

Ripple Effect of Learning

Robert Frost said, "I am not a teacher, but an awakener." Similarly, Fund for Teachers grants are not checks, but catalysts. Every dollar invested in teachers' summer learning experiences matures exponentially into improved skills and authentic experiences that make learning come alive for students.

Fellows are required to submit a Plan for Implementation one year after their fellowship to demonstrate their grants' impact in the classroom. Pulled from those plans, we share some examples of student work. Following the learning from teacher to student demonstrates the ripple effect created by one FFT grant and positions America's students as beneficiaries of FFT grants, as well as their teachers.

All students live and learn through their teachers' FFT fellowships; however, few have returned with their teacher to a fellowship site. Beth Mowry raised funds to take six students and two teachers back to the Wyoming Dinosaur Center in Thermopolis, WY, as a reward for their participation in a paleontology class she started at the Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies. Students dug for dinosaur bones in the same quarry Beth excavated on her fellowship two years before, prospected for new fossil sites with two professional paleontologists, and worked in a paleontology lab cleaning and preparing fossils for research. Beth's students documented their "field trip" at bcsurbanpaleontologists.blogspot.com.



Beth excavates dinosaur bones in the "Something Interesting" quarry on her fellowship.



Beth's students explore travertine deposits in Hot Springs State Park, WY.

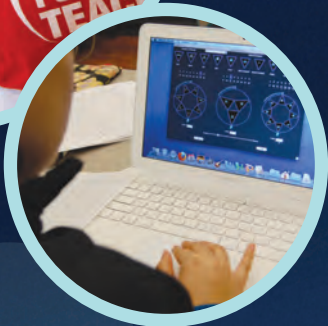


Beth shares FFT with a local in Santiago de Cuba.

What does math have to do with the Salsa? Spoken poetry with social justice? High schoolers at Boston Student Leadership Academy found out when their lessons took on a Caribbean flair following Beth Lambert and Megan Baird's fellowship. With their FFT grant, the colleagues observed the culture of Havana and Santiago de Cuba to infuse math and English curricula with performance art.

As a result, Megan's math students explored the connection between Cuban rhythms and math. Recreating Salsa rhythm on Cuban percussion instruments Megan purchased on the fellowship, her students then used online Rhythm Wheels to create those rhythms, employing least common denominators to do so.

Beth's English students studied revolutionary poetry of Cuban nationalist José Martí by analyzing themes of social justice, independence and equality through poetry. Students then shared their work in a school-wide exhibition judged by teachers, peers and community members. Beth's students also explored Spoken Word poetry by writing – then performing – pieces expressing discontent with injustices in their lives. This unit culminated in a compare/contrast exercise between students' work and Nueva Trova, a movement in Cuban music that combines traditional folk music with progressive and politicized lyrics.



Students use the online Rhythm Wheel to create music using polynomial expressions.

Responding to students' request for more information about their Hispanic heritage, Tanya Roger traveled through Panama (including the Canal) on her fellowship, returning with maps, photos, and first-hand accounts of Central America. Inspiring students to dig deeper, she collaborated with colleagues at Hoover Elementary in Tulsa, OK, to create an interdisciplinary "Bridging Cultures" unit. Students developed research skills and used materials collected during her fellowship to create *The ABC Book on Panama*, which they presented during a new literacy unit Tanya developed with the school librarian.

Tanya travels through the Panama Canal.



Students use Tanya's stories and artifacts to create the "P" page for their classroom book.



Dawn measures mammoth teeth with a caliper to determine the age at the Mammoth Site of Hot Springs, SD.



Dawn's students prepare casts of mammoth teeth in class.

By making casts of a woolly mammoth's tooth, Dawn Staples-Knox's students at Searsport High School in Maine got a taste of her fellowship excavating, recording, and preserving Mammoth bones in Hot Springs, SD. "I say to my students regularly, "You are going to be a scientist: Work like a scientist, think like a scientist and document like a scientist," said Dawn.

Using primary sources gathered by Tracy Teetaert and Cindy Cassidy during their fellowship to Virginia's Historic Triangle, Minturn Middle School students in Colorado wrote and published historical fiction stories based on characters in the American Revolution. The teaching team created "Triangle Trunks" of artifacts acquired on their fellowship to support students' character development and add historical accuracy to the stories. Read more about their students' work at vahistorictriangle.blogspot.com.



Cindy and Tracy sample the stockades in Colonial Williamsburg.



One student's original art work graces the cover of his historical fiction story.



Mary hikes to Alaska's Exit Glacier.



Mary's students apply papier-mâché and tempera paint to their "cool globes."

Mary Trichel escaped the heat in Humble, TX, by exploring Alaska's unique ecosystems to teach students about geography and global warming concerns. Her video journals, artifacts and photos gathered enriched lessons for Atascocita Middle School sixth graders. Assuming the roles of world-renown environmentalists presenting at an international conference, students used globes they created to demonstrate proposed solutions for human consumption's impact on the global environment.