

Teacher Fellowships - Welcome to the Real World

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What do teachers do with their summer vacation? Think you know? Don't be too sure. Some teach summer school, or go to school themselves, while others travel or stay at home. Then there are the few and the proud who actually go out into the real world to work for and learn from leading industries and universities.

This summer a select group of 120 Bay Area teachers were paired with leading corporations and higher learning institutions and embarked on an 8 week paid Fellowship in order to gain real world experience and to enhance their curriculum.

Industry Initiatives for Science and Math Education (IISME), a nonprofit group that partners with companies and universities, launched its 25th annual Summer Fellowship Program. The group works with Bay Area organizations to select and support K-16 teachers who hold paid Fellowships and complete scientific, mathematic, or technical projects for their Sponsors. This year, 37 of the Fellows are middle school teachers. Once the school year begins, IISME Teacher Fellows are able to leverage their newfound skills and experiences, implementing the powerful new lessons and updated curriculum they developed over the summer. IISME Fellowships allow teachers to apply the subjects that they teach in practical and relevant situations which helps reenergize their passion for education -- and boosts teacher retention.

First time Fellow Antoinette Villarin, a South San Francisco middle school math teacher, recognized early on that her summer as a research associate with SRI International, a nonprofit research institute, would benefit SRI's research studies and the students in her classroom. "I am fortunate to be working with researchers on several different projects related to curriculum and data analysis," said Villarin "These projects fall within the parameters of math education, and are deeply related to the discussions and observations that math teachers often experience in their own classroom."

This summer, twenty-seven sponsors including Stanford University, Google, Inc., Synopsys, Inc., Intel Corporation, and Applied Materials are supporting local teachers.

So teachers, what did you do on your summer vacation? Maybe next summer you too can work in the real world and bring back all sorts of new ideas to your students.

For more info: www.iisme.org

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