



QuarkNet

Stories from the classroom

Rossville is a small rural school in mid central Indiana. Many of my students in Physics plan to get a college degree in science or engineering but not all.

A student that was planning on taking over the family farm was taking my Physics class because he felt it might help him with equipment and chores on the farm. He was not planning on college. He had never traveled more than 50 miles from his home. I organized a trip to Fermilab to do a CMS Masterclass with one of the researchers at the lab. The comments and exclamations started as soon as we got into Chicago traffic. The whole event from the travel, working with a particle physicist, to video conferencing with schools in other parts of the country and world opened a new world to this young gentleman. He decided to study engineering, still in the Agriculture field but he is now a supporter of all sciences in this community where before Biology and Agriculture only had relevance to him. I had not changed his attitude about science until we finished the QuarkNet Masterclass sequence. This program inspires and energizes students.

Before QuarkNet, I had some students that went on to study engineering or science. After becoming involved in QuarkNet and getting my students involved with the Cosmic Ray Detector projects and Masterclass, my students do more than just continue on with their lives. This has become a springboard for discussion all things current in physics research, Black Holes, Neutron Stars, Gravity Waves, Neutrinos... My colleagues in the science Department are sending me younger and younger students with questions about science research. This has prompted my school to add a course to teach about research and get students involved in studying their own questions.

But QuarkNet is also professional development for teachers. When I joined QuarkNet I was looking for something to energize my classroom. I was very close to burn out and leaving the profession. I had no one to get ideas from since I am the only Physics Teacher in my school district. QuarkNet has given me the opportunity to work with other teachers nationally (Fellows program) and internationally (CERN HST program, Masterclass). I now share ideas routinely with others. I am a part of a larger community now. This program has helped me to become a better teacher by improving my inquiry skills, by focusing on education standards and pedagogy.

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