

CASE STUDY

# ENHANCING YOUR LIBRARY'S DIGITAL RESOURCES: EMPOWERING STUDENTS

Interview with an international school library in Milan on why they chose *Gale Research Complete: Schools Edition – Ultimate* to help their school shift to online learning.



## Robin Coutras

### About:

Robin works as an Upper School Librarian at the American School of Milan. She started her career in 1999 as a high school English teacher and transitioned into the library in 2004. Although most of her career has been spent in public education in the US, she has a variety of experiences: high school and middle school as both a teacher and librarian; public, private, international, rural, and urban schools working with both affluent and at-risk populations. Her most recent interests are learning how to combat disinformation and providing better support and representation through a diverse, inclusive, and equitable library programme.



### The Resource:

*Gale Research Complete* provides subscription access to the largest package of primary and secondary sources available to schools today. Empowering users from primary to secondary, *Gale Research Complete* covers almost every subject and all year levels from K-12 offering high quality, authoritative and unique content to improve student engagement and outcomes. Resources within *Gale Research Complete* include: *Gale Interactive* databases, *National Geographic Virtual Library*, *Gale in Context* databases, *Gale OneFile* databases, *Gale Literary Sources* databases and *Gale eBooks*.

### Why did the library decide to subscribe to *Gale Research Complete* for Schools?

Robin: When I came to the American School of Milan two years ago, the library had only two online databases for students. During my first year, I observed how these two resources were being used and it didn't feel like all students from Grades 6 through to Grade 12 were benefitting from them. I wanted to provide digital resources that met the needs of all the year levels and, as our budgets were limited, I wanted to streamline our services. That's when I came across *Gale Research Complete*; there's a variety of different databases covering different subject areas designed for different grade levels from Elementary years up to Grade 12.

### How does *Gale Research Complete* fit into the school's overall acquisition strategies and aims?

Robin: Those of us within the school community who are now experiencing distance learning are really appreciating the importance of having digital resources. Finding and thinking of ways I can incorporate more digital resources into the library's services is guided by 3 factors: the budget, our existing collections, and what the current needs of our students are. *Gale Research Complete* fits the bill in all 3 areas as well as providing for the needs of more of our students across all year levels.

## What distinguishes Gale Research Complete from other subscriptions offerings?

Robin: The subscription databases we had from other publishers were geared more towards our IB Diploma Programme students — so our Grade 11 and Grade 12 students had resources mostly useful for them. What *Gale Research Complete* does is provide resources for students in earlier grades as well i.e. Grades 6 through to Grade 10. They now have content appropriate for them across a broad range of different subjects. Even our elementary students can access and benefit from the content available in *Gale Research Complete*.

## What attracted you to the technology of the platforms and how might students and teachers find these platforms easy to use?

Robin: The user interfaces were immediately appealing – I was struck by how simple, intuitive and user friendly they were when compared to the interfaces of other database vendors.

The Topic Finder is a really neat visual tool that can lead students into their research; they search for a topic, and then the tool visually provides sub-topics and even topics within sub-topics that students can click on with ease and view a full list of search results for within that particular topic area. They can then play around with ideas that they have without spending a whole lot of time getting lost in the search process. This is one of the values of an online database for them. Another feature which is useful for teachers in particular is that they can share with their class a link to an article which allows students to go straight to the article without having to log back in. Once they click the link it just takes them directly to the content, saving a lot of time and headaches for both teachers and students.

In the search results and at the document level (in the *In Context* databases for example), there's a lot of useful information about the content that users can preview. Users can preview reading level detail (Lexile Measures and Content Level), which is useful for the library when they've got a student from Grade 6 and a student from Grade 12 using the same databases. You can see very quickly which content is more appropriate for middle school level students and which is designed more for upper high school level students. Not only can they view at a glance reading level information but also the word count and the content format (i.e. whether it's an essay or a review). The whole environment is just really well organized and user friendly.

The screenshot shows the Gale Environmental Studies interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation icons. The main heading is "Global Warming". Below it, there's an "OVERVIEW" section with a small image of a snowy mountain and a text box explaining global warming. A "Global climate..." link is visible. Below the overview, there's a section "ON THIS PAGE" with various resource counts: Case Studies (228), Reference (962), Biographies (26), Statistics (6), Images (76), Videos (73), Audio (779), Magazines (5,582), News (37,688), Academic Journals (3,112), Conferences (254), and Websites (3). At the bottom, there's a "SEARCH WITHIN RESULTS" section with a search bar and two result categories: "CASE STUDIES (228)" and "REFERENCE (962)".

The screenshot shows the Gale Power Search interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation icons. The main heading is "Topic Finder". Below it, there's a search bar with "Global Warming" entered. The "Search Terms: Global Warming" is displayed. There are two ways to visualize results: "Ties" and "Wheel". A "Wheel" visualization is shown, a circular diagram with various sub-topics like "Global Warming Jacksonville Florida", "Financial Statements, Audit", "New Members", "Corporate Advisory Board", "New Product Line", "Release", "Exchange Commission", "Electric Vehicles, Adams Motors LLC", and "8-K". To the right, there's a "RESULTS" section with a list of search results for "GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS (29)". Below the wheel, there's a note: "This tool takes the titles, subjects, and approximately the first 100 words from a subset of your top results and feeds them into an algorithm. Keywords shown in the graphics are those found most often in the text with your search terms."

The screenshot shows the Gale Environmental Studies interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation icons. The main heading is "Advanced Search". Below it, there's a search bar with "Global Warming" entered. There are three "And" filters: "Environment", "Keyword", and "Keyword". Below the search bar, there's a "MORE OPTIONS" section with checkboxes for "Full Text Documents", "Peer-Reviewed Journals", "Document Contains Images", and "Levelled Documents". There's a "by publication date(s)" section with options for "All Dates", "Before", "On", "After", and "Between". There's a "by document type:" section with a dropdown menu set to "Book review". There's a "by content type:" section with a dropdown menu set to "Audio, Magazines" and a list of content types: "Audio", "Academic Journals", "Biographies", "Case Studies", and "Conferences".

*“Features like the user-friendly interfaces and Topic Finder tool make the student’s user experience less frustrating when compared to their experience of using other databases”*

**How does Gale Research Complete help improve the quality of student learning?**

Robin: Features like the user-friendly interfaces and Topic Finder tool make the student’s user experience less frustrating when compared to their experience of using other databases. It’s a more pleasant research experience for them using *Gale Research Complete* which is fantastic, because if they enjoy searching they will want to return again and again to *Gale Research Complete* to repeat their searching experience with other projects and assignments.



**How does Gale Research Complete for Schools help students to become future ready)?**

Robin: *Gale Research Complete*’s user friendly interface can encourage students to use databases before they go off to university where they are faced with a host of different databases. *Gale Research Complete* helps ease the transition to Higher Education; they’re learning the value of databases and how using databases can enrich their research as well as serve as important sources for credible and reliable content, especially peer reviewed articles. With *Gale Research Complete* school students start to understand what peer reviewed articles are and how to use them. They begin to understand the importance and the value that peer reviewed articles bring to their research.

**Any final words of advice to other school libraries?**

Robin: I think *Gale Research Complete* is a great product and a great tool – a lot of bang for your buck is what I think school libraries get with *Gale Research Complete*!

This interview is an edited version of a recorded webinar interview with Robin hosted by Gale on October 15th, 2020 entitled How to facilitate teaching and learning in International schools using *Gale Research Complete: Schools Edition – Ultimate*

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[gale.com/intl/trial/gale-research-complete](https://gale.com/intl/trial/gale-research-complete)

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