

## **The 21st Century Digital Student: Google Books as a Tool in Promoting Undergraduate Research in the Humanities**

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### **Abstract**

In this article, we contend that publically available, mass digitization projects, such as Google Books, present faculty, regardless of their specific institutional context, with an exciting opportunity to promote meaningful undergraduate research in the humanities. By providing a classroom case study and by proposing an institutional model, we suggest that the Google Books archive can be a powerful tool in helping to establish research in the humanities as a regular and expected component of the undergraduate experience.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate research, Google Books, humanities education, case study, writing fellows.

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It has almost become a pedagogical commonplace to acknowledge the importance of undergraduate research in promoting deep learning; for instance, in perhaps one of the most enthusiastic embraces of the practice, Dotterer (2002) proclaims it “*the pedagogy for the twenty-first century*” (emphasis added, 81). Certainly, as professionals in higher education with backgrounds in the humanities, we share and understand Dotterer’s enthusiasm; the humanities’ commitment to reflection, critical thinking, ethical exploration, textual analysis, and independent endeavor suggests to us that the field is ripe for undergraduate research. Despite the seemingly natural fit between the humanities and undergraduate research, the literature surrounding the practice is sadly sparse when compared to the much more developed scholarship dedicated to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and social science fields (e.g., Thiry, Laursen, & Hunter 2011; Maltese & Tai 2011; Kendrick & Arment 2011; Gibson & Kahn 1996; Palladino, Carsud, Hulicka, & Benjamin 1982).

Because of the relative scarcity of sustained programs that encourage undergraduate research in the humanities, faculty and staff involved in higher education have in recent years tried to identify stumbling blocks that limit the practice. Most notably, in a keynote speech at a 2007 conference titled “Undergraduate Research in the Humanities: Challenges and Prospects,” John Churchill aptly identifies three challenges to humanities undergraduate research: 1) research in the humanities is non-collaborative; 2) humanities research generally requires a great deal of time; and 3) humanities research frequently

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requires a lengthy internship (as cited in Schantz, 2008). To Churchill's three challenges, we would also like to add two of our own. The first impediment we identify is structural: vigorous humanities research typically requires a library with an extensive collection of primary or archival materials—a library that the majority of students in the United States simply can't access. The second impediment is perhaps one of perception: instructors seem to fear that the 21st century digital student lacks the commitment and the attention span to locate, read, and interpret the various texts that successful humanities research demands (Burgess & Jones 2010; Bowman, Levine, Waite, & Gendron 2010; Dunn & Menchaca 2009). In short, to quote the Bad Religion song from which this article draws its title, instructors worry, not always unfairly, that students “don't know how to read but have a lot of toys.” In this article, we contend that publicly available, mass digitization projects, such as Google Books, can help ameliorate all these challenges and can present faculty, regardless of their specific institutional context, with an exciting opportunity to promote meaningful undergraduate research in the humanities.

By providing a classroom case study and by proposing an institutional model, we suggest that the Google Books archive can be a powerful tool in helping to establish research in the humanities as a regular and expected component of the undergraduate experience.

Lara Karpenko begins with a case study in which Google Books was successfully incorporated into the curriculum of a senior capstone course in English in order to help students conduct primary research as they completed their thesis projects. The resulting projects were engaging, thoughtful, and well-researched. Using this classroom case study as a jumping off point, Lauri Dietz then articulates a vision for promoting a campus-wide culture of undergraduate research in the humanities through the cross-curricular usage of Google Books. More specifically, she advocates that undergraduate research and writing across all humanities disciplines can and should be promoted at the institutional level and offers as an example how a writing fellows program, a program in which peer tutors are assigned to specific classes for an entire term, could be implemented or adapted. Writing fellows programs can potentially provide a fertile ground for promoting cross-curricular exposure to Google Books specifically and to primary research more generally and can thus help promote a campus-wide culture of undergraduate research.

In the relatively small body of pedagogical work dedicated to undergraduate research in the humanities, easily implementable suggestions for helping undergraduates conduct such research are rare (Ishiyama 2002; Levenson 2010.) Though CUR's themed volume *Undergraduate Research in the humanities: Challenges and Prospects* (2008), Grobman and Kinkead's *Undergraduate Research in English Studies* (2010) and Klos, Shanahan, and Young's collection *Creative Inquiry in the Arts & Humanities: Models of Undergraduate Research* (2011) all go far in filling this lacuna, additional work on the subject is still clearly needed. Together, our classroom model and our institutional proposal delineate specific and concrete applications of undergraduate humanities research within any institution of higher education.

## Why Google Books?

Because Google Books grants complete access to the nearly dizzying array of texts in the public domain (i.e., texts published before 1923), we suggest that it functions as a virtual archive and can facilitate primary research for students at any institution. While most college and universities libraries feature databases like JSTOR and Project Muse (or Google Scholar) that grant access to contemporary secondary/critical texts, in the past, only students at universities with extensive libraries have had the option of engaging in archival or primary research—a necessary component for many humanities projects. By comparison, as we will demonstrate, virtual archives or textual digitization projects, along with targeted classroom training, provides digital students with the tools they need in order to access information successfully and thus eliminates the need for a lengthy internship.

Though other textual digitization projects, such as Project Gutenberg, certainly exist, we focus specifically on the Google Books archive because the massive scale of the project renders it particularly relevant to our discussion: at the time of this writing, Google partners with 17 domestic libraries—including Harvard, Michigan, Stanford, and the New York Public Library—and with over eight international libraries including Oxford and Keio University Library in Japan (Jones 2010; Lackie 2005). Further, because Google Books does not convert documents into plain text format and instead provides page-by-page digital scans, it allows researchers an opportunity to examine the (virtual) material document—an opportunity formerly only allowed to those who could access elite libraries. Finally, unlike some digitization projects which feature search engines that necessitate a learning curve, like the Internet Archive, Google’s familiar and accessible interface provides digital students with a tool that is at once recognizable and powerful. With this mind, we suggest that the Google Books archive can help instructors to design projects and institutions to design initiatives that not only encourage but require undergraduate students to engage in primary research.

Ever since Google announced its mass digitization project in 2004, it has generated interest in both the popular and the academic presses. In general, the material discussing the project falls into three categories: 1) legal considerations of copyright and the implications of digitizing material not yet in the public domain (Milliot & Albanese 2004; Samuelson 2009, Zeitchink & Milliot 2005); 2) ethical considerations of the ramifications of a private entity owning and determining access to all published texts (Bracha 2007; Lackie 2005; Musto 2009); and 3) considerations of the project’s impact on academic and public libraries (Dunn & Menchaca 2009; Jones 2010; Martin 2008; Roush 2005). Though we know anecdotally that faculty are incorporating Google Books into classroom planning, and though various online forums are debating and discussing the usefulness of Google Books within the classroom (“Students using Google,” 2010), to date few, if any articles have been published which consider the project as a pedagogical classroom tool or that consider the sustained use of Google Books as part of a university-wide initiative. By considering a classroom and an institutional application of the Google Books archive, our collective goal is to provide examples of concrete, hands-on practices that instructors could implement immediately and that curricula could incorporate over time.

## **A Faculty Member's Classroom Case Study: Google Books and the Senior Capstone Experience**

To demonstrate how individual humanities instructors can incorporate Google Books, I provide a case study that details how I stimulated undergraduate research within my own classroom. While this experience can certainly be buttressed by institutional support, it can also be conducted at institutions that have yet to establish larger initiatives. Further, my co-author and I suggest that successful classroom experiences, such as the one I describe, justify the need for campus-wide initiatives, which would, in turn, support even more individual instructors as they attempt to incorporate primary research as a regular part of undergraduate humanities curricula.

I teach at a small comprehensive university in the Midwest, and for the past three years, I have been incorporating Google Books into the curriculum for the English major senior capstone. Because of the small size of the university, archival resources are scarce. In addition, many students are first-generation college students and find large research libraries intimidating and unfamiliar. Though, in recent years, the university's rapidly expanding electronic resources (through well-known databases such as JSTOR or Project Muse) and efficient interlibrary loan system have made it possible to teach students how to conduct secondary research, it has still been difficult to create situations that empower English majors to engage in primary research.

I will give a quick overview of the organization of the capstone class before going on to discuss how I incorporated Google Books into the curriculum in order to encourage primary research. At my institution, the senior thesis projects are article-length papers that are completed during one semester and students write their projects on one of three pre-selected target texts; in this particular case, students had their choice of one of three Victorian novels. In my course, I divided the semester into two halves: the first half of the semester was dedicated to exploring and discussing those novels and the second half of the semester was dedicated to student research, writing, revision, peer-editing, and individualized direction. At the end of the semester, students completed an article-length paper and presented their work in a conference format to an audience that consisted of the following: all students from the course, the entire English faculty, other members of the university (including the research librarian), and an outside reviewer from a local university.

My department instituted this current model of the capstone in 2006 in order to encourage students to engage deeply with the methods of the discipline. While prior course work in the major encourages students to engage in close reading and secondary research, the capstone asks students to intervene in an ongoing critical conversation and engage in both primary and secondary research as they craft their arguments. Soon after the department instituted this requirement, the students' difficulty with locating primary research was apparent. Since the library at my institution was simply too small to support archival research, students were left with two options: they either neglected to include primary research in their projects or students travelled to other libraries where, lacking the support and community of their home institutions, they quickly became discouraged. As the

strong data that I provide later in my discussion suggests, introducing students to the Google Books archive has almost instantly given students the tools and the skills they need in order to conduct primary research and has thus enabled students to complete high-quality projects in keeping with the standards of the discipline.

In what follows, I will briefly discuss the four part procedure that I used in order to incorporate Google Books into course design so that I could stimulate undergraduate research. Though I discuss this in terms of an English class, as my co-author will show in the next section, the general principles can be applied to a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities.

### ***The Process***

1. Saturate the class discussion with relevant primary sources that are found in the Google Books archive. Create a thick history for the students. Ask questions that allow students to see connections between the target text and the additional primary sources. Provide a context that encourages students to situate target texts in their larger cultural, social, and historical frameworks.

Students will not conduct research if they do not understand what research in their discipline looks like. So I model primary research as we initially explore the course texts. For instance, as we discussed Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838), I brought in socio-political tracts published in England during the 1830s that discussed and debated the Poor Law of 1834--a direct inspiration for Dickens's novel. By bringing primary materials into class, I help create a situation in which students explore the interconnections between the target texts and relevant primary texts; in essence, students conduct primary research on a micro-level every day and learn, through doing, that primary materials can enrich and complicate our understanding of literary texts. As I bring in these primary materials, I also emphasize to students that I locate all primary materials via the Google Books archive.

2. Assign and discuss the content and the structure of scholarly articles. Have students create an outline of a relevant, published scholarly article (sometimes referred to as a "reverse outline"). Discuss outlines as a class.

Students should understand that primary research is an essential and expected part of the scholarly endeavor. As we discuss scholarly articles in class, I have students outline the article, asking them to pay attention to the article's structure, to the author's rhetorical moves, to citations, and to the ways in which an author makes use of both primary and secondary research. As we discuss these articles, students realize, without me having to tell them, that primary research plays a crucial role in the construction of successful and insightful arguments.

### 3. Demonstrate to students how to use Google Books.

To provide an example from last fall, I demonstrated to the students how I located the primary materials on the Poor Law by modeling an advanced search for the class. Of course, it is not enough for students to know that research is important and required if they do not know how to conduct said research. By introducing the students to the Google Books archive and showing them how to conduct an advanced search, I demonstrate to students that primary research is “doable” and, for the digital student in particular, something familiar.

### 4. Require students to incorporate relevant primary sources (in addition to the target text) as they complete their capstone assignment.

So that course expectations are clear to students, I require in the assignment that the final project demonstrates explicit engagement with primary materials. Since we spend the beginning part of the semester coming to understand how primary research illuminates a target text, students easily accept and engage with this component of the assignment. Also, in order to make sure that students begin their primary research early on in the process, I require that students locate relevant examples of text- and non-text- based (such as comics, portraits, or maps) primary research as they complete their pre-writing (which also includes a proposal and an annotated bibliography.)

### *The Products*

After I began explicitly and deliberately incorporating Google Books into the senior capstone, the results were immediate: 100% of students incorporated primary research into their projects. Though I did not require that students use the Google Books archive specifically (I merely made primary research a requirement), it is also worth noting that 100% of students also made use of Google Books as they conducted their research. In order to assess student reactions to Google Books and primary research, I surveyed the entire class after the course was finished. [See Figure 1 for entire survey.] Students specifically commented that Google Books significantly augmented their research experience. For instance, one commented on the survey “I found [Google Books] unbelievably helpful. . . I loved being able to perform word-searches within the book” (Anonymous, Survey, April 2012). Or perhaps more succinctly, another student commented “Google Books is awesome” (Anonymous, Survey, April 2012). As the students’ favorable commentary suggests, Google Books empowered students to locate primary materials.

Because students were able to locate and read such materials, their final projects were well-researched and featured arguments that were creative and insightful. As mentioned earlier, all students presented their work in a conference format where it was reviewed by departmental faculty, the research librarian, and an outside reviewer. All reviewers were asked to score each individual student presentation on a 3 point scale (3 points: exceeds expectations; 2 points: meets expectations; 1 point: fails to meet expectations); reviewers

<b>Undergraduate Research Survey</b>
1) Given that primary research in literary studies suggests that academics locate and read historical materials in order to illuminate the target text (i.e., the novel), did you conduct this sort of research as you completed your capstone projects? Keep in mind that primary research includes visuals from the time period (i.e., comics, paintings, maps etc.) as well as text based materials (i.e., personal letters, historical documents, travel narratives, conduct manuals etc.) If you did conduct such research, please continue the survey. If you did not conduct primary research, please explain why you felt it was unnecessary.
2) Please articulate what sort of primary materials you located as you completed your projects.
3) Please explain a) if and how primary research benefitted your project in particular and b) if and how primary research is important to literary study more generally.
4) Did you enjoy the process of conducting primary research? Why? Why not?
5) Did you use Google Books as you located your primary materials? If so, did you find Google Books helpful? If not, what databases/search engines did you find helpful? Please explain.

**Figure 1. Undergraduate research survey distributed at the end of the senior capstone.**

were also asked to discuss their observations and general impressions. [See Figure 2 for complete rubric.]

The numerical results from the capstone conference indicate student success. The mean/average score for “Project demonstrates that student conducted meaningful research” was 2.63 on a 3.0 scale--indicating that reviewers thought the quality of the student research was generally above average (Survey, December 2011). Further, the mean score for “Thesis demonstrated critical sophistication and/or intelligent engagement of primary text” was 2.50 on a 3.0 scale--indicating that students were able to use their research to make original and sophisticated claims (Survey, December 2011). Since 2011-2012 marked the first school year (the year in which this present study was conducted) in which we have begun formally tracking qualitative or quantitative data for the conference presentations, I do not have longitudinal results; however, I want to re-emphasize that student engagement in primary research has historically been an area of weakness at my

<u>RUBRIC FOR JUDGING ENGLISH CAPSTONE CONFERENCE</u>			
PROJECT TITLE AND/OR GENERAL SUBJECT OF PROJECT:			
	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (3 points)	MEETS EXPECTATIONS (2 points)	FAILS TO MEET EXPECTATIONS (1 point)
Central argument/thesis is clearly stated.			
Thesis demonstrates critical sophistication and/or intelligent engagement of primary text.			
Project demonstrates student conducted meaningful research.			
Presentation is polished and professional.			
Additional Comments/questions:			

**Figure 2. An example of a reviewer ballot.**

institution. Thus, as the strong qualitative and numerical scores suggest, intentional introduction to the Google Books archive has almost instantly improved student research.

Reviewers commented favorably not only on the depth of the research but also noted that the research resulted in strong and complex arguments. For instance, one reviewer remarked “Great use of primary sources beyond novel.” Another reviewer suggested that the projects demonstrated “good integration of primary sources.” And in another comment, a reviewer noted that the students’ arguments were “consistently evocative” (Anonymous, Survey, December 2011). Of course, I do not want to paint an overly optimistic picture: students did have varying degrees of success with locating and incorporating research in order to strengthen their own claims. But I do want to emphasize that Google Books’ extensive archives and accessible interface did allow every student to engage in the research process to some degree.

Finally, and counter to the myth that 21st century digital students only read in 140 character increments, I found that students embraced the process of primary research and read deeply and widely. Class sessions were spent with students enthusiastically sharing with me and with one another the fascinating, the troubling, and the sometimes hilarious artifacts they were able to locate. Though some critics, such as Werts (2010), understandably lament that a digitized text has “no ... sensual appeal” and cannot “smell like it was read

long ago by a girl on a porch swing one late autumn evening” (53), I contend that the digitized text produces its own kind of magic. Because digitization facilitates access, it allows students to discover texts that they might have otherwise overlooked--especially at a university with a limited library. Indeed, as we spent several productive and engaged class sessions not only examining the content of the texts themselves, but encountering their material reality--the illustrations, the typeset, the advertisements--it became clear that the students were astounded at the fact that they could interact with history so profoundly. In short, I suggest that digitization has enabled students to encounter the textual sensuality and, indeed, auratic capacity that Werts fears has disappeared.

Even more important than inspiring student enthusiasm however, Google Books granted students access to an extensive archive and helped students to understand and articulate why primary research augmented their projects in particular as well as humanities projects more generally. One student commented, “Primary researched greatly benefited my project, mainly because it helped ground much of my discussion in fact rather than conjecture.... As an undergrad, I am well aware of my limited experience in academic research. I believe the best way to overcome this limitation is through primary research....Rather than relying on a professor or a contemporary analysis of the period, I was able to draw my own conclusions based on the primary texts I located” (Anonymous, Survey, April 2012). As this student so aptly indicates, primary research--particularly when it's locatable via an engine that digital students can readily access and use--empowers students to make their own claims and, thus, moves beyond a model where the instructor imparts all information. Instead, students discover the processes by which they can discover and create new knowledge.

I would like to close my section by emphasizing that I could not have assigned or expected these sorts of results a few years ago. Though, as my co-author details in the next section, institutional partners are instrumental in promoting a campus-wide culture of undergraduate humanities research, my individual classroom experiences with Google Books helped empower me to promote undergraduate research with my own department. At an institution such as mine with a small library, it would have been unfair to expect students to conduct primary research if publicly available digital archives did not exist. Fortunately, however, the Google archive uniquely puts every student (and every global citizen with access to a computer) in touch with the holdings of the world's most elite libraries. To some extent, the reluctance of faculty, staff, and librarians to incorporate Google Books into classroom or institutional planning is certainly understandable. Digital students sometimes avoid the library and as Bracha (2007), Lackie (2005), and Musto (2009) all point out, Google Books could perhaps pose a threat to the nonprofit library; however, as my co-author will discuss in the following section, I found that as students located primary materials via the Google Archive, it actually caused them to use their home libraries more as they sought support to understand the new texts they were encountering. Further, though I certainly share some of these concerns that the Google Books archive could render university libraries obsolete, I argue that the project crucially democratizes the research library. Because universities like Harvard and Michigan are willingly working with Google Books in order to promote universal access, undergradu-

ate research in the humanities is no longer reserved for students at elite institutions with vast holdings. Now every student can be a researcher.

### **A Writing Director's Vision for the Future: Writing Fellows Programs and Google Books as Tools in Creating an Institutional Culture of Undergraduate Research**

In the previous section, my co-author delineated how Google Books stimulated undergraduate research within her classroom; in this section, I will widen our focus a bit and consider how Google Books can be incorporated into campus-wide programming. The power of Google Books to allow a broad cross-section of students to engage in archive-based research can best be maximized if there is a concerted and collaborative effort between university programs and faculty. Or to put it another way, undergraduate research in the humanities can best be promoted through a university-wide infrastructure. Based on my experiences as a director of peer writing tutor programs, I suggest that a writing fellows program can provide that needed infrastructure.

To be clear, the merging of research and writing in the writing fellows process is hypothetical at this point and the implementation would require significant campus “buy-in” because a university-wide program requires collaboration between various constituencies of the university community: from faculty, from staff, from librarians, from administrators, and from students themselves. Navigating between such diverse constituencies does admittedly pose challenges. However, the achievable and desirable learning outcomes my co-author delineates suggests that the question isn't if universities should find ways to create more institutional support for undergraduate research in the humanities but how. I suggest that because Google Books is essentially an interdisciplinary archive, it can begin to point us towards the “how.” Further, many of the specific recommendations made in this section do not require the roll out of a comprehensive program, but are practices individual instructors and departments can start implementing immediately.

In what follows, by focusing on Fellow Training, the Following Process, and After-Following Outreach, I lay out a procedure that would be workable at a variety of institutions. Though diverse in design, the model Haring-Smith introduced at Brown University in 1982, and that other programs such as University of Wisconsin, Madison, George Mason University, and the University of Iowa have implemented, would work well for incorporating a research component into the writing process: in this model, specially selected and well-trained peer writing tutors are assigned to specific classes where all students in the class work with a writing fellow. For two papers during a term, writing fellows comment on student drafts as an engaged reader with revision-oriented feedback. After each round of commenting, fellows meet one-on-one with their assigned students to discuss the comments and work on revising. By adding research support to this structure, writing fellows programs have the potential to give the students who work with fellows, as well as the fellows themselves, increased opportunities within one-on-one consultations to navigate the challenging and, at times, daunting research and writing processes.

## **Training**

### 1. Create a Google Books Research Project.

The success of any peer writing tutor program requires rigorous and on-going training; writing fellows would need to learn both how to use Google Books and how to tutor students with Google Books. Because of the Writing Across the Curriculum focus of writing fellows programs, these projects can stimulate fellows to learn about the sources, methods, and research questions valued by a range of disciplines. For example, what would it mean to research childhood in an English class versus a history class versus a religious studies class? A project such as this would give writing fellows experience using the Google Books archive as well as learning about discipline-specific epistemologies and expectations for writing. They could also use Google Books to research a topic related to writing or tutoring. Either way, the key is to give writing-fellows-in-training as much hands-on experience as possible.

### 2. Collaborate with Librarians.

Whether in a training course or in other training venues, such as orientations and inservices, bring in librarians to train writing fellows in how to locate primary sources in databases such as Google Books. I have found that these types of one-time trainings can be particularly helpful if a portion is focused on troubleshooting. What are strategies that experienced researchers use when they face challenges or barriers to their research? What are the best practices for performing successful searches?

Librarians are also key allies for writing fellows to stay in communication with throughout the process because they typically have discipline-specific knowledge that writing fellows, who are often generalist tutors, do not. More and more libraries have helpful online research guides that point students towards discipline-specific resources, including librarians. [see Figure 3.] Writing fellows can serve as an important bridge between students and librarians. The findings of the recent ERIAL (Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries) project, “a two-year, five-campus ethnographic study examining how students view and use their campus libraries,” point toward an alarming conclusion: “students rarely ask librarians for help, even when they need it” (Kolowich 2011). While the ERIAL project researchers advocate for the influential role faculty members have in pushing students to librarians, I would add that peer educators, such as writing fellows, can also be instrumental in helping students feel empowered to solicit librarians for help. Even with the more user-friendly and familiar interface of a Google Books search, “the Illinois researchers found something they did not expect: students were not very good at using Google” (Kolowich 2011). Thus, writing fellows with their own training in best practices for Google Books searches combined with their connections to librarians have the potential to be a game changer

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**Figure 3. A screenshot of DePaul University's research guide on Art. Students can learn from the guide the preferred databases to use as well as which librarian they can contact with questions (<http://libguides.depaul.edu/cat.php?cid=34343>).**

in helping students become more savvy and expert researchers in humanities disciplines.

### ***While Following***

#### **1. Practice with the Assigned Faculty Member.**

Ideally, faculty/writing fellows relationships begin with a meeting where the faculty member and writing fellows discuss the course goals, assignment expectations, and role of the writing fellows. For an assignment requiring Google Books, the fellows can conduct a search in front of the faculty member as a way to test out the clarity of the assignment and to potentially foresee where the pitfalls may be. This way, the fellows and faculty member can strategize together about how the fellows can best work with students so that students are fruitful in their primary research endeavors. If needed, it would also give the faculty member time to make any necessary revisions to the assignment instructions or to determine how to use in-class time to clarify, reinforce, or model particular components of the assignment.

#### **2. Reverse the Order.**

In the traditional writing fellows model, each paper cycle begins with fellows commenting on a draft followed by a conference. If writing fellows programs give an option to reverse the order, then the fellows can intervene at an earlier stage of the research and writing process. The initial conference can be a brainstorming and planning conference where the student and fellow use Google Books, and other relevant databases, to generate research questions and plans of action. Having a fellow collaborate with a student at the start of the project can be particular-

ly powerful for students who do not have significant research experience or otherwise feel intimidated or overwhelmed by the process.

### 3. Provide Models of Best Practice.

Writing fellows can help students learn how to perform advanced searches in Google Books so that they are appropriately narrowing or expanding their search criteria to yield the most relevant results. [See Figure 4.] The advanced search possibilities can also be a useful heuristic for fellows as they assist students in identifying their focus and research question. For example, if a student is working on a history project about Napoleon and is struggling to find a focus, the writing fellow could ask about other languages the student can read and how those other languages might give the student a potential avenue into the project. If the student has been studying German, then maybe this could be an opportunity to combine the two and investigate Bavarian responses to Napoleon. A discussion about language can be particularly emboldening for students from whom English is not a first language: their multilingualism quickly becomes an asset. Even asking students a seemingly simple question about which years to narrow a publication window can produce fruitful discussions about how to refine a research question. To continue with the Napoleon example, how would the project change if the student decided to focus on the Bavarian response pre- versus post- Waterloo?

Google Scholar is an ideal complement to Google Books precisely because of its ability to connect to a university's library. Under "Settings," a user can select

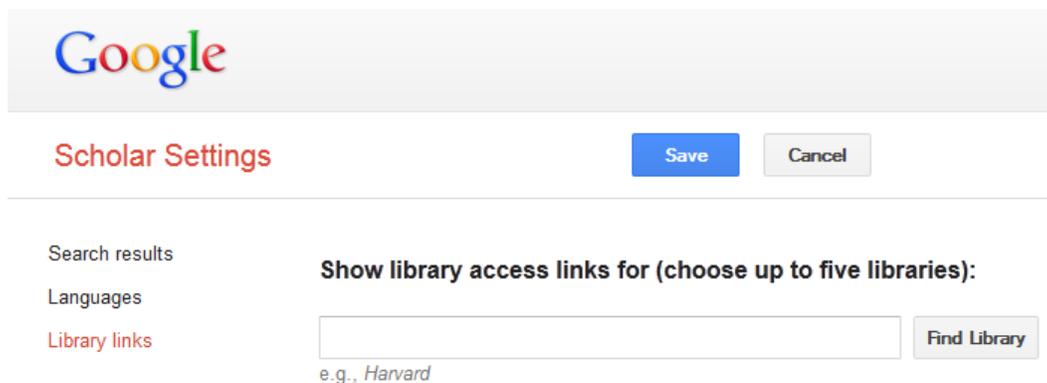
The screenshot shows the Google Books Advanced Book Search interface. At the top, there is a search bar with a 'Google Search' button and a '10 results' dropdown. Below the search bar are several filter categories:

- Find results:** with all of the words, with the exact phrase, with at least one of the words, without the words.
- Search:** All books (selected), Limited preview and full view, Full view only, Google eBooks only.
- Content:** All content (selected), Books, Magazines.
- Language:** Return pages written in any language.
- Title:** Return books with the title. e.g. Books and Culture.
- Author:** Return books written by. e.g. Hamilton Mabie or "Hamilton Wright Mabie".
- Publisher:** Return books published by. e.g. O'Reilly.
- Subject:** Return books on subject. e.g. Medieval History or "Medieval History".
- Publication Date:** Return content published anytime (selected), Return content published between. e.g. 1999 and 2000, or Jan 1999 and Dec 2000.
- ISBN:** Return books with the ISBN. e.g. 0060930314.
- ISSN:** Return serials with the ISSN. e.g. 0161-7370.

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**Figure 4. A screenshot of the Advanced Search page in Google Books**  
([http://books.google.com/advanced\\_book\\_search](http://books.google.com/advanced_book_search)).

“Library Links” and enter his or her institution so that all Google Scholar results will show whether or not a source is available either in house or as a full text through the user’s library. [See Figure 5.] Writing fellows, ideally in collaboration with librarians, can help students find the most pertinent scholarship connected to their research questions. Students, then, experience what it is like to be part of a larger humanities-based discourse community where scholars are engaged in animated and competing debates about the meaning and significance of human-made artifacts. By completing sophisticated and relevant primary and secondary research, undergraduate students in the humanities increase their likelihood of producing a valid argument to be shared through professional conference presentations or publications. As Churchill suggested in the keynote address we noted earlier, humanities-based research is still predominantly a solitary venture, which means students have fewer opportunities to conduct research under the guidance of an experienced mentor. As such, I believe a writing fellows program that uses Google books in targeted ways can provide the needed scaffolding to support students as they experience the rewarding but challenging demands of research in the humanities.



**Figure 5.** Screenshot of where to add a researcher’s preferred libraries to sync with Google Scholar ([http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_preferences?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0,14](http://scholar.google.com/scholar_preferences?hl=en&as_sdt=0,14)).

### *After Fellowing*

1. Sponsor an Undergraduate Humanities Research Showcase or Conference.

Writing fellows programs can do on a larger scale what my co-author does at the end of her senior capstone. Giving students a public, institution-wide audience for sharing their research endeavors and results affirms the curricular value placed on primary research. Whether the material appears in a showcase (i.e., poster presentation) or in the conference format that my co-author suggests, writing fellows can be key allies in preparing undergraduates to share their work with the campus community.

## 2. Create a Venue for Publishing Undergraduate Humanities Research.

Writing fellows programs can also publish some of the best examples from the courses they fellowed. Whether electronic or hard-copy, publications can create a record of successful examples of undergraduate research in the humanities, which faculty members can then use as models when they teach a class focused on primary research and writing.

## 3. Don't Forget to Assess

While the Writing Fellows program at my institution does not formally support undergraduate research processes yet, we do assess every course supported by writing fellows each term. We have found greatest success in getting faculty and students to complete a brief evaluation survey about their experiences working with writing fellows by attaching the survey instrument to the university's course evaluation process; students fill out a writing fellows evaluation at the same time they are filling out one for the instructor. [See Figure 6.] Our evaluations have been instrumental in developing and revising our policies, training, marketing, and talking points with writing fellows, faculty, and students. While our writing fellows do not yet play an official role in mentoring students through the research process, feedback and conversations around research practices do filter into the process. For example, students in upper-division and research-intensive History and American History courses have commented that writing fellows helped them incorporate evidence more effectively into their projects and students in a Research Seminar course within the university's college for returning adults have reported writing fellows helped them gain skills with writing an APA research paper (Survey, Winter 2012). These responses suggest great promise for the potential success of a writing fellows model more explicitly structured around research and writing. This assessment process can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of using Writing Fellows and Google Books to support an undergraduate research in the humanities initiative.

Based on the dynamic potential of writing fellows programs to support university-wide efforts for meaningful undergraduate research in the humanities and based on the adaptability and depth of the Google Books archive, the above suggestions could ignite an institution-wide interest in undergraduate research. Such an institution-wide initiative, when coupled with targeted classroom experiences that my co-author describes, could radically change the face of undergraduate research and effectively ameliorate the obstacles to the practice that we laid in the opening of this article.

## Conclusion

Throughout this article, we have emphasized that undergraduate research in the humanities is implementable at both the classroom and the institutional levels. We also want to emphasize that the examples we discussed are merely starting points and we certainly don't want to suggest that Google Books can function as a "magic bullet." For students

Course Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Course Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Fellow: \_\_\_\_\_

Your feedback as a student who has worked with a Writing Fellow is important and can help us improve our program. Your responses to this evaluation are anonymous and confidential. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions thoughtfully. Thanks!

1) How many times did you meet with your Writing Fellow?  
 0      1      2      3+

2) My Writing Fellow kept our scheduled appointments or gave me sufficient notice to reschedule. *Circle One:*  
 Yes      No  
 If no, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3) What was the most helpful thing about working with a Writing Fellow?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4) What writing skills did you gain or build on as a result of your experience with your Writing Fellow?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5) My Writing Fellow understood the requirements of the assignments. *Circle One:*  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

6) My Writing Fellow was respectful of the ideas I expressed in my papers. *Circle One:*  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

7) My Writing Fellow gave me suggestions that were helpful to my papers:  
 (a) in written feedback  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 (b) in our conferences  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

8) I put an honest effort into each of my first drafts. *Circle One:*  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9) What aspects of your papers were affected by revisions? Check all that apply.  
 Nothing       Introductions       Connecting ideas  
 Following the assignment       Conclusions       Grammar  
 Audience consideration       Transitions       Citations  
 Thesis       Definition of terms       Formatting  
 Organization       Adding evidence       Other \_\_\_\_\_

10) Overall, my papers were better because of working with my Writing Fellow. *Circle One:*  
 1      2      3      4      5      6  
 Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 6. An example of an evaluation tool to assess students’ experiences working with writing fellows.**

interested in periods before 1700 or after 1923 for instance, Google Books would be of limited use and other resources will be necessary to fill these gaps. However, though there are limitations to what we proposed, we write this piece partly to advocate for instructors and for institutions to consider the exciting ways in which textual digitization archives can be incorporated into course design or into institutional planning. For instance, students could create wikis that link to relevant digitized documents; students could create a hyperlinked target text that highlights historical context and/or student generated discussion; or, students could create online resources for future humanities teachers and their students, such as demonstrated in one student’s ePortfolio on Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, which can be viewed here: <https://depaul.digication.com/invisibleman/Home>.

Of course, as the hypothetical nature of our institutional vision suggests, larger initiatives that encourage undergraduate humanities research are still all too rare and instituting a campus-wide culture of undergraduate research in the humanities will take time, vision, and creativity; ultimately, we suggest that the ease and accessibility of Google Books can aid in creating this new culture. In these uncertain economic times, when many are proclaiming the “death of the humanities,” we hope that fostering research skills can remind us all that the rigorous complexities involved in humanities undergraduate research are exciting, teach students transferable skills, and can invigorate a culture of inquiry. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, to paraphrase Cronon (1998), undergraduate re-

search in the humanities helps forge connections—connections between students; connections between faculty and students; connections between students and texts; and connections between us and our richly textured pasts.

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