



Michael Dodes

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OVIC Delivers High-Quality, Accessible Resources to NYC High School Students

Michael Dodes is an active member of the library community. Among other positions, he serves on the Advisory Committee of the American Library Association's Office of Information Technology and has taught bibliographic instruction at CUNY Bronx Community College. In his current day job, Michael is a Library Information Specialist at A. Philip Randolph Campus High School (APRCHS) in Manhattan, New York. When students and instructors head to the library, Michael helps them get the most out of available resources—and one he often recommends for its quality and accessibility is the *Opposing Viewpoints in Context (OVIC)* from Gale. “*Opposing Viewpoints* meets a targeted educational need,” he says.

THE CHALLENGE—A DEARTH OF CREDIBLE YET ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

Educators at APRCHS work hard to equip the public school's 1300 students with the skills they'll need to succeed in college and beyond. That includes knowing how to conduct research, write papers, and prepare for debates and presentations. Until recently, it was a challenge for Michael to help students find and use appropriate resources, because the state databases available to them weren't geared toward education or younger users. Students had to go to a public library to access such materials. When New York State invested in an educational database for upper grade levels—OVIC—the benefits were immediately evident.

“We have to teach students to use multiple resources and multiple presentation mediums,” says Michael. “Of the resources that are currently available to us, especially vetted and credible resources, Gale's is the best. Students find Gale products more accessible.”

VETTED, HIGH-QUALITY ARTICLES

Opposing Viewpoints is a database that draws on the acclaimed social issues series published by Greenhaven Press, as well as core reference content from Gale and Macmillan Reference USA sources, to provide a rich source for information on social issues. Users gain access to pro and con *Viewpoint* articles, topic overviews, statistics, primary documents, images, links to websites, and full-text magazine and newspaper articles. As such, *OVIC* assists students in researching, analyzing, and organizing a broad variety of data for their assignments.

“The *OVIC* articles are extremely helpful in that they're a blend of academic research and more accessible commentary. Students like the *Viewpoints*,” explains Michael. “The periodical functions are also much more accessible for high school students than other databases. In *OVIC*, the articles have credibility and value, but are written in a way that works for students—they're briefer and more in the sound bite format that students prefer.”

CHALLENGE

- Public high school students had no convenient source of high-quality, easy-to-use reference materials that were also at an appropriate reading level.

SOLUTION

- *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*

RESULTS

- Students gain quick and convenient access to resources that assist them in researching and preparing writing assignments and other projects.
- They also become more information literate by learning to recognize high-quality resources and developing the online search skills that they will need to succeed in college.
- Instructors save time designing research projects with *OVIC*'s easy-to-use search and navigation tools, comprehensive coverage of social issues, variety of content formats, and reputable sources.
- Citation tools ensure that students document sources correctly while driving home the importance of accurate documentation.
- *Viewpoint* pro-and-con essays promote critical thinking by demonstrating how issues typically have no single “right” answer.

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To learn more about
this and other resources
provided by Gale, visit:
www.gale.cengage.com

FRIENDLY INTERFACE, EASY SEARCHES

Students access *OVIC* from the library’s website. “The splash page offering of subjects has been helpful with students when they have a general assignment, such as ‘write a paper on a topic that interests you,’” says Michael. “The pre-filtered list of topics offers many choices.” Michael shows students how to run a general search and use subject terms on the left side of the page to narrow their topic, noting that the Gale database is strong on that front. Students can also search by content type, e.g., magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. In addition, Michael says that students make use of the options to print or e-mail articles; other students store articles in their phones. Users can also download and bookmark items.

“I honestly can’t think of a way to make the interface better. If you added much more to the splash page it would become overwhelming. If you subtracted from it to take a Google-like approach then users wouldn’t see the richness in it until they ran a search. Now, there’s a good balance.”

THE RIGHT TOOL IN THE RIGHT HANDS

When asked about the results of using *OVIC*, Michael says, “The main one is that students use more credible sources. They’re getting exposure to sources that have academic value and that they would use beyond high school.” In addition, he says that once he shows students the *OVIC* citation tools—which are mapped to the latest MLA and APA standards—they use them. “Students are often confused by the need for citations and how they’re done. Any shortcut we can hand them is helpful.”

Michael gives *OVIC* credit for playing a supporting role on students’ path to success. “Student success is a product of good instruction, effective resources, and student participation,” he says. “Gale plays a role in the sense that teachers are able to create better projects, spend less time gathering materials, and be assured that students are using credible resources.”

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