



## Kris Jacobson

Glenbrook South High School,  
Glenview, Illinois

### Challenges

- Ensuring large student population has access to a wide range of quality resources.
- Integrating resources into curriculum and ensuring student comprehension.
- Helping patrons learn what resources are available and how to use them.

### Solutions

- Gale's *In Context* family of online resources
- *Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL)*

### Results

- Improved use of the library and its resources.
- Better student engagement.
- Ability to integrate resources with Google Apps for improved curriculum and efficiency.



## Success Story

### *In Context* helps busy librarian improve her library and prepare students for college and career

Kris Jacobson is a teacher/librarian at a busy high school outside of Chicago. With 3,000 students and a campus that recently went 1:1 with Chromebooks, Jacobson stays busy, but is constantly striving to make the library more useful for patrons.

"Our mission is to support curriculum and student inquiries," said Jacobson. "We also seek to make sure students and teachers can gain access to the information they need and to promote the lifelong love of learning and reading." Jacobson found that helping students conduct research in multiple information silos proved time consuming and the library was not seeing steady growth in database activity.

As a Google School (and part of a Google District) Glenbrook High School prefers to utilize resources that work well with all things Google. This—and some of the library's other challenges—became easier for Jacobson and her colleagues when they discovered Gale's *In Context* family of online resources.

### A Resource that Provides Top-Notch Research Databases and Easily Integrates with Google

Gale's *In Context* family of online resources meets the needs of Jacobson's students by combining an easily searchable design with current, media-rich information. Eye-catching, topical portals – covering Biography, Canada, Global Issues, Opposing Viewpoints, Science, Student Resources, U.S. History, and World History—integrate content with media-rich, curriculum-aligned materials that span core subjects and 21st-century themes.

These portals of information have proved to be valuable and instructive for students and teachers alike. "Now that we're in the swing of things with final research projects and term papers, teachers and students are delighted with the Google Drive integration," said Jacobson. "Students in a science class last week were working on a group project. They were excited to learn that they can import articles from the Gale databases into their Google Drive and share them with one another. One of the biggest frustrations for students working in groups is if one student is absent, it can hold up the group's work. These students appreciated the easy sharing of the database content through Google Drive." This allowed Jacobson's students to focus on their research and synthesizing information rather than getting bogged down in the process of figuring out how to disseminate information via email or making multiple copies of articles to annotate separately.

With Gale's *In Context* now integrated with Google Apps for Education tools like Drive and Docs, students can easily share database content and can focus on their research and synthesizing information rather than getting bogged down in the process of figuring out how to disseminate information via email or making multiple copies of articles to annotate separately. Additionally, Jacobson explained, the *In Context* portals are efficiency boosters because they can get feedback from



“The number of hits on the databases has really increased, so we know what we are doing is working! The teachers are more interested in course level guides instead of guides for a particular research project.”

### **Kris Jacobson**

Teacher/Librarian,  
Glenbrook South  
High School

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a lot of different sources on a particular topic by visiting one place. “Everything is there! It is one-stop shopping, and everything is broken down into really obvious containers,” she said.

Because her school uses many Gale products, Jacobson was thrilled when she learned about *In Context* and how the new portals could work in her library. “We can put the resources right into Google Classroom.”

## ***In Context* Adds Value to the Anywhere, Anytime Library**

The ability for students to be able to access the new *In Context* databases from their Chromebooks anywhere, anytime was a huge factor for Glenbrook High School, Jacobson explained. “One of the things we are aware of as we move to the 1:1 environment, students don’t need to come SEE us in the library. They can get to us through chat and get library resources through the computer.” Jacobson described a program called *Actively Learn*, in which students can upload articles and annotate them. “Teachers can insert prompts in the text to check for understanding. Historically, other library resources really didn’t work within this tool unless a library staff member completely reformatted them, a time drain the Glenbrook staff just couldn’t afford. “When I saw that the *In Context* products were able to be integrated into Google with no formatting changes, this was huge!”

## **Increased Use, Improved Enjoyment and More Curriculum Involvement with *In Context***

Jacobson is thrilled with the outcome after having implemented *In Context* and *GVRL*. She pointed out that from 2012 to 2015, use of the Gale products have soared. “We went from 52,000 hits to 191,000 hits,” said Jacobson. “That is a testament to how good the resources are because the kids are actually using them.”

She went on to share another story that illustrates how teachers are using the databases—and enjoying the results. “Just this week, I had a English teacher modify how she expected students to conduct preliminary research for a group presentation because of the capabilities for collaboration that the Google Apps integration provides,” Jacobson said. “She had students work in their groups to research dictators using *Biography In Context*. Each student had to share at least one article with their partners and then the group was to annotate them and share the articles with her. Only after completing this step and getting her approval were they able to complete the next step of the research process. She was thrilled for students work together on preliminary research and share results with her before embarking on more in-depth research.”



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