

# Benefits of Being a Student of the Teacher Researcher Experience (SoTRE)

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In 2007 Mrs. Eubanks spent two weeks at sea off the coast of California aboard the NOAA ship David Starr Jordan as part of NOAA's Teachers at Sea Program. She worked with NOAA researcher Dr S. Kohin to study sharks. All of her students followed her adventure by reading her daily journals that were posted on the Internet. During the next school year students followed the movements of the sharks that were tagged. We also evaluated the catch rate of sharks using a "circle hook" compared to a "J hook". We used real science data.

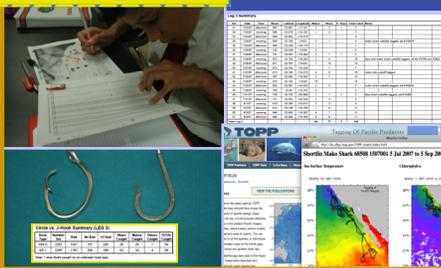


You might wonder why middle school students in South Florida would be so interested in the Arctic or sharks in Southern California. It's because our middle school science teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Eubanks, is always reminding us "we are all connected, we are all affected." She has participated and involved us in several interesting and exciting projects involving the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Polar TREC (Teachers & Researchers Exploring & Collaborating). These unique relationships are called Teacher Researcher Experiences (TREs), which makes us Students of Teacher Researcher Experiences (SoTREs).



In 2008, Mrs. Eubanks went to Barrow, Alaska, with Dr. Steven Oberbauer, a professor from Florida International University (FIU) and Paulo Olivas, a doctoral student from FIU. They studied the effects of carbon fluxes on the Arctic tundra. Once again, we followed the project through Mrs. Eubanks's online journal entries. There were two webinars during the summer. Some of the students took part in a cross-continental germination experiment with alfalfa seeds.

## Ocean to Classroom



## Students Comment on Benefits of Being a SoTRE:

"Science comes alive."  
-Matt B.

"We take advantage of the latest technology and follow experiments taking place from the Arctic to the Tropics."  
-Anthony Z.

"We see how interconnected we all are and how we can work together for a better tomorrow."  
-Hayley B.

"We get to learn things that other kids might not be able to, and this makes school more fun."  
-Alondra R.

"We get to present a poster at the State of the Arctic meeting, which is a once in a lifetime opportunity."  
-Emily G.



Students of teachers involved in Teacher Researcher Experiences. I am a SoTRE.

Shark month included learning about aspects of all sharks, daily morning announced facts, maritime flags, life aboard a research vessel and dissecting sharks. Our Finale: Shark-O-Ween.



## The Entire School (PK-8) participated in Shark Month

### Shark-O-Ween

Our students are working with Dr. Oberbauer and Paulo Olivas on a project measuring the growth of the White Mangrove trees in The Mangrove Park behind our school using dendrometers. We are tracking weather patterns using a weather station and an Open Top Chamber (OTC) donated by Dr. Oberbauer.

## Working with FIU Scientists



The entire school year we celebrated the International Polar Year (IPY). We began and concluded this event with surveys. We had morning announcements, monthly Arctic themes, and a Polar Earth Day celebration. Each middle school student wrote a research paper. In small groups, we prepared displays and oral presentations to teach the younger students (PK- 5th grade) what we had learned about Polar regions. We participated as both students and teachers.

This survey shows that St. Mark students have more appreciation for the polar regions after Mrs. Eubanks's PolarTREC expedition than before it.

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very Important
Pre-Expedition May 2008	8.9%	41%	50%
Post-Expedition May 2009	3.4%	32.8%	63.8%
Change	-5.5%	-8.2%	13.80%

Data provided by A. Larson of Goldstream Group for PolarTREC Evaluation

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