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By MADELYN FAIRBANKS
Published Nov. 27, 2013

Frylendans teacher wins Golden Apple Award
MONROE - It was just one book that changed Randy Brown's life, and because he read it, he has changed the lives of hundreds of others. He didn't do it alone. He did it with the help of several Randy Browns. He made more than 400 instructional videos starring himself for his third-graders at Frylendans Elementary.

The book Brown read teaches the reader how to identify their strengths and lead with them, whether in business or life. "It really started helping me in a practical way," Brown said. "It showed me how I could blow the lid off my teaching and increase my strengths, and I've done that. That book changed my life."

Brown's number one strength is strategizing. He began to use that strength to make his classroom work better. "I started strategizing how I could make this classroom the most powerful environment for my students," Brown said. "I just started dreaming the dream."

He refers to the two halves of his teaching method as "live" and "video." Brown realized that if he showed a pre-recorded lesson of the day to one section of his classroom, he could work with the other half in real life.

"These kids today are digital natives," Brown said. "You see any kid on a cell phone, or an iPad, it's just like breathing to them. I'm using a tool that they're using all the time. It's allowed the kids to have their own personal tutor."

The kids can pause the video, rewind it for clarification and it frees Brown up to work with the rest of the classroom. "I'm a tutor, I'm a coach, I'm mentoring kids, I'm totally free to do that because their main content is coming from these videos," Brown said.

The video lessons are a more efficient way to teach than through live lessons, Brown said, because they are edited, condensed, and there's no waiting for moments like when an instructor has to write out a

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definition.

"There's no waiting," Brown said. "When I do it live, they're waiting while you write stuff out. In a 15-minute math video, that would take like 45 minutes to do live."

Traci Adams, who has taught next door to Brown for the past couple of years, saw what Brown was doing and was inspired to spread the news by way of nominating him for a Golden Apple Award.

Recipients describe the Golden Apple Award as the Oscars for educators.

Brown and seven others across the state won a Golden Apple this year.

The Apples are handed out by Public Broadcasting Station KCTS-TV. Of the eight Apple recipients, only one was selected to receive the Stanley O. McNaughton Award. Brown was this year's recipient.

The Stanley O. McNaughton Award was named after the founder and CEO of Pemco Financial Services for Excellence in Education and Creativity in the Classroom.

"It's both qualitative and quantitative," Brown said of the award, because it's given based on how many children he reaches and lives he touches as well as the depth to which he's increased their knowledge.

"There's two of me: there's the digital recorded version of me and there's the live version of me," Brown said.

To create the digitally recorded version of himself, Brown spends countless mornings coming in at 5:45 a.m. to record lessons for the day so that he could do what he called "flipping" his classroom: showing one half the video while the "live version" of himself works with the other half.

Then, Brown explained, if there are kids who are sick or otherwise have to skip class, missing out on a lesson is never an issue. Parents or kids simply access Brown's website, choose the day's video lesson, and work from the video at home.

"One girl missed school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and showed up on Friday with all her assignments done," Brown said. Brown was selected for a Golden Apple Award because of the innovation he showed in his teaching methods, yes. But that wasn't the only reason he was considered.

Four years ago, Brown started a club for fourth- and fifth-grade students called "Students Can Make a Difference."

The kids came up with their mission statement on their own: "People need help and we can help them."

One of Brown's favorite activities the kids are involved with is their visits to local nursing homes. Once a month, the group goes to a local nursing home and they'll do activities such as creating greeting cards to hand out to all of the residents. Other times, the group will provide hot meals to homeless and low-income people.

"It's a beautiful thing," Brown said of how using his strengths have allowed him to organize so much productive energy among his students.




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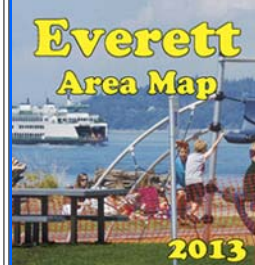


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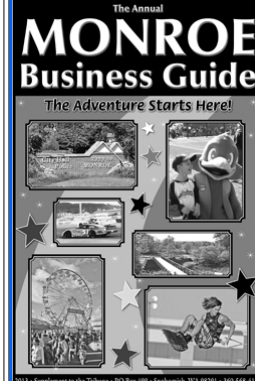
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