

The Big Picture Learning Design



*One student at a time
in a community of learners*

www.bigpicture.org.au - info@bigpicture.org.au

Big Picture
LEARNING AUSTRALIA



The Big Picture Learning Goals

Knowing how to learn

Personal qualities

Quantitative reasoning

Empirical reasoning

Communication

Social reasoning

Learning through interests

In a Big Picture Academy, students learn through their interests and passions, both inside and outside school. Not all students know what their interests are, and so they are supported to discover and explore these.

Learning is *not* organised around subjects, timetables, multiple classrooms and teachers, or exams. Instead, students develop their own **personalised learning plans** in consultation with their family and their advisory teacher.

Students pursue a range of different personal interest projects, and also participate in social action initiatives, field trips and internships. Their curriculum is a personal one that reflects and expands their interests and aspirations.

They connect their learning to the **6 Big Picture Learning Goals** which are designed to broadly cover the key areas of learning that a young person needs to be successful in life.

Many also do external courses or take an elective or two in a mainstream school in areas of personal interest.

No-one is expected to come ready-made to learn independently in a Big Picture school. Students are supported to develop independent learning skills such as: planning, time management, research, presentation and public speaking.

Learning in Advisory

One student at a time in a community of learners

Students learn in a small group of 17 students known as an 'advisory', with a single advisory teacher. This becomes their learning community, and a major contributor to their sense of wellbeing. Every student feels known, supported and respected for who they are.

Within advisory there are codes of behaviour that the students themselves negotiate. Students thrive when treated as young adults, and with exposure to each other's diverse interests.

Every advisory includes a personal workspace for each student, as well as a central communal table for learning as a group.

They also spend time on engaging group activities and challenges that build advisory culture and incorporate variety into the day.

Their advisory teacher guides and scaffolds their learning while helping them to identify opportunities for learning outside school. Advisory teachers also have their own specialty areas and are highly trained in the Big Picture Learning Design.

They regularly meet one-on-one with each student to help them to develop their ideas about their work or to give constructive feedback.

The Senior Years and the IBPLC

Senior students work towards their **International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC)**. This is a non-ATAR pathway that allows students to successfully transition to university, further training and employment.

This credential is warranted by the University of Melbourne and captures the personal capabilities of a Big Picture student across the 6 Big Picture Learning Goals.

Assessment results are supported by an **Online Portfolio** and **Video Profile** that each student has produced to showcase their best work.

A key focus of the senior years is a **Senior Project** or **Senior Thesis** that involves sustained, in-depth work in an area of great interest to the student, often with the assistance of a mentor from a university, industry, trade, sport or art.

The Senior Project/Thesis is an opportunity for students to showcase their grasp of specialist concepts, practices, terminology and technology, and to produce something of worth to an industry or a workplace, or to make a contribution to society.

Leaving to learn

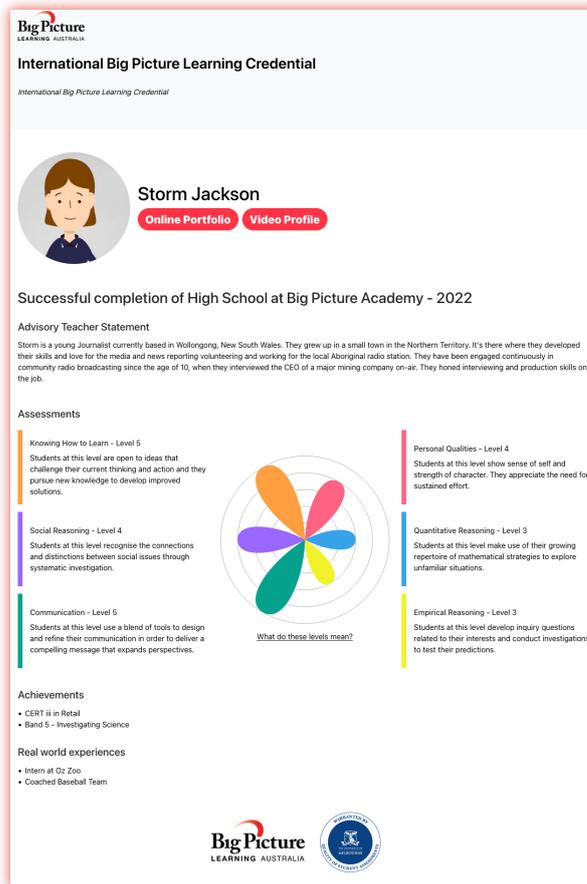
Students leave school one to two days a week to learn through an **internship in the community with an expert mentor** in an organisation, business, art, sport, industry or trade that interests them. This allows them to test out their interests in real-world settings, to interact with a variety of adults and to start to build their networks of useful contacts for life after school.

Students build towards such internships by first doing **shadow days** with a mentor in their field, or by conducting **informational interviews** with a person who is involved in an area that interests them.

With their advisory, students regularly leave school on excursions to explore the people and places in their community. This is all part of exposing students to varied experiences that could stimulate their curiosity and provide a focus for their learning.

Students are also encouraged to take up learning opportunities on offer in the community including courses with TAFE and other training providers, introductory courses through universities, community-based workshops and events, academic or sporting competitions, cultural events, etc.

Big Picture students have access to specialist teachers from other faculties in their school, or mentors in the community, to deepen the learning in their areas of passion.



The image shows a sample of an International Big Picture Learning Credential for a student named Storm Jackson. At the top, it features the Big Picture Learning Australia logo and the title 'International Big Picture Learning Credential'. Below this is a circular profile picture of Storm Jackson with buttons for 'Online Portfolio' and 'Video Profile'. The text states 'Successful completion of High School at Big Picture Academy - 2022' and includes an 'Advisory Teacher Statement' describing Storm as a young journalist. A central 'Assessments' section features a circular diagram with six colored petals (orange, pink, blue, green, yellow, purple) and lists six learning goals with descriptions: Knowing How to Learn - Level 5, Social Reasoning - Level 4, Communication - Level 5, Personal Qualities - Level 4, Quantitative Reasoning - Level 3, and Empirical Reasoning - Level 3. Below the diagram are sections for 'Achievements' (CERT II in Retail, Band 5 - Investigating Science) and 'Real world experiences' (Intern at Oz Zoo, Coached Baseball Team). The bottom of the page includes the Big Picture Learning Australia logo and the University of Melbourne logo.

Assessment by Exhibition

As every student is pursuing individual interests, there are no standardised exams. Instead, at the end of each term, students present what they have learned at an **exhibition**.

They invite family, peers, mentors and teachers to attend. It's often a joyous event (though daunting at first for students) as they get to share their strengths and achievements with a variety of people and reflect upon how they have progressed against their personal learning plan.

In this way, students develop strong skills in public speaking, presentation and communication, and families gain important insights into the skills, knowledge and qualities of their child.

Students are measured by the quality of their work and how this changes them.

After an exhibition, their advisory teachers write a **narrative** for each student outlining their strengths and challenges.

Students also write a reflective narrative about their progress as learners and their next steps.

Shaping...

the day



Each day, students:

- have check-ins and check-outs with their advisory
- plan the day's tasks
- have group-time for discussions and explicit teaching
- build advisory culture through group activities and fun pick-me-ups
- work on interest projects and other items in their Personal Learning Plans
- spend time reading
- write in their journals
- attend electives in the mainstream (optional).

the week

Each week, students:

- attend an internship with an expert mentor who connects them to the latest thinking, technology and practice in their field
- have one-on-one meetings with their advisory teacher
- participate in sporting activities
- spend time at hands-on and creative activities connected to their interests and projects
- collaborate with others on social action projects in the community
- attend a Town Hall meeting (similar to a school assembly) organised and led by students.



the term

Each term, students:

- create or update their Learning Plan
- invite their families to attend a Learning Plan Meeting and an Exhibition
- go on 'out-learning' experiences (excursions, bushwalks, town tours, workplace visits, open days at universities, sporting or cultural events)
- collect all of their work in a portfolio
- celebrate their learning at an exhibition
- receive a narrative reflecting on their growth from their advisory teacher
- write a reflective narrative about their own learning.



One of the most beautiful things about Big Picture is that children are treated as individuals and are able to highlight their skills and abilities. **Kylie, Parent**

It makes you more passionate about coming to school because you build so many qualities which are going to help you thrive in your life after Big Picture. **Aleira, Student**

