

VOICES of ACCESS

Alternative,
Charter, and
Correctional Education
Schools and
Services

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From the Director's Chair

Practical Research

By Ted Price

Since 1996, the individual ACCESS PAR's have developed research projects based on student need or interest relevant to learning. These disciplined research efforts have resulted in many improvements and have helped establish "best practices" in the classroom. Some of the findings of the 1998-99 action research follow:



- Los Pinos implemented a sustained silent reading program and found a moderate increase in reading and language arts;

- Orange Tustin PAR found that the greatest improvements in reading scores occurred when students participated in both the multi-sensory Project READ program and computer-assisted instruction;

- Orange Tustin PAR confirmed that the combination of math manipulative, computer-assisted instruction, and instructional packets, used together, yielded the greatest results;

- Lyon PAR improved school district transition success by implementing weekly transition meetings between teachers, psychologists, and group home staff;

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Borcoman's Class Braves New World of Technology

By Wendy Rogan

Picture the classroom of the next millennium. A video conference center has replaced the chalkboard, allowing students to talk directly to astronauts.

Two robots serve as homeroom monitors. The instructor assists students with projects as diverse as Internet research and computer repair. The students are enthusiastic, yet focused, resisting the temptation to gaze out at the lunar landscape.

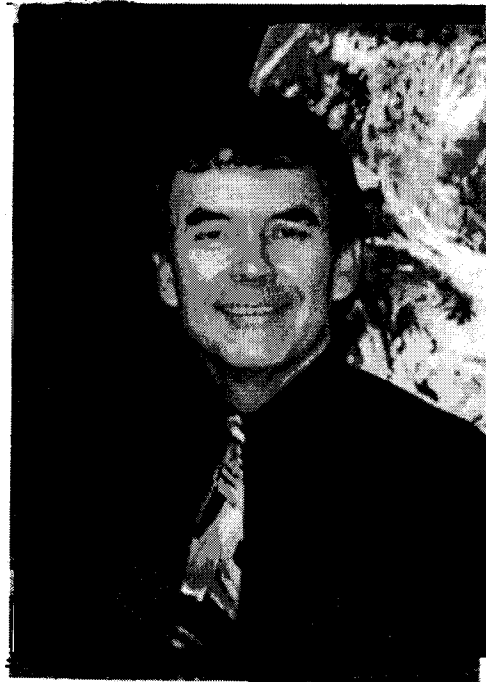
Although it may seem like science fiction, this futuristic setting is actually ACCESS teacher Doug

Borcoman's classroom today. (Okay, so the moonscape is really a wall-sized poster, and the robots are life-size cardboard figures of Star Wars characters R2D2 and C-3PO.)

Borcoman, who teaches at the Single Gender Academy, was recognized recently for his work with technology by the Correctional Education Association. Borcoman was honored in July with the Al Maresh Award, given to one teacher each year by the national organization to recognize exemplary use of computer-assisted instruction in a correctional setting.

According to Borcoman, his program builds upon students' native wonder and curiosity. "The idea is to utilize these resources in order to extend the students' natural abilities through teacher coaching, mentoring, apprenticing, and

cooperative inquiry using modern technology as a medium," Borcoman says.



Students in the elective course complete projects related to one of four stations: editing/videography, web page development, computer maintenance and repair, and multimedia/graphics. Students

assigned to the multimedia/graphics station, for example, design logos and operate digital cameras, while the editing/videography group learn CD burning and create QuickTime movies.

According to Borcoman, boys and girls seem to gravitate equally toward the various skills. Lizette Barrios never thought she would be learning so much about computer technology. The 17-year-old, who is learning how to build and repair computers, hopes to combine her skills in technology with her interest in veterinary medicine as a future career.

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