

Kristin Douglas

Librarian, Hempfield High School, Pennsylvania

(Photo, L to R: Beth Seyfert, Kristin Douglas, Cathi Fuhrman)

Librarian Uses Digital Collection to Provide Higher-Quality Learning Experience for Students

Kristin Douglas, one of three librarians and seven paraprofessional at Hempfield High School in Pennsylvania's Dutch country, knows that the key to being able to teach and support students is having a well-staffed library. She also knows exactly what she's up against when it comes to students' online expectations. "Students come into the library and immediately expect to find online resources," Douglas said. "They're used to finding information online and want to search that way in the school library as well."

As the district transitions from a print to cloud-based library collection, Douglas and her colleagues understand the library will be compared to popular online destinations students have become accustomed to using outside the classroom. It means part of Douglas' job is to break poor student research habits and replace them with behaviors that will help students excel regardless of whether they plan to attend college.

Besides trying to top students' lofty online expectations and persuade them to frequent more authoritative reference materials, Douglas is also on a mission to teach children to be safe online. "We want them to be safe and to take these skills with them when they leave the library," Douglas said.

GALE EMPOWERS LIBRARIANS TO PROVIDE CUSTOMIZED STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The students at Hempfield High, as in most districts, learn at different paces and possess unique needs that cannot be satisfied with a one-size-fits-all digital solution. It's why Douglas turned to Cengage Learning's Gale suite of products, a cloud-based platform that provides digital content, tools, and services designed to promote learning and information discovery in libraries.

Douglas relies on Gale to help her provide the one-on-one attention some students require while simultaneously allowing higher achieving students to progress independently. For instance, Douglas says Gale solutions help her create richer learning environments for ESL students and those who read at lower levels. "I'm able to easily find in-depth content for students who need help with their reading," Douglas said. "At the same time ESL students can use Gale to change languages in the course material which aids in comprehension."

The Gale suite of products contains many of the same reference materials students can find on Douglas' traditional book shelves. However, the benefit to using Gale is that now all of that material is easily searchable. "It pulls in well known content and I can find every topic I have ever looked for there," Douglas said.

STUDENTS TRUST GALE OVER MORE POPULAR ONLINE TOOLS FOR CREDIBLE RESEARCH SOURCES

Douglas' digital collection is attracting students even when they're not required to be at the library. "Students get research passes and come to the library for individual help and we show them how to use Gale products to do their research," Douglas said.



CHALLENGES

- Librarian tasked with making digital library resources students' first choice for research projects, despite more popular free online tools.
- Providing ESL and struggling learners with the special attention they need while allowing high-achievers to move more quickly.

SOLUTIONS

- Cengage Learning's Gale suite of products, which includes digital content, tools, and services for libraries.

RESULTS

- Academic performance increases as students now consistently choose more credible sources for research projects.
- Gale enables instructors to customize student learning experiences based on unique requirements.

“The tools are excellent and help ESL and students who read at lower levels get the special attention they need to succeed academically.”

Kristin Douglas

Librarian

Hempfield High School

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

Instructors no longer allow students to take the easy way out and cite Wikipedia or Google in their research projects. Instead, students now rely on Gale’s GVRL (Gale Virtual Reference Library) databases to do the high-quality work expected of them. “I talk about the difference between searching on your own and using sources that may not be credible and using GVRL,” Douglas said. “They appreciate being able to find everything right there in GVRL.”

In addition to being easy to use, one of the more popular features is the citation tool that provides students the ability to quickly find authoritative articles on pertinent research topics. The tool also provides students with a ready-to-use citation and assures educators students are using trusted sources.

GALE’S REACH EXTENDS BEYOND THE LIBRARY

One of Douglas’ core missions is to use the library to help students become more independent. Gale is helping her accomplish this feat even when students aren’t physically in the library. “Our teachers are really on board,” she said. “They’re helping students use GVRL databases in their classrooms.”

Expect Gale’s reach to continue to expand beyond the library in the future. The district is in the middle of a one-to-one iPad initiative that will put Gale and all of its solutions in the hands of each student. “It’s going to be even easier to use these resources in the future,” Douglas said.

Source Code: M15009913



Cengage Learning is a leading educational content, software and services company, empowering educators and driving learner engagement through personalized services and course-driven digital solutions that bridge from the library to the classroom. Gale, part of Cengage Learning, serves the world’s information and education needs through its vast and dynamic content pools, which are used by students and consumers in their libraries, schools and on the Internet. It is best known for the accuracy, breadth and convenience of its data, addressing all types of information needs – from homework help to health questions to business profiles – in a variety of formats. www.gale.cengage.com

Copyright ©2015 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved.