

Michael and Patrice Mclean attended the Innovation in Education conference in March 2014 to share their authentic learning stories with teachers and educationalists from New Zealand and overseas. This is their account of authentic learning and going to Wellington for the conference.

The Authentic Learning Programme changed schooling for me in a big way, taking me straight to where I wanted to be and helping me realise where I wanted to be in life.

Recently my sister and I attended the Big Picture conference in Wellington to hear other students' stories and listen to guest speakers, as well as present our own stories.

We had never been to Wellington and Te Papa so it was an awesome experience and was also the first time to be involved with a conference. I'd like to thank Te Kura and all the sponsors involved with the Big Picture conference, it was great fun and we enjoyed meeting a lot of new people.

Michael Mclean

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The Wellington Big Picture conference was a very unique, very important learning experience. I haven't previously visited our capital city until being invited to the Big Picture Conference by my learning advisor Ray Edwards. To have been given the opportunity to share with others my story and personal experiences from completing the Authentic Learning Programme was and is still one of my best academic achievements to date.

By speaking at the Big Picture conference my achievement with the programme has been recognised by not only myself and my family but also international visiting school personnel and key staff at Te Kura. I feel as though my speech and presentation worked well and complemented one another tastefully – my nerves did hold me back at first but once I got rolling there was no stopping me.

I loved staying with my brother in the fancy hotel unit, that was really fun. I'm also very appreciative that I could experience the trip with my big brother at my side.

Visiting the city and its many highlights and sceneries was amazing. At night the whole city was lit up like a Christmas tree. Towering buildings, classic timeless architectural styles, modern also. My brother and I especially loved driving through the expressway tunnels at night – that was a very new and exciting experience that we caught on camera. I wouldn't change anything about the trip at all, it was an awesome learning experience that I enjoyed greatly, I will be sure to remember all the memories made during the Big Picture conference trip for a long, long time. I'm extremely thankful for all the sponsoring and important people that made the trip a reality for both myself and my older brother.

Patrice Mclean