

Spaceward Bound Blog
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Wow! What an amazing experience I have been having on this expedition. On the first day of Spaceward Bound I spent the morning hours working with two rovers. This was the only experience I have ever had working with this type of technology! I then spent the afternoon setting up equipment in caves to record the temperature of three different points within the cave. Scientists are using this data to get parameters that could help them to detect caves on Mars. As I participated in these activities I came up with several ideas of how they could be used in the classroom. The research in caves is interdisciplinary and spans several areas of the sciences. I thought about forming a cumulative unit in general science classes using cave research as a theme for teaching several concepts. The second day of the expedition I spent the morning in the lab isolating bacteria colonies from soil samples that were collected Monday. This is an awesome activity for a biology lab! I plan on teaching my students the sterile techniques I learned in the lab to help them to evaluate the differences between soils with high organic content and soils with low organic content. I spent the afternoon learning about the features of Afton Canyon and how there is debate among scientists as to how the canyon formed. This is analogous to Mars in the sense that scientist are unsure of how the canyons there have formed. I thought about using similar landforms on this planet and on Mars as inquiry activities for earth science students in my classes. I am looking forward to the expeditions that I will take part in the rest of the week and I anticipate coming up with more ways to apply these to my classroom!