

# LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2020

OCTOBER 30

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



Eight Big Picture students are taking college classes on the campus of Onondaga Community College. This is our first semester being included in the OCC Early College program. It is an amazing opportunity for our students to take college classes for free. Students are financially responsible for their own textbooks and materials. Morgan was enrolled in OCC classes last year. We received word this week that she was named to the President's List! Congratulations Morgan on your hard work and academic achievement!

Friday was planned as a day for some much needed fun. Staff and students played along with my need to be Willy Wonka. Charlie Bucket and all of the other students searched for the 5 Golden Tickets in the Wonka Bars. Thank you for everyone who worked to make the day a success. A huge shout out to Christine who also organized and planned our Halloween Escape Room activity.





## TGIF from Lenny

The week of Halloween is always filled with energy. That energy can be positive or negative and can seemingly turn on a dime. We did our best to keep it positive in a number of ways. Many students and staff participated in Spirit Week by dressing up each day relating to various themes. Monday through Thursday had many laughs as we dressed up like superheroes and villains, favorite teachers, etc. This all culminated on Friday with students donning their Halloween costumes and many participating in our school wide Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory theme.

This week Erin and I were in charge of morning meeting and PMU. We had a mix of mindfulness moments, movement exercises and a Guess Who reboot. Leveraging the success of last year's school-wide Guess Who, Erin created new, deeper, more probing questions. We read a few each day and learned about each other as we shared some good laughs. We will continue this game over the course of the year.

We had a successful week of science workshops with a variety of learning experiences. ER 1 dissected owl pellets to learn about their diet and role in the ecosystem. I was impressed with the meticulous dissecting skills demonstrated. ER 3 continued to build their balsa wood bridges. The designs are sound, but again what I

am most pleased with is the care in which the students are assembling them. This creates space in the process to stop and evaluate what works, what doesn't and why. In LE we wrapped up our pond water examination and took Friday to explore cordyceps. Cordyceps are some of the spookiest organisms on Earth and the LE students were super engaged.

The shop was humming with many students taking next steps or finishing up projects. One of the best experiences of the week for me was helping Bruce find a way to mount a motor to his custom RC car prototype. We examined adhesives, wood, and metal but all had their drawbacks. Then I remembered I had a material commonly called polymorph. Its basically plastic that when placed in hot water, becomes moldable. When it cools it hardens back to its original strength making it excellent

for custom parts. Bruce used this to craft a custom motor clip that met his needs exactly. It was one of many successes.

Another week full of opportunities awaits us. Have a great one!





# TGIF from Walt

Much of my time this week was spent in advisory helping students with independent projects and getting things ready to show at exhibition. David and I have really been focusing on goal setting and teaching students how to use independent work time effectively. This is a skill that is very important, but also very difficult to learn. Additionally, we have also been focusing on what it means to do research, and how to do it. We are making some progress, and as we get to know our students more, we are starting to realize the needs that we have to accommodate. Overall it was a productive week, and I am looking forward to finishing up some projects next week.

This week's highlights:

In the spirit of Halloween, our advisory created short horror stories this week. We went over the elements of a short story, and each student created a unique and original work. David and I have both been focusing on grammar basics, and this is a great exercise to improve writing. I was very impressed with how well our advisory did on this prompt, and they all took it very seriously. I really enjoyed the finished products, and next week we are going to be doing a peer review/assessment so that they can share these stories with one another.

I worked with Hollis and her cooking group this week to show them how to make ground beef from chuck roast. They were making chili and I offered to bring my grinder in to show them how to prepare the meat and also explain the process behind effective grinding. It was a fun experience, and the fresh ground chuck was far superior to bulk store ground beef.

Charlie has been working hard at On The Dot Coffee Shop, and this week she worked with Dawsun and Olivia to create a lower calorie version of hot chocolate that will be in compliance with dietary guidelines. After some research and a great amount of experimentation, they came up with a recipe that is very good and meets all the criteria. They were very excited to accomplish this, and next week they are going to be focusing on a lower calorie latte and non dairy coffee drinks.

Stone has been learning to read sheet music, and Joy has been working with him remotely going over the basics. He has an interest in creating music, and thankfully Joy has some knowledge of music theory. It has been going very well, and next week he may begin practicing reading sheet music by learning how to play the xylophone.

Our advisory has been reading Mapping The Interior and doing a virtual book club with students from The Sweet Home Central School in Buffalo on Fridays. We have been meeting online and are discussing topics related to the chapters we have read during the week. It has been going very well so far, and the students have been really engaged. This exchange has been fun, and we are definitely using all of the technical skills we learned while in virtual learning.





## TGIF from Jessica

Good and bad can come from anything. We all feel that the the virus and distance learning definitely weighted towards bad results. However, when we look we can find a handful of good too. One good thing that resulted is the use of online programs to aid instruction.

Right before we went on distance learning we gained access to IXL Math. Lenny had the opportunity to try out the program with students during after school tutoring, but once distance learning started I began to try out the program. I found IXL Math to be a great program that challenges and enables students to reach mastery on each lesson! The students get real time feedback and they can track their progress with each question.

When we learned that we would be returning to in person instruction I debated whether to continue with IXL Math or resume with traditional in person instruction for my Algebra class.

I decided to start out the year with learning through activities. These were graphing activities which the students engaged in and enjoyed. With brief supplemental worksheets for students needing support, all students were able to master the content.

I then switched to traditional direct instruction for the next learning objectives. I soon saw and remembered how much direct instruction lacks and fails to meet the needs of the lower and higher level students. My higher level students disengaged and caused distractions. My

lower level students were following along writing out the work but not understanding. Direct instruction requires tremendous effort on my part to meet the needs of the students, to keep everyone engaged and mastering the content.

During our professional development in October, we had the opportunity to attend a session on IXL Math. I was glad to learn more features the site has to offer such as different curriculum mapping, diagnostic testing, and live classrooms. After looking through the curriculums, I decided to give the students the diagnostic assessment and start the next content using IXL.

I was very pleased to see the outcome. My students who are at higher levels reengaged, chose to challenge themselves to a higher score than what I required, and willingly started on the next days lesson if they finished early. My students at a lower level were able to practice the skills, they had to work through and correct their misconceptions inorder to complete the lesson, and they had the opportunity to ask for and get help as they needed it in the class. These students also have the ability to work at a slower pace and go back to practice a skill outside of the lesson or provided instructional packet.

Since I have learned about the live classrooms, I am able to see in real time how the students are doing. I can view their score and the last handful of questions they have answered. This comes in handy especially for virtual students because I can see if they are on task and how they are doing. I can send a message to the student and go over the questions they just missed with them in class. Not only because I have this tool, but also because I am

not tied to a board. I am facilitating their learning.

It's clear to see that students want to learn and when given the space to engage in the lesson they will work to master the content. I'm thankful for the opportunity to look at learning differently and utilize new programs and activities.



## TGIF from April

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory was one of my favorite movies growing up. We have such a fun, creative leader...when Susan said her dream would be to have us dress as characters from the movie for Halloween I was READY to be an Oompah Loompa! As I ruminated on how I was going to make my costume I acquired some materials for Elliana and her sewing internship with me. While Elliana was sifting through patterns, (that could be considered antiques) we found a dress pattern that caused me to have an epiphany. Why not have Elliana learn how to read a dress pattern and practice sewing on a Vercua Salt costume for me to wear for our BP Halloween fun! So we began the task with a 1960's pattern, and in true Big Picture form - we adjusted and modified the pattern to fit our needs. Elliana learned a great deal of skills from reading technical jargon, laying patterns, understanding the sewing machine, changing thread (colors), winding bobbins, putting in zipper, ripping seams, basting and gathering, making pleats, using interfacing. It was not an easy task to learn SO much in such a short amount of time; but she was up to the challenge! She was at tad nervous on the machine at first. As the days, and work, passed she became more adept on the machine. By the time she did the continuous curves on the collar she was doing outstanding work! Everyone loved the Vercua Salt costume on Friday and they were amazed when I said I had "my very own fashion designer" make it for me! ☺ Elliana has more fashion and



sewing planned for her upcoming exhibition. I can't wait to see what she has been doing at home! She is so joyful to work with, I am grateful to be her internship mentor! Jacob has been working DILIGENTLY in a program called blender. He is creating a 'clay' armature in the program. He is learning how to sculpt the human body on the digital program- it is amazing! This week he was working on the human face, and he had a little fun turning the face into weird shapes. He has spent hours and hours working on his sculpture, I cannot wait to see his exhibition. Speaking of spending hours and working diligently, Elaina has spent a great deal of time reaching out to screen printing companies via the phone and email attempting to get an interview or shadow day. Her diligence paid off, as she was able to do a phone interview this week when a print company responded to her email. Drew, the owner invited her to come to the shop to complete a formal interview, she is excited and we will go do the interview next week. She also began investigating how to do screen printing on her own and was able to utilize the screen-printing materials at Big Picture. She is super excited to be able to learn and experiment with her own designs.

Someone else who has been doing some outstanding work is Phoenix.

Hollis raves about the work Phoenix is doing at his internship with her. Phoenix, Leighann and Carson are in Hollis's cooking internship. They are working with world class chefs associated with a program through Cornell, in a food development contest. Phoenix is really doing



an excellent job communicating with the Cornell Chefs and is putting new cooking skills to work. Listening to Hollis detailing the interaction between our students and the chefs I am confident our BP students are going to win the competition! ☺



## TGIF from David

Virtual internships have opened up an opportunity into medical careers that we have not had before. SUNY Morrisville's Nursing Program is offering their nursing classes online, which means that our students can easily connect with professors. Students may not get the in-person experience, which has become increasingly difficult for medical professions, but their learning is being guided by a professional. On Thursday, our students had another opportunity to connect with the SUNY Morrisville Nursing Program by participating in nursing clinicals. These clinicals are virtual experiences for students in the Nursing Program. Students are given medical cases and have to work to solve them. Three of our students had the opportunity to participate in these virtual medical cases guided by nursing instructor, Krysta Beha. Our students met virtually with all of the college students as the medical cases and solutions were reviewed.

This may have been an unintentional week of health. On Monday, the district's grant coordinator of My Brother's Keeper, Meagan Smith, led the 101 advisory in a nutrition lesson. She led students through the process of determining how many calories are in the foods we eat. She made paper cup calorimeters to find the calories in Doritos, Pop Tarts, and Twinkies. After determining the calories, she led a discussion on how long it takes to burn off those calories. The 101s went further by discussing eating habits and foods that provide the right kind of energy our body needs. Thank you to Meagan for leading this activity.

The 101s continued working on goals established in their Learning Plans. Dayton managed to get oil paint all over his clothing as he continued to practice painting landscapes. Lucas used the popsicle stick model of a ballista to inform the building of his larger ballista. Ronnie continued working with Lenny on crafting his Bokken, which is a Japanese wooden sword used for katana training. Charlie continued to refine the business practices of the On the Dot Coffee Shop. Jacoby continued his work with our 301 student Evan on learning more about welding. Bruce created his own custom parts for his RC car that he is building without the use of an RC car kit. Bruce is wiring and building everything himself. Emily conducted more research on an artist who has a style she may like to emulate. Cody decided he wanted to add a hands on project to match his Learning Plan, so it required more research on how a dog's heart works. Stone worked with Joy on learning how to read sheet music.

The 101s also worked on a collective project by writing their own creative horror story. The advisory book we are reading, *Mapping the Interior*, has horror elements. We also met virtually with our book buddies from the Sweet Home Schools in Buffalo, NY. They are also reading *Mapping the Interior*. It does appear that the 101s enjoyed this exercise of creative writing. They had to share their work with someone else in the advisory, analyze the use of story elements, and provide written feedback. You can check out their work in the hallway outside of the 101 room.

I hope you avoided ghosts and goblins this weekend. I only see the ghost of snow hovering over the local radar.