



Klaudia Janek

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Challenges

- Students in rigorous academic programs need top-notch research resources to help them meet exacting performance standards — including developing 21st century skills such as information literacy, critical thinking, research, collaboration, and global awareness.

Solutions

- A suite of Gale products including *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, *History In Dispute*, *Global Issues in Context*, *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, and others.

Results

- Gale's easy-to-use search features and high-quality, credible resources enable students to develop skills in online research.
- *History in Dispute*, *Global Issues in Context*, and *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* empower students to develop critical thinking skills and to broaden their perspectives through exposure to in-depth analyses as well as to non-U.S. and pro-con viewpoints on compelling issues.



Success Story

GVRL Helps Students at an IB School Meet High Standards for Research Proficiency

Klaudia Janek is the librarian at the Bloomfield Hills campus of the International Academy (IA), a nationally recognized public high school in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, with three campuses serving 1,300 students. The IA is an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, and as such, offers a unique program featuring rigorous academic standards, student-centered learning, and an emphasis on global citizenship. The program works, evidenced by the fact that 66 IA students (22% of the senior class) achieved National Merit status in 2014.

Demonstrating research competence is a fundamental requirement at any IB school, and the *Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL)* is ideally suited to support IA's students in developing a sound set of skills. "The IB program has very high expectations for credible resources, so teachers turn to library resources like *GVRL* to create their lesson plans," says Klaudia. "They have also woven *GVRL* into their curriculum."

Research Project Calls for GVRL's Vast Resources and User-Focused Navigation

Students use *GVRL* frequently, particularly because they need many book sources to complete assignments. *Questia*, *Global Issues in Context*, and *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* are also widely used. "We have found that our sources in *GVRL*, *Questia*, and our other databases meet the school's objectives and rubrics, so I always teach students how to use our virtual library," says Klaudia. "Having high quality research materials in one portal saves students so much time compared to randomly searching free websites and having to determine the credibility of the pieces."

She continues, "Working as a librarian in an IB school presents the opportunity to focus on a more global perspective and to have set expectations regarding information literacy. Research is at the core of the IB curriculum and at the high school level it takes the form of an Extended Essay, a 4,000-word investigation into an academic area that interests the student." Required to earn a diploma, the Extended Essay goes far beyond a traditional report. Students combine the research skills they've learned from 9th grade through the middle of the 11th grade — exploring primary and other sources, conducting an investigation, presenting multiple perspectives before coming up with their own conclusion based on the evidence they found.

Credible, Insightful Sources Empower Students to Critically Examine Issues

"We emphasize the need for students to use credible sources, and *GVRL* is one of the easier sources to use and search," says Klaudia. "Students need to be prepared to do college level research with college level sources. *GVRL* certainly fulfills this



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need. The way the *In Dispute* titles are set up in the form of an inquiry question is valuable to students because this is what they are expected to do with their research project.” (The *History In Dispute* titles address heavily debated questions by offering critical perspectives on major historical events, and provide students with an enhanced understanding of events that are only summarized in history texts.)

Students also complete a history internal assessment that requires them to evaluate sources; they’re taught to consider the opinion, value, purpose, and limitation of the sources they use for research — and *GVRL* “passes” with flying colors. For the required science internal assessment, students come up with a research question and test it, using the *GVRL* databases as resources.

In addition, Klaudia says that new highlighting and annotation features in *GVRL* and *In Context* resources have been popular and have been woven into some student assignments. “We can check to see if they are doing their reading assignments by having them highlight and take notes about their reading. They can do that through *GVRL*, save the document as a PDF, and submit it through Google Classroom. It makes it easy for the students, and it’s paperless, too.”

Students Build Skills That Foster Later Success

IA students put the skills learned in high school to good use. “We have students coming back as alumni saying that the research skills they learned here have helped them in college. We expect them to cite their resources in their writing from 9th grade, so they are quite good at it when they go to college. I am trying to teach them that proper citation is important in academic scholarship and intellectual exchange. By citing the work of others they are establishing credibility, showing respect for others’ work and giving the reader the opportunity to follow up on references out of interest. We also have data results where students score very high when it comes to the quality of their sources. Students don’t necessarily understand how much they are gaining by using credible library resources such as *GVRL* while they are here, but they certainly understand it during their first semester of college when it is easy for them to complete their research compared to peers who didn’t use these resources in high school.”

When it comes to sharing her experiences with *GVRL* with others, Klaudia doesn’t hesitate. “I feel like I’m a walking commercial for *GVRL*. It’s always my first recommendation to an institution that’s becoming an IB school.”



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