



**FAST FACTS**

**Project :** Career and Education Project  
**Teacher:** Joan Turek,  
joan.turek@bossierschools.org  
**School:** Parkway High School  
**Location :** Bossier City, Louisiana  
**Website:**  
parkway-bps-la.schoolloop.com  
**Start/End date:**  
November-December 2013  
**Mentors provided by:** Google, Hewlett-Packard Company, Intel Corporation and Merck & Co., Inc.

**Unique requests of participating mentors:**  
Communicate with students at least twice a week. Help students connect with several professionals working in their career fields of interest.

**Challenge:** Keeping students motivated, interested and engaged

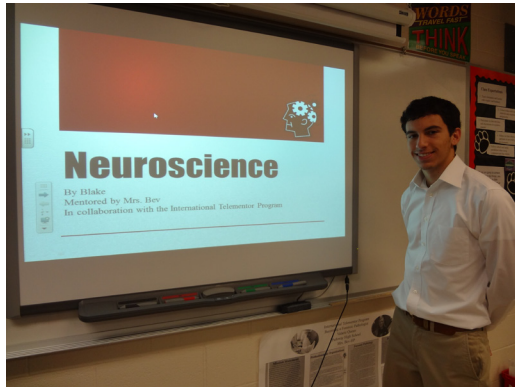
**Solution:** Teacher and mentor communication, interaction with students. Connecting students to projects in which they're interested.

**Results:** Students explore their interests and develop an education and career plan of action. Students develop research, reading, writing and collaboration skills.

**Contact:** David Neils,  
ITP Founder/Director  
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# Students develop career, education planning prowess

Mentors encourage students to execute their plans



**Poised for presentation**  
*A student presents his research on a career in neuroscience and the universities that have acclaimed academic programs in this field.*

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” This is a question asked of almost every child alive from the time they can begin to formulate an answer.

Few people have a strong calling at an early age or know what type of work will inspire and satisfy them. Rather, the majority have trouble identifying their calling or choosing that one perfect career path. Society offers many solutions to this dilemma in the form of career assessments and aptitude tests. Parkway High School Teacher Joan Turek offers her students a different solution to this quandary.

With the help of professionals who volunteer to mentor students through the International Telementor Program (ITP), Turek’s students interview several people working in the fields in which they are interested. (Students are required to rank their top career choices and narrow those down to two on which to focus for this project.) Mentors help students craft interview questions and then email those questions to top professionals in students’ fields of interest.

Turek said, “It helps tremendously if each mentor reaches out within their network to help their student because they have contacts I don’t have access to and those contacts have more contacts and so on. Interviews are absolutely critical to the project and provide extremely valuable information that the students cannot get any other way.”

Mentors also assist students in locating information by making them aware of professional associations and publications related to their career choices. They also



*“I have found that most students rise to the challenge of taking their futures seriously when monitored by their teacher and mentored by ITP professionals...”* Joan Turek, Parkway High School Teacher

explore related websites and learn about the companies that hire people with skills and training in which the student is interested.

If it sounds like a lot of communication occurs between mentors and students, it does. “I request that mentors communicate with my students two-three or more times a week if at all possible. Most do that anyway, and some even write every day! My students love getting messages from their mentors, and find that frequent communication helps keep them motivated and interested in the project,” Turek explained.

Once students have collected information from several professionals, they add the knowledge gained from the interviews to other information they glean from research to design realistic education and career action plans, complete with desired goals. Students then summarize the information gathered and their plans in a PowerPoint presentation, a portfolio or a written report, and present their work in class.

“I encourage my students to generate choices and make career decisions based upon interests, abilities and values,” said Turek. “I want them to gain a greater understanding and focus of their education and career interests, and articulate those interests both verbally and in writing. In the process, they develop research, reading, writing and collaboration skills. I believe the Career and Education Project helps them really explore and focus on their interests and gives them a compass and goals.”

“ITP has an incredible pool of mentors from some of the top companies in the world,” explained David Neils, ITP founder and director. “Corporations like Merck & Co., Inc., Hewlett Packard, Thomson Reuters, Google, MasterCard, Citicorp, Agilent, and Intel have been very generous in providing mentors for Turek’s students.”

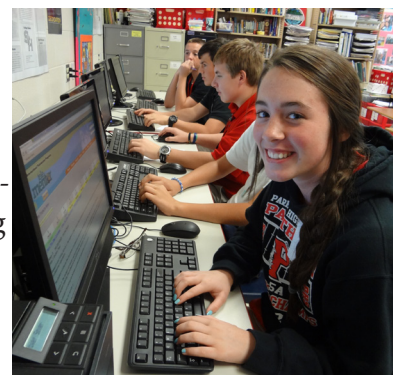
Turek said, “I have worked with ITP over the last eight years and have found the mentoring relationships to be one of the most helpful ways possible for students to connect with professionals outside of the classroom as they explore their college and career interests.”

Despite opportunities to flourish, like those offered through ITP-supported learning, a reality Turek hopes mentors (and others working with youth) understand is that, “children and teens live in a very complex world and experience things in their personal lives that are sometimes very challenging. Because of confidentiality regulations, teachers cannot ever communicate personal challenges or difficult situations to mentors, so mentors do not necessarily have a ‘full picture’ of what a child is going through at a particular time unless the student chooses to share that information. Sometimes, those down times are when the child needs the very most encouragement and assistance from their mentor. Mentors who make the most impact are those who are patient and understanding, especially when a child seems to be struggling.”

But at the end of the day, many students who complete the Career and Education Project choose to take advanced high school classes, participate in extracurricular activities, and often are dual-enrolled in college classes because they really have an understanding of where they want to go and how they plan to get there.

“To be successful after high school, students today must be connected with top professionals in their field of interest, and challenged and supported by them to develop and execute career and education plans that meet industry and postsecondary standards,” said Neils.

“I have found that most students rise to the challenge of taking their futures seriously when monitored by their teacher and mentored by ITP professionals who truly care about them and communicate regularly with them,” added Turek. “Working with students and their mentors through the ITP program is truly one of the most rewarding experiences of my teaching career.”



**WWW.TELEMOTOR.ORG**

The International Telementor Program ■ David Neils, Founder/Director

