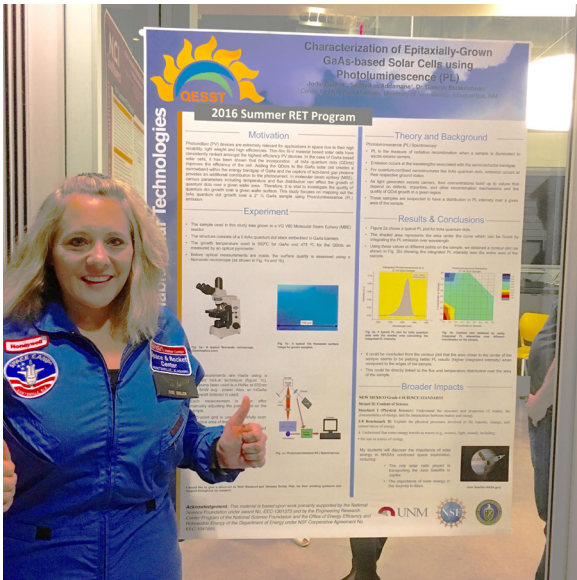


Classroom Lessons Introduction

Jodie Guillen

The world of the 21st century is advancing at a mind-blowing pace, powered through technological marvels that were simply a figment of the imagination just a few, short years ago. This influx of incredible new resources has changed the way people live, work and play along the way. However, with great opportunities come great responsibilities, and an entirely new set of challenges that simply did not exist in years past. It is estimated that 65% of students sitting in classrooms today will one day work in jobs that have yet to be created (World Economic Forum, 2013). The question then becomes, how do educators prepare the future scientists, technicians, engineers, artists, mathematicians, and space pioneers of tomorrow? The answer is really quite simple . . . educators must teach students how to think. As said by Albert Einstein himself, “Education is not simply the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think,” and that is just EXACTLY what education is all about!!!

As an elementary science teacher, I strive to bring SCIENCE TO LIFE each and every day with the most hands-on, engaging lessons that I can, delivered through the platform of project-based learning! Through the implementation of these carefully designed projects that spark the natural curiosity in ALL students, as well as the seamless INTEGRATION of the content of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, the pursuit of solutions to everyday problems provides the perfect scenario in which to develop innovation, creativity, and perseverance, among the qualities of most value to the world just beyond my classroom door! Not only have I have witnessed FIRST-HAND the impact Problem Based Learning has had on



student understanding, resulting in 83% of my students showing growth between short-cycle assessments, but my students are completely engaged, virtually eliminating behaviors in my Title One, majority-minority school!

Unfortunately, we live in a world where educational resources are virtually non-existent and educators are quite simply maxed out . . . and THIS is just EXACTLY where we need YOUR HELP! Please join educators around the globe on our quest for awesome-ness, and help us fuse science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics, and BEYOND into a fantastical display of awesome-

ness, creating environments where dreams can take flight . . . forever altering the course of lives along the way!!!

I currently teach science in the MIDDLE OF NOWHERE NEW MEXICO to the most FANTABULOUS bunch of 6th and 7th graders you'll ever meet! I LOVE spending my days teaching science, and NOT so secretly hope that one of my students will be the first human to walk on Mars! However, I realize that not all students dream of becoming space pioneers, and in FACT, this is the VERY reason I am so passionate about solar energy education! It is more important to me that my students leave my classroom in May better humans than when they first step through my door in August . . . and that no matter where their journey leads, they will one-day make a positive impact on our planet through the informed votes they cast. We have ALMOST reached the point of no return here on Planet Earth due to global warming, and in order to ensure a future for this next generation to inherit, we must help them discover that the very solution lies in harnessing the energy of our very own star, the sun!

Per aspera ad astra!

The Astronaut Teacher :)