

Learning through
Books, Media and Technology

Good Ideas!

Compelling Ideas for Administrators, Teachers, the PTA, and the School Board

All students deserve exemplary programs like these.

CSLA is proud to present "Good Ideas" for creating information literate students.

1998 Administrative Leadership Award

Dr. Ruben Zacarias

"In his first three months as superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District, Dr. Ruben Zacarias did more for school libraries than all the superintendents preceding him — put together!" That bold statement by Bonnie O'Brian, LAUSD supervisor of Library Services, is clearly under-



lined by the accomplishments noted at the end of this article.

In the second largest district in the country, the job of building a library program seemed almost overwhelming. Since Dr. Zacarias believes the library media program is integral to raising student achievement because it supports reading, standards, and the curriculum, he is committed to rebuilding the corps of library media teachers to 1:1000. Furthermore, since he believes the size of the library book collection is the best predictor of student achievement, he is committed to raising the number of books to the national average of 18 per student. Because of Dr. Zacarias, libraries have become an instructional priority in Los Angeles and an inspiration to other districts.

► Dr. Ruben Zacarias, Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified School District
(Grades K-12, enrollment 681,505)
450 North Grand Avenue, Room A-223
Los Angeles 90012; (213) 625-6251

AREA	PAST	PRESENT
District allocation for library books	None	\$4 per student (\$2.7 mil.)
Elementary library aides	10 (8-hour aides) 103 (3-hour aides)	10 (8-hour aides) 412 (3-hour aides)
District plan for libraries	None	Resolution (5-year plan) unanimously approved by Board of Education
Elementary library media teachers	None	Goal: hire 72 per year for the next 5 years
Districtwide funding and coordination of library services	1 supervisor 1 coordinator	1 supervisor 6 coordinators; clerical staff (\$.55 mil. allocated)
ESEA Title VI per pupil allocation for library/learning resources	\$3.00 per pupil	\$4.27 per pupil
Library media clerks for secondary schools	None funded by district	Incentive of \$15,000 for books if site hires clerk
Secondary library media teachers	LMTs in all	LMTs in all; 2 if over 3,000 students

THIS ISSUE
Creating
Information
Literate
Students

A Note to Administrators, Teachers, the PTA, and the School Board

Information literacy, not just literacy, is the key to a student's future. If students can read and understand information using a variety of resources, extract the information they need to accomplish their task, combine it with information from other resources, and synthesize their findings into a usable form, they are on their way to information literacy.

How can we help students onto the information literacy highway? The most effective and efficient way is to mobilize the powerful resources of the library media center, the curricular expertise of the classroom teacher, and the information literacy expertise of the library media teacher to create meaningful projects that enable students to learn *how* to learn as they learn.

The six schools highlighted in the 1998 *Good Ideas* publication demonstrate a commitment to this collaborative learning philosophy and have developed projects worth replicating and expanding upon. These schools are worth a visit if you are looking for innovative curriculum leadership, technology integration, and learning resources management. We hope you find these good ideas helpful in your own quest for excellence and encourage you to share *your* good ideas with us in next year's publication.

1998 President's Award Gail Ann Richmond



Each year the CSLA President's Award, sponsored by Demco, honors a library media teacher who exemplifies excellence in all areas of the profession. The winner must be a model teacher, an outstanding information specialist, and an active instructional consultant — job descriptions that fit Gail Ann Richmond to a . . . to an LMT!

Gail's library career began early. As a child in Hammond, Indiana, she worked at the school library and later, as a college student, worked summers in the public library. She graduated from Purdue University in 1973 and earned both English and media credentials.

For 25 years, Gail Ann Richmond's library media career has spanned every educational level, both public and private, in Colorado, Oregon, and fortunately for us, California. Her students have included elementary children, middle and high schoolers, and college students working toward their degrees as library media teachers.

Gail's dream has been to be able to create an information center for the twenty-first century, a dream now proceeding full tilt at Scripps Ranch High School. Hired in 1992 to plan the facility, Gail spent a

year working with key teachers, administrators, community members, parents, and soon-to-be students on curriculum and developing an appropriate collection spanning every information need. Because of her efforts, the Scripps Ranch High School library media center has developed into an outstanding example of information literacy in action.

According to her principal, David P. LeMay, Gail is, first and foremost, a teacher whose dedication is demonstrated daily as she collaborates with faculty and students facilitating research. She serves as an information specialist and technology advisor to the school and the cluster that feeds it. She is also an unselfish curriculum consultant, who shares knowledge regarding instruction and the teaching and learning process at all levels.

In recognition of a library media teacher who has fully earned the respect of her peers, her students, and her profession, CSLA is pleased to present Gail Ann Richmond with its 1998 President's Award.

► Scripps Ranch High School (Grades 9–12, enrollment 1,991)
10410 Treena Street, San Diego 92131; (619) 621-9020
David P. LeMay, Principal
Gail Ann Richmond, Library Media Teacher
San Diego Unified School District

1998 Technology Award Lisa Politzer



During the 13 years Lisa Politzer has been at Torrey Pines High School, enormous changes have taken place technologically, and most of the credit goes to library media teacher Lisa Politzer. Determined to create a technology model for the district, Lisa started making it happen in 1985 when she coauthored a five-year district library plan that resulted in a district allocation of lottery monies to media centers. In 1988 she chaired a faculty and community committee responsible for authoring the A.B. 1470 technology grant, which seeded the library's first network of four computers and a fileserver. In 1989 Lisa and a corps of dedicated parents founded the Friends of the TPHS Library, which has been nationally recognized for providing support and assistance in accomplishing many technology-based goals. In 1994, she and a group of parents formed a Technology Boosters organization, which continues to add hardware and software to the media center. The same year, while a member of the Site Council, Lisa coauthored and lobbied for the inclusion of a technology goal in the School Improvement Plan, which has resulted in more than \$130,000 being earmarked for campus technology.

Since fall of 1997, she has served as site project coordinator for S.B. 1510 and the Digital High School grant, and she is responsible for leading a school team

in developing and implementing technology, curriculum, and staff training.

Lisa feels strongly about parent and community involvement and keeps in touch through a monthly parent newsletter column focusing on technology, curriculum, and the media center. Lisa meets with every student to review the district's new computer and Internet use policy and conducts workshops with teachers and parents to investigate and inform them of curriculum-relevant web sites.

Today, with the media center's networked computers, students have access to many learning resources unimaginable a few years ago, and Lisa is looking forward to expanding the existing media center to accommodate the ever-growing needs of the school. Principal Marie Grey notes that Lisa "is completely dedicated to the advancement of educational technology in our school instructional program . . . There are not enough superlatives in the English language to adequately convey the impact Lisa has had on our school, our staff and students, and on our community."

► Torrey Pines High School (Grades 9–12, enrollment 2,300)
710 Encinitas Boulevard, Encinitas 92024; (619) 755-0125
Marie Grey, Principal
Lisa Politzer, Library Media Teacher
San Dieguito Union High School District

The Roaring 20's: Humanities as Context for Literature

Chatsworth High School

Janet Sklar, library media teacher at L.A. Unified's 3,200-student Chatsworth High, encourages English teachers to use a humanities approach to teaching literature by studying the politics, world events, economics, architecture, music, and art of the time period that might have influenced an author's work. Using this approach, students not only gain a heightened enjoyment of the literary work, but gain knowledge in history and understanding of the world.

Using this approach to literature, Janet collaborated with a new teacher facing her first experience teaching *The Great Gatsby*. Together, they brainstormed topics that would apply to the

book, and as the new teacher learned more about the twenties herself, she was able to choose which topics she should emphasize in class.

Using topics such as prohibition, inventions, technology, fashions, and sports as a project framework, students reading the novel worked in small research groups using books, journals, microfiche, CD-ROM programs, and the Internet.

Students shared their group projects with the class and reported that the novel came alive because of their new understanding of the events of the time period. The teacher and library media teacher also were excited by the projects, stating that they accomplished their curricular objectives, engaged all students at every academic level, and utilized the library media center to effectively develop increased information literacy skills.

► Chatsworth High School (grades 9–12, enrollment 3,200)
10027 Lurline Avenue, Chatsworth; (818) 341-6211
Fran Ramirez, Principal
Janet Sklar, Library Media Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District



Researching and illustrating the era adds new dimensions to *The Great Gatsby*.

Seniors' Supreme Court

Redwood High School

Seniors at Redwood High participate in a Supreme Court simulation in collaboration with the social studies teacher, the library media teacher, and each other. The simulation serves as a model of significant student research and authentic performance. Students work in small groups researching different aspects of the judicial branch of government: one



A Redwood senior, as defense lawyer, explains her case to Supreme Court judges.

student writes a profile on a Supreme Court justice and his/her decisions; other group members research individual cases, drawing on the constitutional issues and precedents. As a group, they choose how they will defend or

prosecute the case, with two students in each group acting as lawyers.

On the day of the "hearing," nine justices (in black robes), each armed with at least three questions for each lawyer, hear the cases, which are videotaped by students. After both sides have presented their cases, the justices discuss and debate the issue and the chief justice writes the decision (while



Time for the final Supreme Court judgment (a la Redwood).



Shooting down an argument, a senior prosecuting attorney gets agreement from the court.

the remaining seven each submit their individual decisions, including support). Lawyers submit their research, speeches, and notes. Cases and decisions must include constitutional issues and precedents supplied by the lawyers and research for the cases. Afterward, all students write a self-evaluation based on their experiences and their critiques of their own performances on videotape.

The Supreme Court project was originally designed by the classroom teacher, Jeanine Laughran, whose subsequent collaboration with Dr. Lesley S.J. Farmer, library media teacher, enabled the project to become streamlined and tremendously deeper. Students come to the library with topics, which are then focused through instruction on research strategies. Lesley strengthened the library collection to support the project, purchasing numerous reference materials on the Constitution, the Supreme Court, and notable cases. She also created a WebQuest on Supreme Court resources, including good web site links, that was placed on the library's web page for ongoing use.

The project is an outstanding example of rigorous curriculum, assessment, and collaboration on the part of the Redwood High information literacy team.

► Redwood High School (grades 9–12, enrollment 1,300)
395 Doherty Drive, Larkspur 94939; (415) 945-3663
Greg Duffey, Principal
Dr. Lesley S.J. Farmer, Library Media Teacher
Tamalpais Union High School District

Resource-based Learning for Resource Students

Ridgeview High School

One of library media teacher Pat Lindsay's goals since Ridgeview High opened in 1994 has been to include *all* the students in resource-based learning. Just when Pat was considering possible projects for a literacy grant from the Kern Reading Association, special education teacher Erin Hure mentioned how frustrated she was because her students had such a limited exposure to a literature-based curriculum. Pat and Erin put their heads together and came up with a biography project that would introduce these students

to people, places, and technologies they'd never experienced before!

First, the teachers perused the library's holdings for materials accessible to students reading at third-to-sixth-grade levels and found that purchasing high interest/low ability biographies would be a vital part



Teacher Erin Hure and two of her students in the classroom with their biography posters.

vent fatigue and to provide variety in the day's work. By the third visit, students were able to move into the library's computer lab to access Encarta as an additional source.

With Erin and Pat supporting them all along the way, these students did more research — and increasingly more and more independent research — than anyone had ever expected they could or would. By choosing their own biographical subjects and by having the biographies available, students also were motivated to do more independent reading than many had ever done before. Students were proud to share their culminating biography displays.

By participating in resource-based activities, these special education resource students not only learned they could succeed in a complex task requiring multiple sources and steps, they learned that the school library is available to them and the staff is there to help.

Pat and Erin plan to expand on the project next year and include writing a biography of someone the students know, as well as researching a city or state project, which will provide entrée into use of the Internet.

- Ridgeview High School (grades 9–12, enrollment 2,000)
8501 Stine Road, Bakersfield 93313; (805) 398-3100
Bill Jones, Principal
Pat Lindsay, Library Media Teacher
Kern High School District



Librarian Pat Lindsay and special ed teacher Erin Hure look over two student posters.



Erin and three of her students with their posters.

of the Reading Association grant. The biography project would be the first library experience for most of these students, so it was important to work on basic locational skills (where biographies are kept and how the spine label constitutes a book's "address," etc.) and keep the library times frequent and brief to pre-

Kid-Friendly Big Six Brochure Makes For Terrific Research

Southeast Middle School

Anyone who has experienced Margaret Baker — either in her daily role as library media teacher at Southeast Middle School or as an instructor in the library media program at Fresno Pacific — knows that she's a model for resource-based learning and for designing really great forms. In the process of col-

laborating extensively with classroom teachers on a wide variety of projects, Margaret has designed and developed beautiful, student-friendly materials that help guide children through that process and ensure that they transfer those skills from project to project.

When Southeast Middle School opened in 1995, Margaret spent the entire year building the collection and orga-

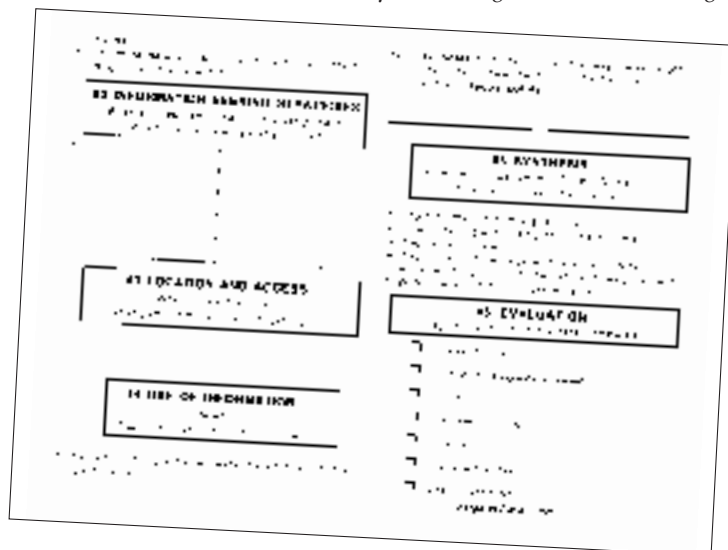
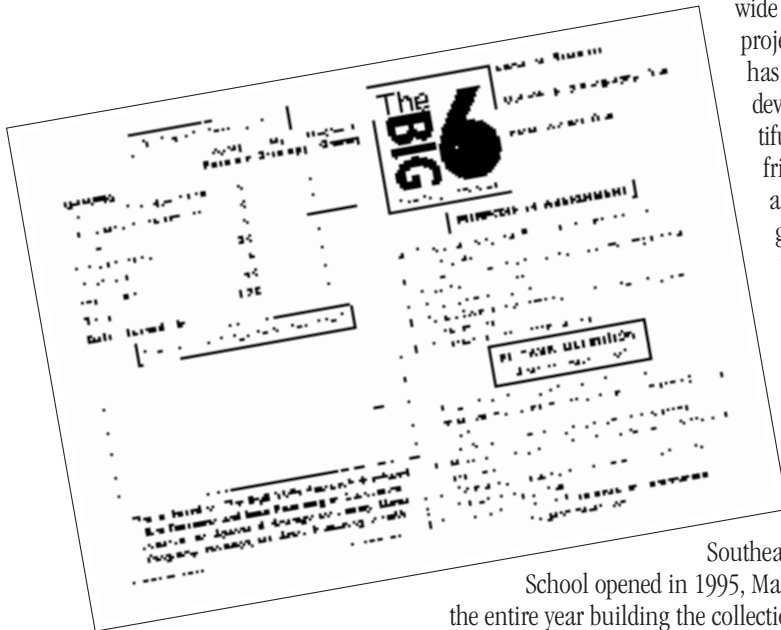
nizing the massive technology (a magnet school, SEMS has over 250 computers alone). In 1996, finally able to implement a resource-based learning program, Margaret collaborated with seventh grade science teacher Debbie Rogers on a project introducing students to the periodic table — and to the world of the library media center, a brave new world to most of the students, over 96 percent of whom are minority students. Encouraged by the students' success in learning basic research skills, in 1997–98 Margaret and Debbie designed a project about scientists, their lives and their science, for the same students — now eighth graders.

Since all acknowledged that the process was more important than the product (which, in a technology magnet school is likely to be snazzy), Margaret designed a brochure for students to work through that provides an accessible route through the Big Six process. This route can be adjusted to emphasize whichever step(s) the teacher is most interested in having students learn and can be revised to reflect nearly any research project.

The Researching Scientists brochure (reproduced here) asks students to reflect on each step of the Big Six process and provides a format for turning those responses into action. The front page elucidates Task Definition (#1) and includes a parent signature requirement. Inside is a definition of Information Seeking Strategies (#2), along with space for listing possible resources. Location and Access (#3) requires the student to consider where each source is located. Use of Information (#4) directs students to take notes (using other forms Margaret has created). Synthesis (#5) moves the student through organizing the information and creating the product. On the back page, Evaluation (#6) provides the grading format, with requirements clearly spelled out and evaluation required by student and teacher.

The brochure is a really Good Idea! We hope you'll latch onto it, use it, and create one of your own.

► Southeast Middle School (grades 7–8, enrollment 450)
5090 East Church Avenue, Fresno 93725; (209) 265-2630
David Gonzalez, Principal
Margaret Baker, Library Media Teacher
Fresno Unified School District



To Ireland with Love

Olive Vista Middle School

“Why does Ms. O’Neill talk funny?” This question, posed by students in a learning disabilities class, was the catalyst of a collaborative project between Christine O’Neill, the special education exchange teacher from Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and library media teacher Leona Cook. It was called “To Ireland with Love.”

The students researched information about Ireland in both hard copy and electronic encyclopedias, library books, and maps. With background knowledge about Ireland in hand, these learning-disabled kids then established connections via e-mail with students in Ireland to exchange ideas, interests, and schoolwork.



Olive Vista students choose research as their first stop on the journey.

Christine O’Neill’s part of the project was to monitor the students’ word processing and establish an electronic mail address for them. She helped students do much of their reading and note taking in short periods in the classroom, thus tailoring instruction to their shorter attention spans.

Leona Cook taught students how to locate books using the electronic card catalog and how to locate information in the encyclopedias. To meet the special learning needs of the children, Leona taught skills lessons at the point of need and at the students’ level. For example, she reviewed the alphabet and had students identify the location of the letter “I” (for



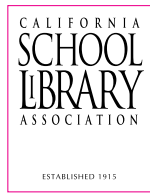
Computers make the Ireland connection.

Ireland) before looking for the volume they needed. Then she had them identify where in the alphabet the second letter of Ireland, “r,” would be in the alphabet. She also had them compare and contrast what they knew about their home country or state and Ireland. Using a wall map, Leona had students compare the distance between California and Ireland and between California and Mexico, the country of origin for many of the students. She also visited the classroom to announce the arrival of e-mail.

Victor Melgar, the library technician, was another project collaborator, responsible for maintaining the hardware and software and compiling the student work, cutting and pasting the display, creating a banner, and helping students with their questions.

Leona, Victor, and Christine met regularly with each other and the children throughout the project. The students did their very best writing in their e-mail correspondence with the Londonderry school and eagerly awaited responses, frequently surprised and pleased by how much they all had in common. The culminating project, assembled by Victor and the students, was displayed in the Resource Center for Open House. What a joyful, successful project — a really Good Idea!

► Olive Vista Middle School (grades 6–8, enrollment 1,729)
14600 Tyler Street, Sylmar 91342; (818) 367-1071
Charles Baldwin III, Principal
Leona Cook, Library Media Teacher
Los Angeles Unified School District



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Illuminations

Tenaya Middle School



Students find the Illuminations project even more illuminating than they expected!

One of the highlights of seventh grade at Tenaya Middle School is a collaborative project between library media teacher Sandra Mobley, the social studies teachers, the language arts teachers, and nearly every student. As kids are reading *Catherine, Called Birdy* in language arts and studying the Middle Ages in social studies, the three teachers collaborate with each other and the students on a research project called "Illuminations."

In groups of four, students create a 26-page illuminated manuscript alphabet book, the content of which must be focused on the Middle Ages. After learning illumination techniques, students begin work on the pages, each of which contains the appropriate letter (colorfully illuminated, of course) fol-

lowed by the results of research on a medieval topic beginning with that letter. For example, the "C" page in the book might be about castles, chivalry, chain mail, Charlemagne, etc. . . . the "S" page might be about serfs, scribes, or squires. Students then record their information (at least 100 words) and fill the page with designs or pictures related to their topics.

Students must use note cards, record bibliographic information, research print and nonprint resources, write rough drafts, create title pages, produce biographical sketches of authors, make front and back covers, and compose a dedication page as part of this research and bookmaking process.

Since modifications to this project are relatively easy to make, "Illuminations" has proven extremely successful with all students, no matter the language or ability background. In fact, because students have so much fun producing their illuminated alphabet books, they hardly notice they are learning the research process along the way.

► Tenaya Middle School (grades 6–9, enrollment 780)
760 West Eighth Street, Merced 95340; (209) 385-6322
Pamela Atkinson, Principal
Sandra Mobley, Library Media Teacher
Merced City School District



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MARY HOFMANN, JANIS KESSLER, AND CHELA CORTEZ, *Editors*