. However, it wasn't until 2009 that a Big Picture inspired program began. Called ‘Take the Lead’ at first, the program's name was changed to ‘Big Picture’ after two years.

SOME OTHER SCHOOL SNAPSHOTS:

Cooks Hill Campus is a greenfield site established in Newcastle at the start of 2014. It has 85 students in six advisory classes and is a NSW public school operating in partnership with Big Picture Education Australia. As the first greenfield (start up site) development in NSW, the campus offers students in the Lower Hunter Valley the opportunity to engage in a different style of project based learning. Students develop an individualised curriculum that is tailored to include their interests and passions. Through the small class size of one teacher to 17 students, each student will design a unique learning path that encompasses the requirements of the curriculum set down by the NSW Department of Education and Communities whilst encouraging innovative delivery and design.

See <http://www.cookshill-s.schools.nsw.edu.au/home>

Yule Brook College in Maddington, Western Australia, is an established school which has converted in whole to the Big Picture design from 2007. It joined Big Picture Education Australia in January 2007 with Year 8 students and continued to introduce a Big Picture inspired program with each subsequent Year 8 cohort. The Big Picture program now operates across Years 8, 9 and 10 in every classroom and with every student. There are 11 advisory groups in total, three in Year 9, and four in each of Year 8 and Year 10. On average each advisory has 15 students.

See <http://www.yulebrookcollege.wa.edu.au/>

Croydon Community School in Croydon, Victoria is a small government secondary school with 110 students in Years 7-12. The school provides an alternate secondary education to students who, for various reasons, have experienced difficulty in their previous schools, or who are returning to school in order to prepare for work or further study. Croydon Community School is committed to educate students under the Big Picture School design of 'One student at a time ... in a community of learners'.

See <http://croydoncs.vic.edu.au/about-us/design-principles>

Halls Head Community College is south of Perth, Western Australia. In partnership with Murdoch University and BPEA the College introduced a Big Picture Academy in 2013, beginning with a class of 16 year ten students and their families. The College plans to have three year groups, Year 10, 11 and 12, by 2015.

See <http://hallsheadcc.wa.edu.au/>

Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu The Correspondence School Wellington, New Zealand. This school represents our partnership in New Zealand and a very different context for the Big Picture design. Te Kura provides distance education from early childhood level to Year 13. The school works in partnership with students, whanau, school and communities to provide personalised, authentic learning experiences. In 2011, Te Kura established formal partnerships with Big Picture Education Australia and Origin Energy, and Chief Executive Mike Hollings was appointed to the Board of BPEA. The relationships, and funding from Origin Energy, enabled the school to establish student advisories in Tauranga and Taranaki following the Big Picture learning design.

See <http://www.tekura.school.nz/>

Mount Austin High School in Wagga Wagga, NSW, is a comprehensive high school with a clear social justice agenda, a progressive learning environment and commitment to Aboriginal ways of knowing, learning and teaching. In 2014 Mount Austin will begin with two advisories in Year 9 consisting of approximately 15 students each. A Year 7/8 advisory will follow the Big Picture design, with the 2 day Learning Through Internship (LTI) component being a community involvement program.

Wanniassa School in Canberra, ACT, is a government P-10 school, comprising a Junior and a Senior Campus, as well as a Koori Pre-school. The school offers a Big Picture program on the Senior Campus for a group of self-selected Year 10 students, with their parents' involvement. Students attend Big Picture on 4 or 5 lines of their 7-line timetable, while also attending PE and elective classes and/or outside programs where appropriate. The program meets the ACT Year 10 certificate requirements. Students complete four Learning Plans and four Exhibitions in the year and also incorporate a Community Service or Service Learning project in each Learning Plan. All students also undertake real-world learning, ranging from shadow days and workplace anthropologies to full LTI's.

Erindale College in Canberra, ACT, is part of the larger Erindale Education and Recreation Complex. The Big Picture program operates for some students for up to 12 hours a week for independent study, and then four hours a week for advisory, called College Link, in years 11 and 12. The majority of students are involved in the program for at least 8 hours per week. This would include 4 hours of independent study and 4 hours of advisory. There are a total of between 48 and 60 students involved in four advisory groups at various times during the semester.



STUDENT AND TEACHER VOICES

Observations made by students and teachers are important in Big Picture learning. Rachel Grant, a student at Wanniasa School in the ACT, agreed to share her speech from the 2012 Big Picture Education Annual Conference in Canberra. Rachel spoke to over 150 teachers, students and academics about her experiences of the Big Picture Education design.

Her advisory teacher, Shelley Lavender, was asked to reflect on her experiences as a mainstream teacher and as a Big Picture advisory teacher, two roles which often exist alongside each other but which can be quite different.

Together their contributions help us understand the human dimension of being a student or a teacher in a Big Picture school.

RACHEL'S CONFERENCE SPEECH



Good morning everyone my name is Rachel Grant and I am proud to say I am a part of the Wanniasa High School Big Picture Program.

Big picture has shown me that it is important to take the time to absorb what you are learning. I'm going to start with something that has not just guided me through my Big Picture experience but has actually made me grow as a person, because I was able to absorb rather than skim over the surface. This was a pivotal point in my 2nd learning plan as I feel like my head finally left the hazy cloud and moved into the clear air giving me clarity and direction.

Eat Pray Love.

Big Picture is my puzzle board. And finally I have found contentment in where I fit. Everything just feels right being a part of Big Picture. And the amount that I have gained from it ... I will never take for granted. My weaknesses are now my strongest attributes, my insecurities have been taken away, and the person I am connects with what I am learning and how I do so.

My enthusiastic, overflowing energy did not disrupt the Big Picture class. I loved this! I didn't realise how much a classroom environment didn't suit me until I was opened to something new and ... more 'me'. I have found my groove and my own way of concentrating, not having to be worrying about sitting still in rows. Setting my own space and organising my own

learning was massive for me. I had all these things I wanted to try all through high school; I got the opportunity to do them, to fulfil my passion. I don't know how I could resist this amazing temptation of education. This was a significant change for me, it made me settle down, I guess because I felt so calm – comfortable and in my own zone. I could study and try new things, but I always had Shelley my advisor to seek massive amounts of support from. However I was always able to switch off with my music when I need to be introspective.

Thinking deeper was the most significant aspect of Big Picture for me. Looking at topics, facts, any type of information, I've been taught to never just lick the top of the icing...but to demolish the whole entire cake. Get as much as you can out of it because it's more learning, more growing and with Big Picture ... everything is interesting and will take you somewhere. You don't have to cover a certain strict curriculum or topic but are actually building something so much more. I call it learning for life. I honestly have learnt nothing so far in Big Picture that I will not take with me on the journey of my life. That was actually my biggest issue in mainstream school. I would always forget what we learnt there. I lost focus.

For example, at Big Picture in my 1st learning plan I focused on child development. Half a year later I still pick up things when I see a child that can't socialise with other children and I literally question myself, why can't they do that? I wonder if they went to day-care or maybe they don't have siblings. Or my last learning plan was based on famine and what happens to the body during starvation. I now connect that to people in my life who suffer eating disorders and how that is a similar process. It's just the little things that still shock me as a learner, and I love it because it makes me feel like I'm really developing and my journey of learning never stops even when I leave school.

One of my most improved areas – thanks to Shelley – is my ability to reflect. The way we learn – there are so many tools and ways to do this: journals, narratives, exhibitions, and our comments from Shelley. My ability

to reflect is something that has helped me be ready for each new learning plan, because I have had the chance to step back and reflect on what I have done, my achievements, my setbacks and my road blocks. When I am reflecting I ask myself why? Why did that go well? Why did that completely fail? Why did I enjoy that piece of writing? That is both my advisors' work rubbing off on me as I cannot say a single sentence without them asking why? It is the most overused word. But it does work. It makes you think, although it drives me crazy.

I've learnt to trust my own intellect. Just because I write differently does not make my thoughts, understandings and opinions any less valuable. In class prior to Big Picture they only gave me one image of what a good learner looks like and I could never identify with that image. Big Picture has given me the chance to be my own learner, and that is of value.

Shelley Lavender is my advisor, my friend, my guidance, my inspiration, my humour, and like my mother. For me building a relationship with people who are significant in my life has always been extremely important to me. Shelley took me on board and I thank her for that. She made me feel comfortable in Big Picture and as we bonded my trust in her developed. This made it possible for me to open myself to new ways, try new paths and exciting experiences. I opened myself to a whole new way of learning.

Of course my peers have been a big part of this year because that is also something that Big Picture emphasises. You're in a place where everyone is learning different things but still in the same room. You learn a lot about one another and I think that is great. As I regularly remind everyone in my class... we are a family. We understand one another and Big Picture for a lot of us is a getaway. It is a place of education, but I forget that a lot of the time because we all make it our own.

I am thrilled to be a part of something so well suited to the person I am. This year was academically and personally my most rewarding one yet. My teachers have seen my growth,

so have my friends, my family, and surprisingly, me. So thank you to Big Picture in general, all the people out there that make this possible and I thank you Shelley, you truly have got the best out of me. I couldn't have done it without you.

The Book Story!

The feeling is overwhelming – the feeling of success! 2011, first week of six weeks of holidays, I decided to start reading my first book from my own will. I made a deal with myself to try and finish it by the end of holidays ... I now realise how unrealistic that was, knowing me. I didn't completely fail in my promise. I only failed in meeting the time limit. Today, I am sitting here 24 weeks later, 6 months later, equal to half a year later with my first book completed and I am ecstatic with myself.

I think to myself "I did it, I really did it". You might think this is a bit of an overreaction just for the completion of one single book after living for 16 years on this earth. Trust me, it is not. This is something that Big Picture has seriously taught me, to be happy with individual accomplishments. Shelley has really held my hand and pushed me to develop this part of my strengths as I was lacking some knowledge. I can be happy for reading one book, even when someone else could have read it within a day or read thirty books, but that is not me, that is them. I will continuously state how really happy I am to finish a whole book. And yeah, after I finished it I kept flicking through saying to myself "yeah Rach, you have read that word, oh and that one" then a little giggle 'HEY THAT ONE TOO!' It was easily the biggest achievement yet.

Back to the book, it's not just the fact that I completed it; it was the "bigger picture". I could have given up after the holidays, but I didn't, I kept going, whether it was weekly, daily or monthly, I still wanted to finish it although at times it may have slightly shifted into the back of my mind trying to hide back there as my body almost repelled reading. I still accomplished it in the end.

I think it was my love for the book that really made me eventually finish it. There were so many reasons why I liked this book. The way she talks, her values, her look on life and of course her way to recovery. I actually look up to her; I see similarities between us - when she talks about the negative sides of her personality and accepting them within her life. I didn't want to just read this book and end it there (that was if I ever was going to finish). So I made it a part of assessment in term 1, as my reading project. Still not completing it by term two I made it my personal project, pushing myself in every aspect to complete this book! I used my book to guide me on my path to developing my vocabulary as this area of my learning was lacking a lot of knowledge and I will show you all how I need this soon!

The words that are engraved within me!

This is something I wrote in my journal awhile back:

Last night I read this when I was extremely tired but this part was so moving and inspiring I had to crack out just this chapter, it was page 186. This is officially the most important moral within my life now, I agree with everything she says here-

'Destiny, I feel, is also a relationship – a play between divine grace and wilful self-effort. Half of it you have no control over; half of it is absolutely in your hands, and your action will show measurable consequences. Man is neither entirely a puppet of the gods, nor is entirely the captain of his own destiny; he's a little of both. We gallop through our lives like circus performers balancing on two speeding side-by-side horses, one foot is on the horses called "fate," the other on the horse called "free will". And the question you have to ask yourself every day, which horse is which? Which horse do I need to stop worrying about because it's not under my control, and which do I need to steer with concentrated effort?'

There is so much about my fate that I cannot control, but other things do fall under my jurisdiction. There are certain lotteries I can buy, thereby increasing my odds of finding contentment. I can decide how I spend my time, whom I interact with, whom I share my body and life and money and energy with. I can select what I eat and read and study. I can choose how I'm going to regard unfortunate circumstance in my life, whether I will see them as curses or opportunities (and on the occasion when I can't rise to the most optimistic viewpoint, because I am feeling too damn sorry for myself, I can choose to keep trying to change my outlook). I can choose my words and the tone of voice in which I speak to others. And most of all, I can choose my thoughts.

By Rachel Grant!!



SHELLEY LAVENDER - REFLECTIONS

I am writing this paper as I sit on a train travelling through East Malaysia on the last leg of a month-long student expedition. We have trekked through jungle in Borneo and Malaysian for three weeks, including time in a remote community project. Of the nine students, six are from my school. Five of those six are Big Picture students - well, one of them is my daughter so not technically in Big Picture but certainly parented Big Picture. These students, unequivocally, have been the most resourceful, resilient, team players and morale boosters - first to acknowledge others' strengths and the most open to the people and culture on the expedition.

Their strength of character has shone through; most significantly two of the boys 15 and 16 years of age, unsuccessful in a traditional school environment. They managed to organise transport, accommodation and the whole group in a non-English speaking country. They engineered the most effective method of moving 100 metres of pipe that weighed 300 kilos - by a group of 15 people, 20 km through undulating terrain and knee deep in clay mud.

I am asked why I am such a firm believer in Big Picture when I am a successful teacher in the mainstream setting. I can answer easily: Big Picture prepares young people in a way that they can embrace all that is on offer in the world. These students have excelled in a new and completely foreign environment because of their skills set, developed and fostered in the Big Picture learning community. They understand and respect community because it is what they do every day in their Big Picture advisory, projects, internships and service learning.

The one non-Big Picture student from my school struggled socially and culturally, shying away from all responsibilities or leadership. He relied on adult/teacher direction consistently, not having the confidence to make decisions. Although on paper, these students will most likely receive similar grades, I know which of them is prepared to accept challenges, take risks, make informed decisions and give back to their community.

My personal belief informs my teaching practice; it is our responsibility to raise a generation of conscientious, critical thinkers who holistically care for their own well-being and that of their communities. I started my adult life wanting to be a professional artist, studying ceramic design then a few years later completing my teaching qualifications. When I graduated it was a turbulent political time, education had been deregulated in the state where I lived and the job market was tough.

I realised that if I was going to get a job I would have to increase my teaching areas. I took on more tertiary study, then more... adding up to ten years in total. This is when I caught the bug for learning: English literature, political science, project management, community services, early childhood, mental health...the list goes on. The job market continued to be difficult which made me look outside of teaching: moving into community services, working with at-risk kids and community art projects. Five years ago I returned to teaching and the gods must have been looking upon me, as I got a placement at Wanniasa High School and found Big Picture.

After working in three different states with three different education models, I had failed to connect to any pedagogy. I felt a deep-seated internal unrest; I thought I was a fraud, sprouting a curriculum that I didn't really feel passionate about - and I knew I wasn't empowering the students. I wasn't connecting to them as individuals, I wasn't facilitating their well-being and there was just so much that was not happening.

Big Picture encapsulates what I honestly believe education should be: individual, community, whole child, academic rigour, diversity and lifelong learning. For the first time in 22 years of my working life I felt confident and complete.

Wanniasa High School facilitates a Big Picture inspired program within a mainstream setting. I balance my time between the two settings; this balance has significantly changed over the last 5 years. In the beginning I only taught one of my five classes as a Big Picture class, this was disjointed and meant that I was doing a huge quantity of work at home.

Being with your advisory students for a very short period of time means the advisor spends every spare minute of the day connecting with their students. It is the connection that allows you to be prime advocate and chief critic - without a relationship you cannot have expectations, without expectations you cannot have academic rigour.

From the first year we learnt many a great lesson but the essential message was: in order to create an advisory you need an advisor. I increased my teaching load so that it consisted mostly of Big Picture and only one other mainstream middle school class. Our school has seven subject lines, five lessons a day that rotates through a two-week cycle. Of the seven subject lines, four are classified core subjects: Maths, English, History/Geography and Science. Students have two electives and a mandated P.E. class.

Our Big Picture students stay in their advisory classroom for their core subjects and join the mainstream students for P.E. and electives. What this means essentially is that the Big Picture students maintain an advisory environment but also fit into the whole school timetable. Having this integrated approach has not always been beneficial to the Big Picture program but has assisted the acceptance of change from traditional teaching.

In the beginning, teaching mainstream and Big Picture was starkly different. I rolled out an allocated unit of work that was delivered across the board and ticked all the curriculum and quality teaching boxes. However, if I asked those students now what they remember from those classes they could sprout all the grammar rules and tricks of the trade for good assignments. Most of all, the relationships between the students and myself were at the forefront. If I asked Big Picture students what they remember it would be relationships, skills...and contentment from their own personal projects and other students' exhibitions.

Big Picture has influenced the mainstream setting through a whole school focus on personalised learning and connecting to community. The divide has shrunk; I do not feel the pinch that I use to, switching from

one to another with only minutes to change my whole mindset and teaching delivery. My teaching practice flows from my advisory to my classroom. There is always going to be an increased workload for the teacher who teaches in both modes: mainstream is dominated by prepared units of work and marking assessment while Big Picture is led by building relationships, connecting to student interests and facilitating learning - the focus is on 'now' and 'where to'. They are two substantially different mindsets and it is difficult to flip from one to another.

The other factor that generally impacts is class size and student ability. The mainstream classroom environment is significantly dominated by these two factors. It can be even as simple as "do I have enough chairs for 28 students in a class?" and "how do I cater for students who have a reading age of seven in contrast to students who are on the gifted spectrum." How on earth can I differentiate the curriculum that much and assess them using the same tools? It is a stressful situation that many, if not all, teachers find themselves in.

In a Big Picture class it makes no impact at all; the design already does the differentiation for you. I no longer have to compare one personal project to another to judge its value. I assess students on their skills set and I have a clear and concise forum to identify their understanding - exhibitions. Students with literacy difficulties can achieve through exhibitions; they can demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. Students are not limited by standardised testing.

What about the dreaded "B" word, behaviour management? I work very hard in my mainstream class to keep students focused on teacher designed tasks and curriculum content. I would spend 80 per cent of my classroom time dealing with only ten per cent of the class. This ten per cent engage in typical disruptive behaviours with well-researched understanding of the causes: disengagement with content, low literacy skills and the need to be heard as an individual in a class of 28 students. Many of these students have exceptional skills in work avoidance and attention seeking behaviours that have



been honed over eight or nine years of schooling. I often take a deep breath before entering the room to teach this class; I dread having to spend energy bringing the whole class on task. Again I can do this successfully and I am skilled at engaging a class in the set content, but it is tough work.

There are times when I need to use traditional classroom behaviour management strategies in my Big Picture class - but these times are few and far between. The explicit teaching times are negotiated with students to fit into everyone's timetables and students are engaged in daily, weekly and monthly self-reflection of their behaviour and learning. The advisor and student connect consistently about their learning, their well-being and how they are organising and managing their work loads.

I have tough conversations with students and parents but it is always with the focus of moving forward. I never feel like this is an arduous task. There is a saying, 'If you are doing what you love, you will never work a day of your life'. I would not go that far - but it is pretty close. The parent commitment and communication significantly

helps and supports the advisor, and also the student. The students feel a responsibility to themselves, their parents and their advisor - a responsibility to succeed to the best of their abilities. They never want to let anyone down at their exhibition.

Throughout this journey of implementing the Big Picture program into our school we have come across typical and non-typical criticism and negativity. This has made me constantly reflect on my teaching practice and ensure that I was striving for a program that engaged students in academic rigour. This was, and is, confronting - it would have been easier for me to stay in a mainstream classroom and deflect blame for student disengagement and academic failure on outside factors.

My aspiration is to teach only Big Picture, no mainstream, and eventually in a whole Big Picture school environment. I have been called a zealot on more than one occasion but I think that is simple criticism of someone who has strong convictions and I have unquestionable belief in this educational philosophy and model.

AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATIONS

The accounts of Rachel and Shelley help us reach into the depths of their experiences as student and teacher, something that is essential if we are to understand the real impacts of personalised learning. For years Big Picture Education Australia has compiled visual accounts of the experiences of teachers and students. These visual accounts are available to view at the Transforming Learning and Schools interactive gallery. They help complete our understanding of why this learning design is continuing to attract attention.

Each of the following links is prefaced by a title, a summary and duration.

The interactive gallery is located at: <http://www.bigpicture.org.au/transforming-learning>



Addison's journey 8 minutes 42 seconds

Addison graduated from Launceston City Campus in 2012. He started his learning journey with an interest in tattoos. His advisory teachers channelled that interest towards art in a broader sense. This led to an internship with the curator at the University of Tasmania Art Gallery, then curating an exhibition of student work followed by paid part-time work at the gallery while still attending City Campus. Although Addison's final exam marks alone were not sufficient for university entry, with the help of his advisory teachers, he was able to put together an impressive portfolio of his work for entry by interview. He is now studying for a Bachelor of Fine Arts, and is the first in his family to go to university.

In this video see how the advisory teachers at Launceston City Campus helped Addison to build an interest in tattooing, do an internship at an art gallery and begin a bachelor's degree in fine arts.



Alex lights up the Opera House 8 minutes 42 seconds

Alex wasn't getting a lot out of school until he made the transition to a Big Picture learning environment. He has Tourette Syndrome and experienced difficulty in a normal classroom context. His grades were suffering as a result.

A personalised Big Picture Education design, however, allowed Alex to tailor his learning to suit his own needs and skills. The Big Picture internship program has played an important role in his education, his personal growth and his confidence. Working closely with mentors and through a 'hands-on' approach, Alex has not only learnt practical work and life skills, his reading and writing have also improved dramatically.

From a classroom in Tasmania, to Launceston City Campus, to an internship in one of the most iconic buildings in the world - the Sydney Opera House - Alex has come a long way and is enjoying every minute of it.

In this video, he tells the story of his Big Picture experience.



Shauna 2 minutes 18 seconds

Shauna, from Launceston City Campus, has a passion for cookery. With the help of her advisory teacher. She dreamt big and with the help of her advisory teacher, applied for an internship with Australia's top pastry chef, Adriano Zumbo.

She got the internship, but it was in Sydney!

In this video she talks about how she made the internship happen and how she took charge of her own learning along the way.

Since making the video, Shauna has been accepted into the prestigious William Angliss Institute in Melbourne, a specialist centre for foods and hospitality. She begins her studies in 2014.



Ben from Yule Brook
5 minutes 25 seconds

Ben was one of the first students in the Big Picture program at Yule Brook College in suburban Perth.

His passion for music led to an internship teaching music, which sparked a passion for teaching.

This spark propelled him throughout his later schooling at a traditional senior school and he is now studying for a Bachelor of Education at Edith Cowan University.

This video follows his journey from year 8 to university.



Emily's internship with Eva
5 minutes 48 seconds

Emily had a passion for writing. Her advisory teacher at Wanniasa School in the ACT connected her with the local Federal MP.

The highlight of her internship was the crafting of an effective speech with a limited number of words to be delivered in Parliament house. Meeting the then prime minister, Julia Gillard, was OK too!

In this video, Emily and her mentor Eva talk about how the Big Picture internship makes learning real.



Sameer 6 minutes 33 seconds

Sameer is a student at Launceston City Campus. As a boy in Nepal, he saw how much extra effort people made to go around a river and so he imagined the benefits of a bridge across that river. The passion for bridges stayed with him.

Jeremy is from Pitt & Sherry, consulting engineers, from Launceston. They do bridges. They make infrastructure.

Jeremy and Sameer seem to have a lot in common. Ordinarily they probably would never have met. Sameer became a trusted intern at Pitt & Sherry, a relationship brokered by Gary, a Big Picture advisory teacher.

Now Sameer is studying engineering at University

In this video Sameer and Jeremy talk about the internship experience.



Sonja And Daniel 8 minutes 57 seconds

Sonja is an advisory teacher at City Campus Launceston. Daniel is in her advisory class. He is quiet and shy, but with her help, he landed an internship with the Wilderness Society in Launceston.

Now, Daniel leads forest destruction protests dressed in a Tasmanian devil suit. He's also creating resources to be used by conservation groups around the country, staffing the Wilderness Society shopfront and bringing the voice of youth into the organisation.

As Sonja says, the beauty of the internship is that Daniel is so engaged, he doesn't realise just how much he is learning.

In this video, Sonja and Daniel's mentor, Ruth, talk about the internship and how it benefits all involved.



Brad's internship 3 minutes 30 seconds

Brad was in year 9 and switching off from school. He planned to leave as soon as he could. His teachers steered him towards the Big Picture program at Wanniasa School, where he could get out of the school environment and see what the real world was like.

He developed a bond working 'on the tools' with his mentor, Paul, a tiler. He learnt about responsibility, dependability and what it means to have an adult working relationship. He also learnt that maybe quitting school was missing an opportunity that wouldn't come back.

In this video, Brad and Paul talk about the internship experience.



Brad's Mother 9 minutes 46 seconds

In this video, Brad's mother gives a speech to the Big Picture annual conference about how the Big Picture Program turned Brad's life around.



Imogen's speech 4 minutes 45 seconds

Imogen was one of the first students in the Big Picture program at Ogilvie High School, Hobart.

In this speech, delivered after graduation, to a research symposium in Sydney, Imogen talks about how Big Picture open her eyes and her heart to a world of possibility.



Canberra College farewell 6 minutes 20 Seconds

Canberra College runs a Big Picture Academy for students most in need of a new approach to re-engage with learning.

In this video, produced by the 2012 graduating class, the students show how Big Picture changed their lives and their futures.



Sam from Yule Brook **6 minutes 21 seconds**

Sam was attending a prestigious private school in Perth. His dad was an advisory teacher at Yule Brook College. He could see that Sam wasn't getting what he needed.

Although Yule Brook college didn't have anywhere near the resources or the funding of the private school, it did have the Big Picture Education design that could tap into Sam's passion for seafaring and help build the rest of his schooling around it.

In this video we follow Sam's journey from loving boats to a career piloting them.



Nickson's Story – Big Picture and the National Curriculum **10 minutes 10 seconds**

Nickson is in Yr 10 at Halls Head Community College in Mandurah WA.

His passion is basketball. He has been doing a 'dream' internship with the Perth Wild Cats basketball team.

In his time there Nickson has been doing projects that explore the biology and physics of being an elite athlete. He has also been exploring basketball careers that include skills training, diet & nutrition and physiotherapy.

Through Nickson's experience of discussing his Learning Plan with his teacher Brooke, we get an insight into how the Big Picture Learning Goals can be mapped against the Australian Curriculum.



Emma Salmeri - Footy, Function and the Five A's of Internships **11 minutes 31 seconds**

Emma is a Yr 10 student at Halls Head Community College in Mandurah WA where she attends a Big Picture Academy within a larger school.

This is Emma's fourth school in 3 years.

Since coming to the College Emma has re-engaged with schooling thanks to the support and relationships built in the culture of advisory.

Emma's passion is football, so she does an internship at the Peel Thunder AFL Club in Mandurah and learns the art of Events Coordination from her mentor, Shae.

Emma is then inspired to stage her own event for 80 people at a local surf club, promoting the Big Picture way of schooling. Called her 'Evening of Big Ideas', the event is a great success. Her portfolio tracks the progress of her event from inception to exhibition.

Emma's experiences demonstrate the Five A's of a good internship – authenticity, adult connections, active learning, academic rigour and authentic assessment.



Brodie's internship **3 minute 32 Seconds**

Brodie was in Year 10 at Wanniasa School. Things were hard with her family situation. But, she liked turtles.

Her advisory teacher developed this narrow interest into a long-term internship at the Canberra Wildlife Park and Aquarium. The work was tough, and so were the hours but Brodie learnt what Zoo work was really like. It was life changing.

Now, Brodie has developed her internship into tertiary study and a career in zoology.

In this video brodie and her mentor discuss the internship.



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