A Year at Mission Hill - Report

Launch Date: January 31, 2013

Final chapter published: June 6, 2013

Reach:

331,800

and counting...
Summary

A Year at Mission Hill launched January 31st, 2013 with Chapter 1: Why We’re Here and ran for just over four months. More than 211,196 people have viewed at least one piece of the series between YouTube, community screenings, and the Prezi with the series reaching 331,800 people through video, blogs, or internal networks. 453 resources were shared by 58 partner organizations to wrap around ten chapters for the series.

What’s been the impact of the series so far?

Here’s some of what we heard when we asked:

- “The video series and publicity spotlighted an outstanding school and showed what is possible when staff and students truly respect and value one another. We were happy to affiliate the RC name and resources with such an effective school.” - Rick Henning, Responsive Classroom

- “Gave people, both educators and especially non-educators, a look inside the life of a school that showed the possibilities and realities of quality education. I shared the series widely, and most people I discussed it with were astounded, as in “Wow, we could never have something like that here, could we?” - Renee Moore, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

- “I loved the conversations that were generated from this series, and I really liked the way all the partner orgs contributed complimentary resources. I loved the additional media that was created and seeded by this series. The Prezi was also a high point for me; what a fantastic idea and execution!” - Amy Erin Borovoy, Edutopia / The George Lucas Educational Foundation

- “Broadening the conceptions of ‘successful school.’ Provided digestible video tools to accomplish this.” - Lars Johnson, Ed Evolving

- “For SRI, it gave us another avenue of reaching out to our membership to discuss issues in education that are important. It also allowed us to align with other like-minded organizations around a common topic.” - Kari Thierer, School Reform Initiative

- “I think it’s essential when talking about impact to talk about the new documentary film for PBS that is about one community’s efforts to transform its schools by implementing the holistic developmental framework of Yale’s James Comer. In other words, NoVo’s $50k investment in #YearatMH led directly to a seven figure budget and a prime time feature on PBS that will make millions of people more aware of the power of SEL.” - Sam Chaltain, on Hartsville project forthcoming with PBS

It is difficult to calculate the full impact of the series, in part because it continues to get new viewers and find new uses. What seems accurate is that Mission Hill’s impact can be split into three categories: 1) generating narrative and resources, 2) building a stronger loose network, and 3) modeling a new way of collaborating strategically to spread ideas.
Generating narrative and resources

The series was found useful by parents, community organizers, educators, and teacher educators. The series is being used in several university and community college classes to supplement, and in some cases, frame education courses. Every chapter came with at least 30 shared resources, and one partner remarked that the series was really a living book on the subject of meaningful student, community, and educator engagement across the intersections of social emotional learning and social justice. A powerful moment took place during the second chapter when the State Superintendents of Education in Minnesota and Vermont both tweeted almost identical messages promoting the series. The series was screened at the 50th anniversary of Civil Rights Leaders in Jackson, MS, and many viewers reported a new found sense of energy, hope, and reinforced commitment to this work.

Building a stronger loose network

A goal of the series was to make visible the shared efforts of a number of like-minded organizations. New and stronger relationships were made across many organizations, and the partner organizations themselves included a diverse range of groups. In the process of developing the series, sharing resources, tweeting until the series went viral, and promoting each others’ work, stronger bonds were built, especially amidst the direct staff and organizers engaged in the execution side of series development.

Modeling a new way of collaborating strategically to spread ideas

When you Google “A Year at Mission Hill,” you get a long string of search results that take you to each partner’s content and all the original content and blogs around the series. This echoing effect is exactly what we wanted to try out, and we were fascinated to see if it has any positive impact different than the more traditional way of creating one singular branded campaign to share a story or idea.

Many partners built their own content around the series and owned the narrative. Here’s a great example from Ashoka:

- Biweekly blogposts corresponding to each chapter written by two ed experts (10 each + several guest pieces): http://startempathy.org/year-mission-hill-1
- Biweekly short videos corresponding to each chapter produced by Visual Influence: http://startempathy.org/visual-influence

“Often when I watched a chapter of the series, I’d be in a stressed-out mood in the midst of a busy workday. I wanted to watch the video and move onto the next task. But each time, without fail, the first few seconds of each chapter reminded me to take a deep breath and slow down. I could feel my body relaxing and a renewed sense of energy and hope coming over me. The questions raised made me think, and the enthusiasm in the kids and teachers made me smile. At the end of each chapter, I would think, “Maybe there’s hope for education, after all. Now how can I ensure that my own kids go to a school like Mission Hill?”

The dedicated partner page was also received as having particular value. Partners appreciated having a dedicated website that was developed alongside the campaign page to support uploading resources and providing sample twitter messages.
What might make an effort like this better in the future?

1. The format presented a palpable opportunity to influence public opinion; however, having great content is not enough. Finding ways to be more intentional in how we utilize and present content, build and sustain an audience, and ensure that visitors are engaging with resources will benefit any future collaborative campaigns.

2. Several partners suggested the value of having strong PR management and media strategy, which could create more awareness and penetration.

3. Providing more access to the focus of the campaign and its full future with clearer details could support stronger resource-to-project alignment, allow organizations to better prepare and amplify their messages across networks, and keep resources from sometimes feeling disjointed for some partners.

4. Social media sharing can often happen all at once, thereby shortening the potential reach of our message. Designing a strategy to stagger posts throughout the day that takes all partnering organizations into account will increase reach, especially during launch.

What now, what’s next?

For now, IDEA would like to extend its deep appreciation and celebrate the accomplishments of all involved at “A Year at Mission Hill.” Our collaboration has been impressive to say the least, and will serve as a guide and inspiration to future collaborative efforts like this.

The main site (www.ayearatmissionhill.com) is still live and available for folks for the time to come. It also features a pointer to the full Mission Hill documentary in the works and creates a way for a few teachers from Mission Hill to keep the conversation going with folks who are new to the series and/or want to engage with it via teacher prep classes.

IDEA is brewing a next national narrative campaign to build on what we learned here. We look forward to being in touch soon, and once again, thank you for all of the time and energy each of your organizations have given.

“I loved the series website and thought it was really well-designed, clear, and useful, especially for the partners. Thanks for having us as part of the series. It was a monumental effort and a great adventure in collaborative Web content production. We learned a lot and we hope the conversation continues…” - Amy Erin Borovoy, Edutopia
#YearatMH at a Glance

58 Organizational Partners collaborated to demonstrate not only what's possible for public education, but also what we as a community of changemakers are capable of when we join forces. Schools, Organizations, Media Outlets, Foundations, and AFT all came together in this powerful, inspiring drive that transformed the way we think about education and community organizing.

Prezi, with Sam Chaltain, created an immaculate presentation for A Year at Mission Hill that was showcased on Prezi’s homepage for various weeks. The presentation achieved 208,557 views, was favorited 924 times, and was tweeted 158 times.

The YouTube channel brought in 203 subscribers and 39,343 views over the course of the series. This does not account for the views on YAMH’s website.

Twitter. The full feed is likely a better report than this one. It captures quotes, provocative comments, and Q&A. #YearatMH and #IDEAedChat brought many folks into conversation (including tweets in seven different languages) with one moment of trending. Here’s a sampling:
Facebook is home to photos, videos, and memes that enriched A Year at Mission Hill’s campaign and gained 814 likes and the attention of many more.

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