



"I like a classroom where students are not afraid to participate!" says Culp, pictured with his winning team.

Building robots (and team spirit)

Teacher David Culp revs up the passion for science. **By Lauren McCollum**

David Culp was only ten when he learned to program computers. A career as an engineer seemed inevitable. But during college, he had a change of heart. "I decided to be a teacher," he says. "I haven't regretted it."

Culp's choice has benefited many students at DeWitt Perry Middle School in Carrollton, Texas, but one group stands out—a team of 10 middle schoolers that achieved honors at the National Botball Tournament in July 2006.

What's botball? Only a cool robotics program in which student teams design and build original robots that compete on oversized game boards in regional

and national tournaments. What set Culp's bot battlers apart? In a field dominated by all-male high school teams, the DeWitt middle school group—with seven girls on the ten-member team and a number of sixth-graders—placed fourth in national competition.

How does Culp get his students excited about robotics? "I can't sit still," he says. "Everything is hands on." Culp's students can be found doing anything but sitting at desks.

An inspiring educator, Culp shows his students that science is a domain not for nerds—nor just for boys—but for adventurers of all kinds. □

The Making a Difference Award

Behind every incredible kid is a truly inspiring teacher! In each issue this year, *Instructor* magazine and TeachersCount (www.teacherscount.org) are pleased to recognize the accomplishments of an outstanding K-8 teacher.

Nominate a colleague for the Making a Difference Award! It's easy. E-mail a letter to info@teacherscount.org. Tell us all about his or her accomplishments. Be sure to include his or her contact information as well as your own.