



Learning in the Real World (LTI)



The most important element of the education at a Big Picture Learning school is that students learn in the real world. The main component of every student's education is the LTI (Learning Through Internship/Interest). In this internship with an expert mentor in the field of the student's interest, the student completes an authentic project that benefits the student and the mentor at the internship site. The projects are connected to the student's interests and meet the needs of the mentors, and are the main root to deepening student learning and academic growth.

There are three primary reasons for connecting real world, adult mentors to the schooling process:

1. Students learn how to be adults by being with adults.

Teenagers are on the brink of adulthood, and we believe the best way for them to learn how to be an adult is by being immersed in the adult world. With mentoring, a young

person steps into that adult world on a regular basis, and interacts with a variety of adults. Mentoring moves a young person beyond the familiarity of the adults in his or her personal life and provides a broader range of role models.

2. The expertise is out in the real world.

Advisors know a great deal about human development and their own specialties. However, Big Picture schools do not expect advisors to know about all the interests that their students may have. The expertise of a mentor in her/his field is valuable to both the student and to the advisor. Mentors become living examples of the careers that students are thinking of pursuing.

3. The guidance is invaluable.

The mentor-intern relationship is special for people of all ages. The guidance and direction that mentors give is personal, and based on the intern's own particular needs, talents, and interests. There is a level of comfort in this kind of guidance that makes it possible to learn through both accomplishments and mistakes. For teenagers, it can be an especially important haven during the tumultuousness of adolescence.

Essential Elements of Learning in the Real World include:

- Mentors who are experts in their respective fields
- Authentic projects at internships that involve academic investigation
- Mentor training provided by the Big Picture Learning school
- Mentor recognition and celebrations hosted by the Big Picture Learning school
- A School-based LTI Coordinator providing mentor and student support
- Advisor meetings with mentors
- Experiential learning and trips
- The integration of summer learning opportunities
- Service learning
- Exposure to a diversity of learning experiences
- Senior Thesis Projects

- See more at: <http://www.bigpicture.org/2008/11/learning-in-the-real-world-lti/#sthash.ZK2RbNqR.dpuf>