

# LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2020

JANUARY 31

## We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



During this week's PLC time, the Big Picture staff learned a little bit more about each other. We used the Compass Points Protocol to learn more about our own preferences in Group Work as well as what each others preferences are. Staff members self selected their predominate direction: North: The direction of action. "Let's do it" East: The direction of speculation. "Let's look at all the possibilities" South: The direction of caring. "Have everyone's feelings been taken into consideration" West: the direction of detail. "Who, What, Where, When, Why, How" After reflecting on their own preferences, each direction spent time thinking about how the "other directions" act, what they need and how to best work with them. As a staff, we reassembled and held a circle to reflect on the exercise and how we can best work together for the remainder of the school year. I felt the energy in the room as we allowed ourselves to discuss how our natural tendencies allow us to work easily together or how it makes it more difficult. We all became more aware of the needs of the group. Most importantly, we recognized how we need EVERY DIRECTION in order to be successful as a school. It was a fabulous meeting!



## TGIF from Lenny

Last week felt like a fresh start in many ways. We had begun the second half of the year with a new workshop schedule, new policies in advisory and a renewed focus. Here is an overview.

In advisory we revised our student phone use policy, made assignment completion data more visible and cleaned up our learning plans so we have a clear vision for goal setting. We had a great week in advisory with significant progress in our book (*The Last Lecture*), solid goal attainment, and a general sense of harmony.

We used our time in ER to explore pathogens, specifically viruses, to better understand the coronavirus. We also explored what it means to be carbon neutral, a

rather complicated concept. In Living Environment we wrapped up student body system presentations and began to look at the immune system in depth. We did go on a couple 'exploration tangents' to better understand how mollusks feed and the environmental impact of the global t-shirt industry. Sometimes you have to seize the moment of student curiosity.

In addition to advisory and workshops I hosted a couple successful exploratories where students meditated and engaged in yoga. It is amazing how simple it can be to re-center ourselves if we take the time.

Next week I will be conducting site visits to check on progress and ask mentors to complete internship evaluations. This feedback is another great tool to support growth in our student's workplace skills. Have a great week!

## TGIF from David

I spend a lot of time talking to students about what they like, what they are interested in, what are they passionate about? I then ask them how they got there and what is the source? The answers vary, but I have been thinking a lot about how the passions stored inside of us are there at birth. For instance, let me talk about my favorite subject, my son. There is music in his body. He hears a tune and just moves. When actual music is on, no matter his mood and whether he is whining, the music just overtakes him and he needs to move. He is ten months old and the music is living through his body. I am not surprised he would be so moved by music. My wife and I frequently play music. Whether in the car, in the living room, while cooking, while eating, music is on quite a bit. Music has been on since he was in the womb. So, maybe we helped shaped that, or maybe he was just born with it? Put on a Prince song and my son will begin to sway back and forth.

I see this same kind of characteristic in our 401, Melissa. Melissa has no formal training in painting. She has some family members that paint, but she has not been guided by instruction. As I watch her paint, I am jealous and I told her I was jealous, but she knows what to do like it was just born in her. It's remarkable and I just cannot help but think that we were all born with a mission. Sometimes, the

rest of the world just gets in our way. It's up to us to help our students shove the world to the side.

Speaking of painting, Christine and I continued our Exploratory making oil paintings with students. I made a small error in my instruction, and I admitted my mistake to the students. Luckily, these first paintings are practice for the students to get used to how oil paints move and blend. I told them the first oil painting I did, I redid it three times until it felt right. Nikki asked me if she could do her painting three times until she gets it right and I told her that yes she can. Practice will only make her better.

This week, Leighann went on her first job shadow to the Museum of Science and Technology to work with the Planetarium staff. Elias went on a shadow day to Elm Street Cafe as he continues to explore cooking. There are so many different interests and passions our students are exploring that we need many new sites for students to shadow. Luckily, the Cortland Chamber of Commerce is helping us out with job shadows.

Anyone can help us shove the world aside and allow our students to get down to that passion born in them. It might even make you jealous to watch a young person work in such a natural way that it makes you want to work even harder. It will be beneficial for both of you. Now, let me get back to dancing with my son. Maybe one day you will be dancing to one of his songs.



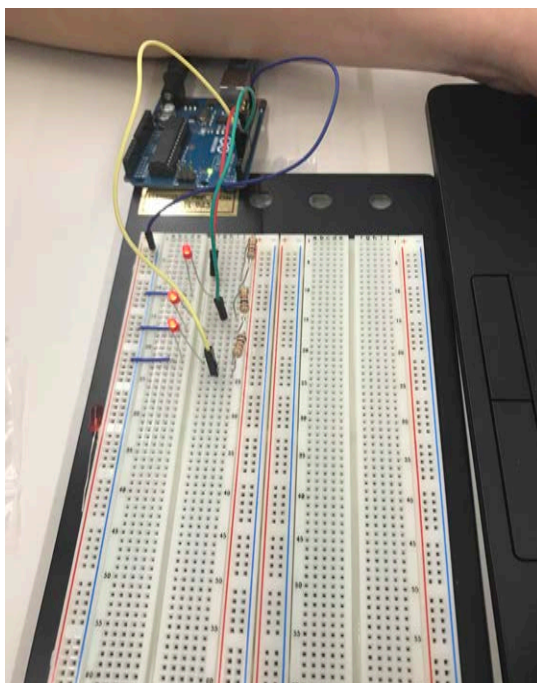
## TGIF from Walt

This week, we started our new workshop schedule, and things were a little hectic. I spent most of my time this week working on student projects, pushing into advisories for writing/reading support or planning out some new vocabulary units. I began a PSAT/SAT/ACCUPLACER workshop for the 201s and 301s, and we are starting off with vocabulary building. Vocabulary is a huge part of these tests, so I have been experimenting with different strategies to help students incorporate new words into their daily conversations by switching out tier one vocabulary for tier two.

### This week's highlights:

The school coffee shop officially opened up to the Jr./Sr. high school staff this week. After three months of experimentation and refinement, we finally have a functional and efficient model of operation. It is currently being operated by JJ, Adam, Bri, Alyssa and Ricky, and they have been doing a great job. We also experimented with almond milk this week, and have added it the menu officially as a dairy-free option. Next Thursday, we are going to be offering free coffees and half-off lattes in order to promote our shop, so make sure to take advantage of this special.

I have been working with Elijah and Jacob for the past two weeks on basic electronics. Jacob is interested in ultimately creating an underwater remote operated vehicle (ROV) and Elijah is interested in making a small arcade cabinet that



can play retro games. Both of these projects will require coding and electrical engineering, so I have been working with them on Tuesdays and Thursdays to teach them the basics. Last week, I showed them how to use a breadboard, how to code an Arduino microprocessor, introduced them to the different electronic components they would be using. This week, we focused on using the arduino to control servos and stepper motors. Working with electronics and Arduino coding is very difficult, but Elijah and Jacob are making great progress so far. Next week, we are hoping to control motors with an analog joystick and then move on to wireless commands.

Darryl and I continued to work on his desk this week. Ricky also has joined us in the shop, because he is interested in basic woodworking. This week, we created a drawer for the desk. Darryl wanted more storage options, so we settled on one drawer and a shelf. We were able to create and instal the drawer, and next week we will be installing the shelf. Hopefully it will finally be completed next Thursday.



## TGIF from Jessica

At Big Picture, we put the world together piece by piece until one day we carry the whole world in our hands....at least in exploratory! This week we broke out a new 3D puzzle of the Earth and Tete, Riley, Elijah, and Ricky dove in. They discovered each piece was numbered and assembled together in order accordingly, so they quickly sorted and grouped numbers while beginning to connect pieces. Little do they know they are having fun using their mathematical thinking and analyzing skills!

There are several internship and project updates in the 301 advisory. Rioux's tomato plants are growing big and there are two baby tomatoes! Tete is continuing to work hard at the Food Bank of CNY. She is wrapping up her first aid kit project this trimester and beginning to dive into planning her project for distributing food to areas in need with advice from her mentor Matt. Liz has worked with her mentor Amber to hang the Dewey Decimal System Labels she made at the Tully Free Library! Hayden started a new internship at Dominick's Restaurant, over the past few weeks he has been learning how to prep for both cooking and baking. Elias went on a shadow day at Elm St Cafe where he learned about cooking breakfast and serving customers. Dawsun has started a new project with her mentor Roe at Grimshaw. The two of them are working to research, design, and possibly create a sensory pathway!

On Thursday, January 23rd, Riley, Tete, Kylee, Elias, Sam, and Liz fulfilled one of their participation in government requirements by attending the school board meeting. We stayed after school and enjoyed my homemade chicken riggies. After experiencing the board meeting, the students were intrigued to see how professional everyone was and how everyone collaborated well together. They were interested to hear about the reports and updates, learning



about the operations of the school.

New to the 301 advisory this trimester is D.E.A.R. time. For at least two days out of the week, the 301s will Drop Everything And Read for 30 minutes or more. This is to support our advisory with dedicating time to read and complete their independent reading book work. This means the students are reading or listening to their individually

chosen book. To my surprise, after getting everyone started reading their book, we hear no complaints during or at the end of the reading time. The 301s are really (without saying it) enjoying to one degree or another reading their books and taking a step into the realm of their stories.

The 301s have been focusing on mental health and wellness this January. In addition to the strategies we have already learned, we also tried out stretching, using lotion for scent, reflecting on our abilities/skills/ personal qualities, and we began to learn how our thought patterns

tend to cycle back the same outcomes thus examining how to change our thought patterns. Moving forward, we plan to develop our understanding of our thought patterns, examine our priorities, and begin to develop our own individual philosophies.

This Wednesday, Kelly Drapikowski and Kristeen Cool came and gave a special interactive mental health awareness study to the 301s. They related caring for your mental health to caring for your physical health on scales of worse condition action steps to best condition action steps. They taught about the three types of stressors and how our internal organs respond to stress. The students were provided the opportunity to make a note of their method(s) of caring for their mental health. Kelly and Kristeen are using their notes to create a wordle to hang in our advisory. We ended with a time of breathing and a mental body scan. The better we care for ourselves and strengthen our mental health, the better we will perform and handle stressors that come our way.