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Catch the CyberWave:

Building Teacher/Librarian Partnerships in the Middle School Environment

by Mary Beth Pearl
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Just as the school library media center has moved far beyond a room with books to become an active, technology-rich learning environment with an array of information resources, the school library media specialist today focuses on the process of learning rather than dissemination of information.

—INFORMATION POWER, 1998

Cascade Middle School students in Bend, Oregon, acquire the skills they need to harness and use information for a productive and fulfilling life, thanks to a program that integrates technology and research skills with classroom instruction. Romona Greeno, school librarian, has developed and implemented a model for teaching information literacy objectives at the same time students learn subject area content. This collaborative approach among Greeno and fellow teachers works!

Greeno's instructional strategies involve cooperation with teachers to provide students both the "what" and the "how" for completing exciting research projects. In Cascade Middle School's library you will find students searching for information in all kinds of resources. However, more often than not they are finding the data they need on Web sites. Greeno uses the library's computer lab to teach students how to perform efficient searches and how to select the most valuable information sources.

Teaching Information Literacy at Cascade Middle School Typically, a teacher will come to Greeno with the germ of an idea for student research. Working together, they plan and organize the project, checking for available resources, and scheduling time in the library. The goals and objectives are defined for both the content learning and skill building. Expectations are clearly identified and communicated to the students at the beginning of the project.

When the students arrive in the library, Greeno teaches them how to organize and conduct research using Internet resources, and other electronic and print media. She guides them to the school library's Web page, which has links to all sorts of appropriate information sources, such

as the EBSCO databases and World Book Online. The Cascade Middle School Library's Web site, created by Greeno, is an outstanding example of valuable links for students, teachers, and parents. To see the content of this site and how it has been organized, visit

<http://www.bend.k12.or.us/cascadems2/library/index.htm>

With few exceptions, the research projects culminate in class presentations. Each student is scored individually using the state scoring guide for speaking, which measures progress toward the benchmark for that content standard. Greeno teaches students how to organize and prepare their presentations using Power Point, Hyperstudio, Web page construction, and other audiovisual aids. The resulting student work demonstrates both quality and individuality.

Finally, each student is required to prepare a written bibliography. Again, Greeno provides instruction for creating bibliographies and citing sources properly, using examples for all types of media. Students learn how to collect the data they will need for citing the sources as they gather the information for their project.

To see examples of some of the topics used for collaborative projects developed by Romona Greeno and the Cascade Middle School staff, enter the following Web page and click on any of the curriculum links there.

<http://www.bend.k12.or.us/cascadems2/library/studentint.htm>

The following site on immigration is a wonderful example of collaboration among Romona, a social studies teacher and an English teacher.

http://www.bend.k12.or.us/cascadems2/owings/immigration_simulation.htm


Catch the CyberWave Project

This past year the Bend-La Pine School District provided a unique staff development opportunity for other middle school teachers in the district to learn about Cascade Middle School's exemplary library media program. Grant funds provided the means for teachers in other middle



Tracking down a resource

schools to observe the library program in action and to attend workshops provided by Cascade media specialist Romona Greeno describing the student instruction and the teacher/librarian collaboration in planning the research projects. This program, *Catch the CyberWave*, has enabled Bend-La Pine middle school teachers to see an outstanding media specialist in action and to learn more about what is widely considered to be the best practice for teaching students information literacy skills.

Middle school teachers participating the *Catch the CyberWave* staff development project first attend a half-day workshop presented by Romona Greeno and held in the Cascade Middle School computer lab. At the workshop, teachers learn about Greeno's program, become familiar with the resources Cascade students use, and see examples of student projects. Each teacher then arranges for a half-day observation at Cascade Middle School for another time when Greeno is working directly with students as they prepare for or conduct their research in the library. The purpose of the staff development project is to encourage district educators to develop a plan replicating the media program in their own schools, so each *Catch the CyberWave* participant completes a brief evaluation that includes a vision for implementing the program at the home school. 

Reference

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. American Library Association, Chicago.

About Romona Greeno

Romona Greeno is highly respected by her colleagues for her contributions to teaching and technology. Last spring she was honored with the Educational Excellence Award presented by the Central Oregon Region of the University of Oregon Alumni Association. She also received the Distinguished Educator Award from the Bend Branch of the American Association of University Women. She has been honored twice with the Bend Foundation's Excellence in Teaching award, and received the Oregon Educational Media Association's Library Media Specialist of the Year Award as well.



Romona Greeno helping a student choose the best resource.

Students must become skillful consumers and producers of information in a range of sources and formats to thrive personally and economically in the communication age.

Library media programs must be dynamic, enthusiastic, and student centered to help ensure that all students achieve this status.

—INFORMATION POWER, 1998

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Preparing his bibliography