

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2022

MARCH 4

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



My week did not go as planned. Our 101 and 201 students had exhibitions. My plan was to attend as many as I could. I also planned to complete a formal staff observation. Neither happened. I bounced from meeting to meeting and conversation to conversation. I missed listening to what our students presented. However, I was given a different gift. The gift was having students share about their advisory mates exhibitions. I cannot recall a time when so many students were talking about how a classmate did when presenting. The 201s did a fantastic job of highlighting and celebrating the successes of each other. It was wonderful to hear the take ways, the learning and the compliments.

I also want to give a huge shout out to Kyler and Lenny. This dynamic duo has been so dedicated to the sugar shack development. They have been working tirelessly to get ready for production. Thank you so much for building the start of a legacy.

We are still looking for mentors in a few areas: Electrical Engineering, Animal Care, Illustration, and Video Editing. Let us know if you have a contact!



TGIF from Lenny

In our last communication I described our progress on the maple syrup project. In the week prior to break, over break and last week we have accomplished quite a bit. Kyler is the lead student and he is acting like a true leader. He does what he needs to do himself and recruits fellow students when he needs assistance. Here is an update.

We finished building the cupola in the shop and Kyler meticulously painted it our signature dark green and burgundy colors for our out buildings. We installed the cupola on the sugar shack roof on the coldest day of winter break. We then cut out the roof from the inside and braced the cupola. We also set up a system of ropes and eyelets so we can close the cupola doors from the ground.

Next we hooked up the smoke stack to the burn arch and ran that through the roof. We then assemble the fluepan, boiling pan, and float boxes. This required a great deal of concentration as we read the manual and chose the right tools for the job. We also had to do a fair amount of leveling and adjusting.

On Thursday we did what is called a clean boil where we boiled water and baking soda to clean the pans and ensure that the arch vents properly and that nothing leaks. I am happy to say that it worked well and Kyler was proud of his work.

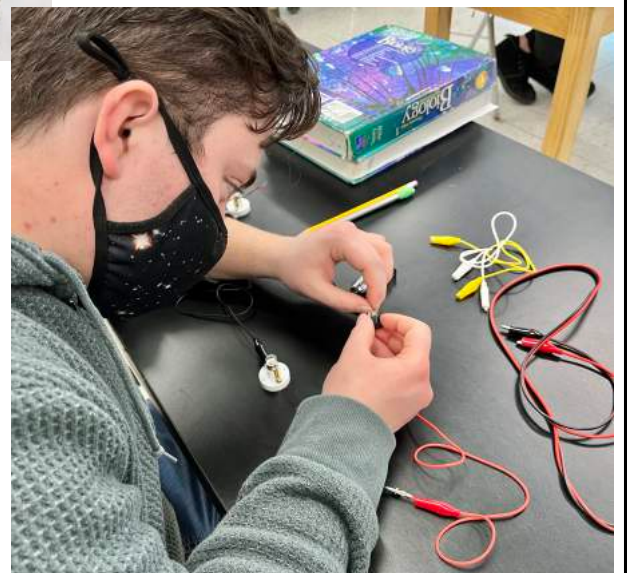
While all this setup was going on, Kyler was simultaneously tapping trees, checking buckets and deciding what additional trees to tap based results. He did a great job getting fellow students involved and teaching them the techniques he recently learned himself. We have not had much sap flow yet but we anticipate that will change this week as the daytime temperatures rise.

101s and 201s had exhibitions last week so many of them were in and out of the shop finishing up products to use in their presentations. We continued to run workshop 1 last week so I had ER with 301's and a few 401s. We continued our exploration of



electricity and magnets by creating circuits, motorized vehicles and a few challenges. Challenges include building an electromagnet, a magnetic levitating device and wire buzzer game. Students did a great deal of exploring and problem solving.

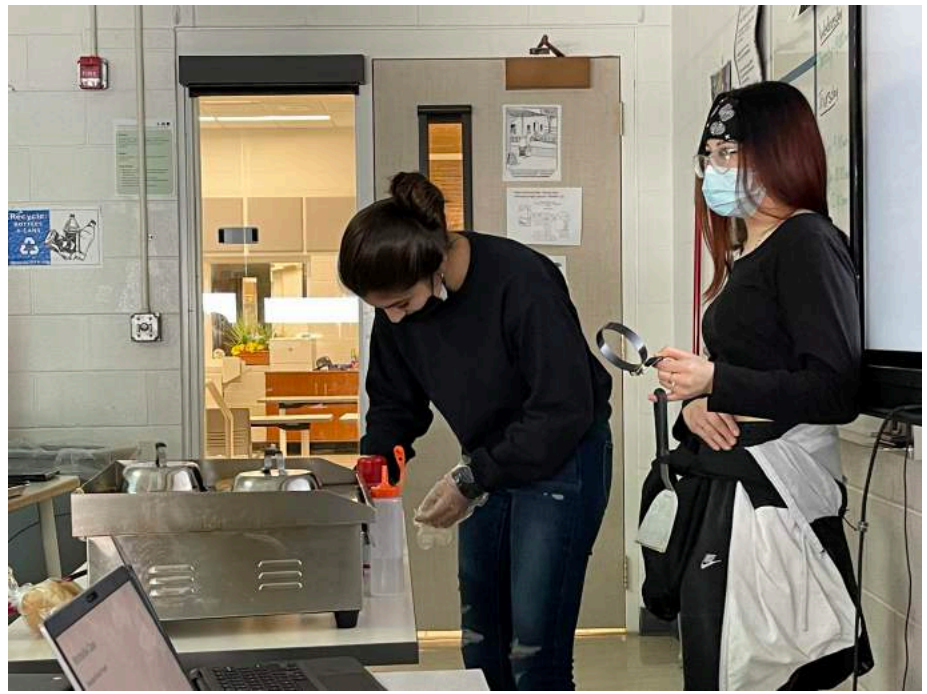
Looking ahead we will shift our focus in ER to preparing for spring planting. We will be germinating next week for a number of purposes and a variety of plants. We also hope that enough sap will run that we can do a sap boil. There are many exciting things in the works. Stay tuned and have an awesome week!



TGIF from David

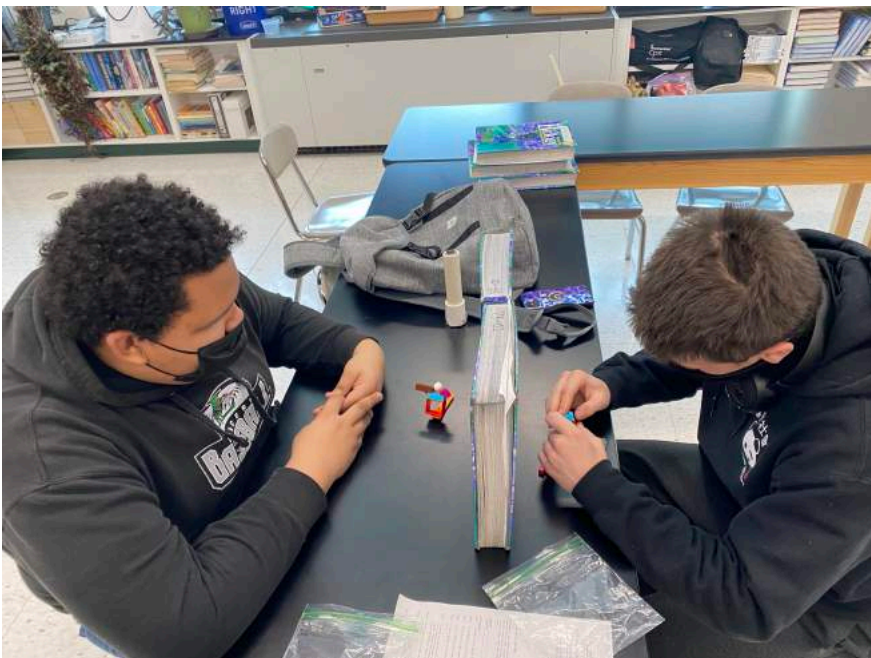
These Exhibition Weeks can be nerve wracking. Not just for students, but for us adults in the building. Exhibitions present the ultimate assessment of student work. This is the week where you learn if all of the feedback has worked. This is the week when you learn what adjustments you need to make to help students understand their projects better and the expectations that are tied to them. As any visitor to our building can attest, there is often a nervous energy in the building during Exhibition Week, but not all of that nervous energy is emanating from the students. The adults can be just as nervous. I can say that I shared a bit of that nervous energy this week. I just have years of practice pretending like that nervous energy does not impact me.

Those nerves we get can make us perform our best, or our worst. This week I saw those nerves help students perform better than our last round of exhibitions. The growth students showed this week was spectacular. You could see they understood that growth following their individual exhibitions. There was a confidence on display that was easily defined. They felt good about their work. They understood their success and their growth. They understood the areas they need to grow and refine skills. The dialogue following each exhibition proved students understood these personal areas of growth.



Weeks like this are long, but worth the work. Now, the mission is to keep this momentum going. We have to translate all of this good energy into the next learning plan. Students need to elevate their learning. I have confidence they can.

We are still looking for mentors in a few areas: Electrical Engineering, Animal Care, Illustration, and Video Editing. Let us know if you have a contact!



TGIF from Walt

We had our second round of exhibitions this week, and things went very well overall. It was a fairly difficult trimester, so I was happy to see that students took this round of exhibitions seriously. For the first time (with this advisory) our exhibitions felt more like a celebration of work and less like a formal assessment. I am hoping we can continue this positivity into next trimester because that will be our Gateway Exhibition. We have a great deal of work to do, and we are going to hit the ground running next week by starting new learning plans and beginning our Gateway work.

I was very busy in the kitchen before break working with Kat, Bruce, Braxtin and Jade. We were making traditional bacon and canadian bacon to use for Kat's Kitchen, a diner she is hoping to start next week. Kat will be working with Bruce and Braxtin in order to make breakfast sandwiches and breakfast burritos; the bacon we made will be used for this purpose. This week we finalized our recipes, organized our menu and hopefully we will be able to start service next week.

I worked with Jacob this week to plan out his learning plan for next trimester. He is interested in learning about food photography, so he will be collaborating



with the Morrisville culinary students to document the dishes they make. In addition to this, Jacob will also be creating promotional images for Ronnie's Diner and Kat's kitchen. This week we cleared out space in the storage room and made a small photo booth so that he could start practicing. Next week he will be going to Morrisville to plan out the shoots with the professor and make a plan. I am excited to see that he is doing a collaborative project and can't wait to see how it goes.

It's seed starting season, and this week I worked with Lenny to start planning out our pumpkin patch. We harvested and dried seeds from our last crop, and we are hoping to germinate them next week. Lenny will be doing this with this science workshop, so his students can track and monitor the growing progress. They are also going to experiment with hydroponic versus soil seed starting to see which one is more efficient. Last year we had 24 plants, and this year we are hoping to get 60. We also put the plants in a little late last year, so this year we

are hoping to get a jump start on the growing season.



TGIF from Greg

This week the 401s were pushing really hard to advance their STP work. Devyn is enjoying his culinary class at Morrisville. He really seems to have found his niche. Adam is learning behavior management skills while mentoring a student at Grimshaw elementary school. He is working with the school psychologist learning the skills required to work with students in terms of motivating and appreciating the way kids learn. Claire is doing a great job working with elementary students on robotics. Her students have built their first robot and are preparing the programming phase. Kyler is doing an excellent job preparing the sugar shack with tapping trees and setting up the boiler system. He has had a few local experts in to work with him and has been able to include some other 401s in checking the buckets for newly running sap. Lenny has been working closely alongside Kyler to help make his STP a success - Thank you Lenny!! Austin is plugging away at learning kitchen skills at Ronnie's dinner as well as in the school cafeteria. Evan is a mentor for our welding students teaching them different types of welding they will use in the future, and has been learning how to work with younger students; he is starting to understand what it takes to be an effective mentor. Hayden is working hard at welding class at BOCES to attain his welding certification. Gabe has been in touch with the maintenance staff in the high school to start measuring out where his final mural will be. Garrett has been hard at work on his research involving photojournalism and its influence in today's news. Morgan is doing tremendous work with her fundraiser for Mended Little Hearts as her STP. She has been able to secure some fundraising ideas and will be ready to advertise to the community soon. Secorrah is using photography and videography to show the history of lacrosse. She is continuing to learn new editing programs and has been experimenting with lighting for when she begins interviewing people. Aiden continues to research the history of golf as well as the beginning stages of building a bench for a golf course he plays at. Griffin is creating ideas to improve the types of coffee and beverages at On The Dot Coffee Shop. His experience and work ethic is showing in his planning and implementation for his STP. He's been teaching us all about

the environmental impacts of plastics and everything he has been learning throughout his research. Next week the 401s will continue to work away on their projects and start filling out their very LAST Learning Plans.



TGIF from April

The 301's have set off on their final learning plan work of the year. Three of our advisory members are taking the Morrisville Culinary course, so they are basing their learning plan around that very real learning experience with their chef/professor. Other students are beginning their own business, starting with a well laid out business plan. Some are working in photography, while another is studying the many facets of jewelry. I have a student studying feminism, and another is going to take us on a journey forging mushrooms! A couple are studying various forms of art. And the senior in our advisory will be completing his Peace Garden. It is going to be an exciting semester!

(I apologize for the length of the following portion of this write up; well I guess not really, because the 301s did AWESOME work.)

As I have contemplated the events and unrest in the world that the young students of today have been experiencing for the last 2 years; due to COVID, the US political environment, and now the conflict in Ukraine

I am deeply moved by their resilience.

(The masks are off, the masks are off! It's WONDERFUL to see student faces!)

Many students are fully aware of these events, and some are blissfully unaware; it is a mixture that

often creates confusion in the classroom (at least ours) through lack of good/sound information and students simply blurting out 'phrases'. Such as this week upon returning from winter break students were making comments about WWII happening. I could see some students were uncomfortable by the comments being bantered about. Comments which would be anxiety causing for any adult much less an adolescent. So rather than have teenage rumors, assumptions and misinformation being thrown carelessly around about the Russia/Ukraine conflict, I

have been working through a series of lessons that give some of the historical context and background of the area, and then moving on to recent events.

I must say I was concerned enough, after thinking back to 9th & 10th grade (when we would try to discuss sensitive topics- and it would end in tears, angst, and anything other than learning to hold a civil discourse) that I opened my lessons with a brief conversation acknowledging their feelings in the past of wanting to avoid controversial subjects, and the desire of some to be allowed to opt 'out'. I also acknowledged that I am not a doom and gloom kind of person, but some of the information they may read within these lessons might appear doomsday-ish. I explained that knowledge is the key to understanding and these world events will certainly impact them as they are now on the cusp of adulthood. (One student acknowledged the change in the price of gas for their vehicle.)

We began the lessons with geography. Then moved on to compare and contrast some of the key 'players' in the conflict (past and present). The 301s read primary sources, watched video clips, looked at newspaper

headlines (SO antiquated according to today's standards, as the students informed me, - but I still love to hold a book or newspaper and I told them someday they will be gone so I

am going to teach them about newsprint NOW while still available). They annotated, analyzed, and made inferences after investigating the various sources. We learned about the Budapest Memorandum- where the students asked great evaluative questions! We discussed Crimea, and Donbas, we studied maps, created timelines, and read President Zelenskyy's address to the people of Russia. I threw a ton of information at them KNOWING that the situation in Europe could, and would, change any moment and I wanted them to have as much background knowledge



as possible. (I also challenged them to follow the day to day changes.)

I was SO thrilled to see the level of engagement and questioning- really SOLID, analytical questions that propelled our discussion even further into rigorous learning!! We actually laughed at times (so important in such a serious world [and topic] to still find JOY, no matter how silly- including silliness like: "Have you ever heard of Albany Ukraine?!? (Long story- just roll with it) LOL), they argued only a BIT; NOTHING like in the past. They appeared willing and wanting to learn! We had our usual NOISY-ness, with some seriousness, and then laughter, and all throughout we continued learning. Such as including the concept of Miss Ukraine wielding a machine gun in defense of her country! We may have made too much noise in the building on a few occasions, however, it was thrilling to see them actively engaged in learning! Be still my heart :) - I'll take it!

My hope is that these lessons, on current events, will empower our students to know that they have the ability to understand really complex situations. To know that they can have a political voice, that they *can* impact the outcome of *their future through knowledge*, and that ultimately they will finally, after 2 years of their young world feeling totally out of

control (due to COVID and all the restrictions therein) feel like they can investigate, research and learn actuality - rather than rely on social media sources that fuel anxiety and negativity. That they can make a difference in how THEY as individuals feel about any given situation; through education versus

rumor, innuendo, and media headlines that may, or may not be, more hype than fact.

That said, I am not playing down the very grim situation in Ukraine, however, my trend is to try and give my students hope.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. And knowledge allows you to focus on more than just the negative in any given situation. It was not easy. Teens like to hold onto the drama. Spew things that aren't necessarily factual just to get a response. Human nature is to complain or focus on the negative much more than the positive.

We have to work as humans to find a balance between concern and positivity, otherwise sadly, life appears as doom and gloom.

Since we (301s) began working through these lessons the teenage dramatic comments about Russia and WWII are less frequent in our advisory, and the conversation is much more fact based or inquisitive oriented (yay!).

The advisory as a whole, took their learning seriously and appeared excited to continue the learning experience. Looking back to one of my concerns: no one came to me asking to opt out!- Such growth! I am very proud of them! <3

