

PowerKnowledge



SOLON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, IOWA

Kathy Kaldenberg, Librarian/Media Specialist

Kathy Kaldenberg started using PowerKnowledge Earth & Space Science, first as a trial resource, and now as a satisfied subscriber. She first explored the resource for a sixth grade astronomy project. She was so happy with the breadth of the resource, and the students were so excited by it, that this project prompted them to subscribe and add Physical Science and Life Science, for the complete suite. Here's how Kathy uses PK Suite in her school, and what her students love most about the database.



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AT A GLANCE

- **Students Served:** 1500, PK-12
- **Education Facilities:**
1 elementary, 1 middle school,
1 high school.
- **Notable:** Mobile labs throughout the district and ready access to online resources. Project Lead The Way Engineering program in the middle school and high school.

Describe the project that prompted you to have your students use a PK Science database.

Last fall I spent sixteen class periods collaborating with sixth grade science teacher, Travis Kerkove, for my third year working with his students on their Astronomy inquiry projects. Prior to my first visit, Mr Kerkove spends some time exploring basic information about the solar system, so the students have basic background knowledge from which to start posing real questions about topics of interest.

Ideally, students have several days to explore potential "why" questions using the recommended sources on the "Trustworthy Resources" web page, the majority of which are subscription databases. Students are used to going directly to Google because it always appears to have the answer, with dozens, if not millions of results for any search. Focusing our attention on the content of our online databases helps remind the students that magazines and online reference books are excellent (if not superior) sources of information.

What about PK Earth & Space Science did your students value most?

We were able to trial PK Earth & Space Science during the Astronomy inquiry project and it turned out to be one of the best all round sources for

the students. They loved the concise text, written at their reading level, and the simple, short videos. It was the perfect jumping off point for gathering foundational knowledge before moving on to more sophisticated content from the magazines and newspapers.

As we began our research and note taking process, the students really appreciated the consistent availability of MLA formatted citations for every entry. Nearly every student included at least one PowerKnowledge database citation in their bibliographies.

What led to your decision to subscribe to PK Science Suite?

The PK Earth & Space Science database was so well received by the 6th grade students that I decided it needed to become a permanent part of our suite of resources and I budgeted to purchase it for the current school year. Now, it has become a "go to" reference for our 4th grade students as well and we have added Physical Science and Life Science modules.

There are other features of the databases, such as science fair ideas and lesson plans that we haven't even tapped into. I'm looking forward to sharing these resources with our teachers this year so that we can maximize our investment.