



From the Sea of Cortez to NASA

With more than \$9 million allocated to professional development, the grant helps teachers deepen their own understanding of what they are teaching and how they can work together as a strong school staff to impact student achievement.

Introducing Field Research to Students



This past summer Randall Gibson, a middle school science teacher at William H. Taft School, studied desert ecology and community conservation in Mexico's Sea of Cortez. The program, called the Global Master's Program, is designed to give educators field research experience as well as classroom work during the school year.

In the two previous years, Mr. Gibson did field research in Trinidad. "The program in Trinidad focuses on habitat loss and endangered species,"

states Mr. Gibson. "This type of first-hand experience for a science teacher is phenomenal." At the end of the three years of study, Mr. Gibson will have earned a master's degree in teaching.

Mr. Gibson has also participated in professional development sponsored by the GE Foundation. In 2008, a group of seven teachers traveled to the Biological Sciences Curriculum Studies (BSCS) program in Colorado. The program is designed to improve how science is taught, focusing on using a hands-on approach and encouraging students to ask questions and explore.



Randall Gibson, Science Teacher, William H. Taft School (left). Mexico's Sea of Cortez (above).

"These experiences make science real for students. The first-hand experience can open their eyes to career options."

The teachers that participated in the BSCS training conducted trainings for other CPS teachers upon their return.

"Through these experiences, students will experience field biology. Inquiry Action Project,

an after school program, is especially good for girls because they often avoid science—I make sure there is an equal number of boys and girls in the program,"

explains Mr. Gibson. "These experiences make science real for students. The first-hand experience can open their eyes to career options."

Randall Gibson
William H. Taft School (STEM magnet school)
Science, Grades 6-8