Who We Are

Now entering its sixth year of operation, Dark Skies, Bright Kids (DSBK) is an entirely volunteer-run outreach organization based out of the University of Virginia. Our core mission is to enhance elementary science education and literacy in central Virginia through fun, hands-on activities that introduce basic Astronomy concepts beyond Virginia’s Standards of Learning. Our primary focus is hosting an 8-10 week after-school astronomy club at underserved elementary and middle schools. Each week, DSBK volunteers take the role of coaches and guide students through astronomy-related concepts ranging from the Solar System to galaxies to astrophotography.

This August we hosted our Fourth Annual Star Party to showcase the beautiful dark skies of Central Virginia. The event, free and open to the public, attracted nearly 400 people and featured night sky tours, planetarium shows, and astronomy-themed demonstrations including our IR camera.

We aim for a ‘journal difficulty’ of 3. Week 7’s (Invisible Light) proved to be too difficult, suggesting that the lessons and assessments needed to be revisited.

Perform Post-Club Evaluations

After our adjustments, we saw a noticeable improvement, not only in the difficulty level of the journal, but also in student learning and engagement.

Determine Learning Goals

What does it take for a week to be successful?
- Clear and limited goal choice
- Activity alignment with journal
- Clear point to each activity
- High level of interactivity
- Positive volunteer attitude

Implement at Club

For more information, including additional activities and resources, or how you can help, visit our website at http://www.astro.virginia.edu/dsbk/