How often do students get excited about “traveling the world” during the school day?

With Jennie Yearick’s GREATRACE initiative, students are learning what tools they need for real-world success as they are led through a host of challenges in such places as Tokyo, Paris, Cairo, Caracas and New Delhi.

Jennie Yearick, Algebra I and Geometry teacher at Porter Ridge High School in Union County, is this month’s IEI featured educator because she exemplifies the innovator role.

A National Board Certified Teacher, Yearick holds a Master’s degree in Middle and Secondary Mathematics Education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She was recently named Porter Ridge High School’s 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year.

Yearick encourages exploration and experimentation in learning, and has modeled this in her classroom.

The GREATRACE event successfully provides an opportunity for administrators, teacher, parents and students to problem solve, utilize critical thinking skills, and build rapport and relationships. This program has bolstered school spirit, and ignited a true sense of unity among the entire population of students and their parents.

While exposing students to diverse cultures and locations, the event helps to achieve the school district’s goals of (1) developing high achieving and globally competitive students, (2) providing innovative leadership and (3) classroom enhancements as well as (4) establishing effective and engaging opportunities to develop and maintain mutual trust and respect between the school system and its community.

THE GREATRACE has become an annual hit at Porter Ridge, and Jennie Yearick’s innovation is at the heart of the event.

“[Jennie] masterfully walk[s] the line between professionalism and street credibility...Her students respect her without question...[they] identify with her, share their fears and interests with her, and desperately work to please her. I’ve never seen anyone live both sides of the coin as well as Jennie Yearick.”

Sam Basden, Porter Ridge High School Principal