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10 Fascinating People in Education in 2012

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The world of education seems to be amidst a sea change, and a full list of people that are making an impact on education would be infinite. However, we couldn't resist the opportunity to list just a few of our favorite folks in education in 2012 (in no particular order).

1. Michael Chasen

Let's get the obvious out of the way first. Michael Chasen, the [co-founder and CEO of Blackboard steps down](#) at the end of the year, but we can't forget his pioneering work to build Blackboard to the organization that it is today and his contributions to the ed-tech community over the past 15 years. While we'll miss him walking our halls, we know this isn't the last we'll hear from him.

2. Sal Khan

Sal Khan is getting a lot of attention (Time's Top 100 Most Influential People) for offering his world-class instructional videos for free to anyone, anywhere. This recent Forbes article headline says it all – "[One Man, One Computer, 10 Million Students: How Khan Academy is Reinventing Education.](#)" [Watch the video](#) below for highlights from his closing keynote at our BbWorld conference this past summer!

3. The Active Learner

We can't forget to acknowledge all of the students who are driving change and technology adoption from the student level. As our recent video tells the story, these learners best represent the future of education and are rapidly growing in numbers and force.

4. Anant Agarwal

Agarwal is the President of EdX, a nonprofit start-up from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which [The New York times reports](#) had 370,000 students this fall in its first official courses. Yes, it's a MOOC. Agarwal is leading the way in open education through free online courses from top universities.

5. Curtis Bonk

[Dr. Curtis Bonk](#), a revered e-learning expert and Professor of Instructional Systems Technology in the School of Education at Indiana University, taught [our first ever MOOC](#) on our CourseSites platform. The MOOC, [applauded by Joshua Kim of Inside HigherEd](#), offered professional development to fellow instructors on improving motivation, retention, and engagement within blended and online courses.

6. Eric Sheninger

When not busy with his position as Principal of New Milford High School located in Bergen County, NJ, [Sheninger is a vocal leader](#) in the use of social to better engage students, educators, and other stakeholders. He maintains personal blog, [A Principal's Reflection](#), tweets to over 30,000 followers as [@NMHS_Principal](#), and provides frequent contributions on [Huffington Post](#).

7. Jessie Wooley-Wilson

Formerly of Blackboard, Woolley-Wilson is now President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board at [DreamBox Learning](#). According to [Forbes](#), in an article where she was recently named one of their Top 15 Classroom Revolutionaries, her adaptive learning technology has provided over 50 million online lesson minutes over the past 12 months, both privately and in schools in 47 states.

8. Adam Braun

Inspired by a trip to India in 2008 when he handed out his first pencil, Adam Braun, founded [Pencils of Promise](#), a non-profit that builds schools and trains teachers in the developing world. Since his organization began, his staff has delivered more than 4 million instructional hours to kids around the world. Oh, and he was recently named to [Forbes 30-Under-30](#) in 2012. Check out his organization that is doing lots of good: [@pencilsofpromis](#).

9. Diane Auer Jones

This former Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education is using her voice as Vice President for External and Regulatory Affairs for Career Education Corporation (CEC) to highlight [the importance of accountability in higher education](#). Jones advocates for a "single definition" in education through a rethinking of accountability and student success across institution types, as the distinctions between traditional schools and career or vocational institutions is starting to blur.

Our #10 falls more in the category of "One Watch in 2013," but here's why...

10. Jay Bhatt

The new CEO of Blackboard formally took the reins just barely two months ago, but is gearing up to take Blackboard to the next level. Bhatt has exceptional experience in the software industry, but more importantly, is strongly committed to excellence and innovation for Blackboard in the coming years.