EMPOWERING YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Research In Context—Learn how this school discovered the benefits of using Gale databases to enhance middle schoolers' research, writing, and comprehension skills.

Gale products like *Research In Context* give students *"a safe zone to get their information. I tell them, 'The information you find in Gale has been vetted. That is, you don't have to worry about fake news. The people at Gale make sure the documents you pull up are reliable.'"*

Bridget Beal,
Teacher Librarian,
Sequoia Middle School
Fresno, CA

BACKGROUND

Sequoia Middle School is part of Fresno Unified School District, which is the third largest district in the state of California. The school serves approximately 850 middle schoolers (grades 7th and 8th). The school has a strong academic background, and is working diligently to strengthen their students' writing skills. For many of Sequoia Middle School's students English is a second language, which means that teachers need the right resources to support students' current needs as well as adequately prepare them for the next steps in their education.

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE
BECOMING MORE DISCERNING WITH ONLINE CONTENT

When Bridget Beal began as the teacher librarian at Sequoia Middle School three years ago, she noticed that students used popular search engines to find information for assignments. "I needed something safe and reliable to offer students to do their research. I saw that our district already subscribed to Gale databases. Gale turned out to be the perfect solution," says Beal. She is continuously helping teachers learn how to utilize *Research In Context* and become comfortable with other *In Context* products to demonstrate their value.

Another problem Beal noticed was that students weren't citing their work. Her response: "How can I get the teachers and students on these databases?" Beal didn't want to add to teachers' already full plates, but knew it would be beneficial for students and teachers to use the resources available to them. If students are taught an easier workflow, they are more prepared for success in an ever-changing technical world. Integrated directly into the user's workflow, *Research In Context*'s formatted citations can be easily imported from single or multiple documents to services like EasyBib or NoodleTools.

It was also imperative that students had access to quality articles that they could refer to for writing samples. Articles pulled randomly from the internet often haven't been edited for accuracy or proper grammar. According to Beal, *Research In Context* gives students "a safe zone to get their information. I tell them, 'The information you find in Gale has been vetted. That is, you don't have to worry about fake news. The people at Gale make sure the documents you pull up are reliable.' I also feel safe directing our middle school students to a place where there are no advertisements, especially inappropriate advertisements."

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EMPOWER™ OUTCOMES

> *"Access to databases made it easier to find spoken language sources for my students with reading disabilities and for my English-language learners to interact with. My students appreciate the fact that they could read any article in either English or Spanish."*

Kyle Knott,
Special Education Teacher,
Sequoia Middle School
Fresno, CA

BRIDGING THE GAP

SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND FAMILIES

Before Beal became the school's teacher librarian, teachers and students did not utilize the services available through the library and teacher librarian. This made it challenging for Beal to find something she could offer teachers that would be worth taking up valuable class time. "Having *Research In Context* and gradually introducing databases to students was doable. They get it. And the teachers are really happy with it too," says Beal. Before introducing *Research In Context*, her students didn't know what databases were. Now, they're able to navigate through the databases using highlights and notes, leveraging cross-search functionality, and creating citations for Works Cited pages—skills they'll need in high school and college.

Students are fortunate to have tablets in their core classes, a computer lab, and computers in the library. But they are also encouraged to use Gale's databases at home. As a benefit to students, Gale products allow users to gain access to databases with just a single sign-on through services like Google, Microsoft, ClassLink, and Clever. This builds a collaborative environment for students and helps them be more efficient. Beal says, "I like the fact that they can go home—if they have internet access—and there is a resource for them to write their reports or even share with family members." Having a resource that translates English to Spanish has proven invaluable. "That's something wonderful that we can offer to our population here in Fresno," adds Beal.

The special education department has also found value in Gale's databases. Kyle Knott, the 7th and 8th grade special education teacher, says, "Access to databases made it easier to find spoken language sources for my students with reading disabilities and for my English-language learners to interact with." Teachers can accommodate diverse backgrounds with Readspeaker text-to-speech technology and on-demand article translation to over 20 languages. Readspeaker text-to-speech technology lets users download audio files and save them onto any mobile device to be read aloud at the user's convenience.

THE RESULT

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

In addition to the above, teachers like Knott have noticed that weekly test scores improved during units that included the spoken-language sources. Teachers are excited to have access to trusted resources that support curriculum and help students develop the skills needed in college and in their future careers. Beal continues to lead tutorials on products like Gale's *Research In Context* and many others, and expects to see an even bigger surge in usage. "If the teachers easily adopt it, the kids will like and use it too," says Beal. There are still many good things to come for Sequoia Middle School.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PRODUCT

gale.com/ric

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