

FUELING PERFORMANCE THROUGH ACCESS

Opposing Viewpoints In Context: Usage increases following classroom integration.

“Integrating OVIC with the classroom provides unlimited access to credible information and turns students into repeat users of the library.”



Mark Gottschalk
Public Services Librarian,
South Plains College

INTEGRATING THE LIBRARY INTO CAMPUS LIFE

At South Plains College in Levelland, Texas, it's Mark Gottschalk's mission to increase the value the library provides on campus. The library staff routinely seeks out new ways to improve the access students have to library materials. "The library's primary mission is to support the academic, vocational-technical, continuing education, and community service needs of our students, faculty, staff, and the greater community," Gottschalk says. "My personal mission is to find ways to make the library a more used and integrated part of the college community."

One way Gottschalk fulfills both of these missions is by partnering with Gale, a Cengage company. To help drive academic success, Gale provides libraries with educational content, services, and tools to aid in research and instruction. "Gale is by far my favorite to work with," Gottschalk says. "They do a great job trying to understand our needs as a library and how our students and faculty access the library."

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

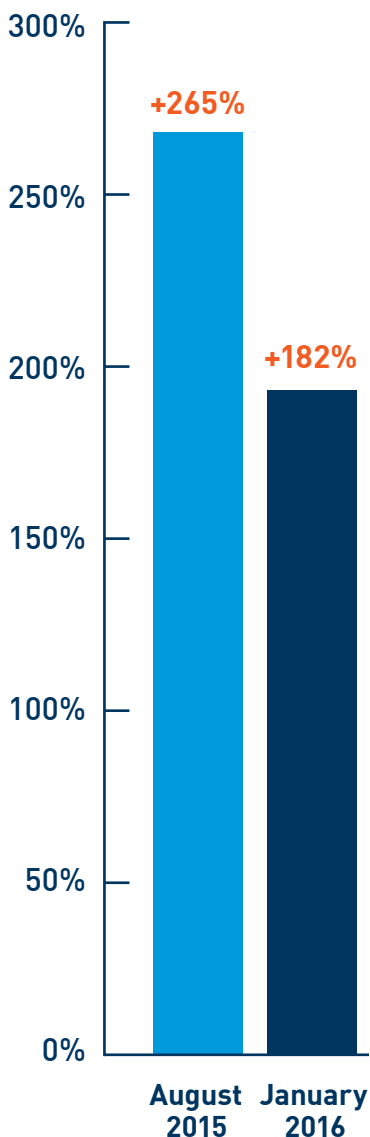
OVERCOMING THE ACCESS GAP

For optimal academic performance, students at South Plains College need broad access to a wide variety of vetted and trusted reference materials they can use to create high-quality, well-rounded research papers that accurately illuminate a wide range of perspectives. While the South Plains library housed a physical copy of Gale's *Opposing Viewpoints*, student access was limited. "There was only one copy," Gottschalk says. "Students would often come to the library and it would already be checked out."

Not only did the limited access prevent students from accessing materials necessary for outstanding academic performance, it also meant instructors weren't able to assist students as it simply wasn't convenient or possible to order additional copies. "It was really an issue," Gottschalk says. "Students could not get the materials they needed."

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**MONTHLY USAGE
GROWTH
FOLLOWING
INTEGRATION
INITIATIVES**



BRIDGING THE GAP

INTEGRATION WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

Once South Plains College had access to Gale’s *Opposing Viewpoints In Context (OVIC)* digital database, which houses tens of thousands of pro/con viewpoints, reference articles, and multimedia elements students can access on any device, Gottschalk saw an opportunity to further fulfill his mission by ensuring students who had been doing without the reference materials they needed would have the unlimited access they deserve.

Initially, Gottschalk learned that Blackboard, the college’s learning management system, wasn’t integrated and barely contained any of the digital reference materials housed in the library. So he found a couple of early adopters—instructors who already loved *Opposing Viewpoints*—and set out to prove to instructors the campuswide benefits of integrating *OVIC* databases within their classrooms.

“Gale databases helped us bridge the gap,” Gottschalk says. “I like to show faculty the ‘why’ of why they should do something, which is more focused access for students and instructors.”

Thanks to the library’s word-of-mouth marketing, word quickly spread among instructors and made the integration a focal point during employee orientation. The integration really took flight once students became aware of the unlimited access they now enjoyed. “We go to students and they come to the library as well,” Gottschalk says. “Students will email the library directly if they have a problem. Usage has gone up tremendously.”

THE RESULTS

UNLIMITED ACCESS RESULTS IN INCREASED USAGE

Gottschalk’s successful integration initiative, which began in 2015 and is now showing dramatic increases in *OVIC* usage metrics, is also yielding a variety of additional benefits. “Students find the integration to be more user-friendly,” Gottschalk says. “Rather than a massive database listing on the library’s site, instructors can cherry-pick relevant materials for specific classes so it’s less overwhelming for students.”

The narrow focus and improved access is illustrated in a report Gottschalk recently ran and highlights the spike in *OVIC* usage following classroom integration. Highlights from Gottschalk’s report, which covers usage from March 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016, include:

- a **265% increase** in *OVIC* sequential monthly usage following the initial integration initiative in August 2015
- a **182% increase** in *OVIC* sequential monthly usage following the second integration initiative in January 2016
- a **total of 9,040** *OVIC* searches that have produced **4,089 Result Clicks** and **4171 Record Views**