

Warwickshire College Group brings international experts to the classroom with Google Apps for Education and Classroom



**WARWICKSHIRE
COLLEGE
GROUP**

At a Glance

About Warwickshire College Group

- www.warwickshire.ac.uk/
- The Midlands, United Kingdom
- 15,500 students

What they wanted to do

- Use technology more effectively to save teachers time and provide a more collaborative learning experience for students

What they did

- Launched Google Apps for Education to teachers
- Rolled out Google Classroom across all six campuses
- Introduced Chromebooks to teachers and students

What they accomplished

- Saved £15,000, 100,000 miles of traveling, and thousands of pages of paper
 - Used Google+ and Hangouts to bring industry experts from around the world to lectures
 - Enabled conversations between teachers and students anytime and anywhere
 - Created an online community for teachers to collaborate and share resources
 - Increased transparency into student work, notably for group assignments
 - Turned mobile devices into learning platforms
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About Warwickshire College Group

Located in The Midlands in the United Kingdom, Warwickshire College Group (WCG) offers two-year college education for high school graduates before they decide what they want to pursue at the university level. More than 15,500 students attend college at one of the six campuses and the colleges employ about 1,700 staff. WCG's goal is to encourage students to develop an innovative, entrepreneurial mindset.

Challenge

Two years ago, WCG students had access to Google Apps, but teachers only had access to Gmail. Fewer than 200 of the more than 15,500 students used Google Drive, largely because the teachers didn't have access to Google Apps, so they didn't encourage students to use it.

"We had the Rolls-Royce of apps, but teachers didn't know how to help students use Google Apps and take advantage of its capabilities," says Yousef Fouda, chief technology officer at WCG.

Teachers felt complacent using existing software, so they didn't consider changing systems. Fouda saw the opportunity to use technology more effectively to save teachers time and provide a more collaborative learning experience for students. He also saw a chance to bring international expertise into the lecture halls, without the hassle or cost of travel.

Solution

Fouda didn't have to think twice about how he could achieve his goal of creating a tech-savvy ecosystem: He launched Google Apps for Education to teachers, introduced Google Classroom across campuses and rolled out Chromebooks for teachers and students. Since students already used Google Apps for Education and teachers were familiar with Gmail, the solution met WCG's goal to introduce technology that equips students and teachers to connect, work and share. These goals map directly to their use of Google Hangouts, Drive and Google+.

"Google Classroom has been transformational, enabling students to learn wherever they are."

*—Paul Rabone, professor of electrical construction and rugby,
Warwickshire College Group*

The use of Google Apps for Education spread quickly and organically across the campuses. Fouda introduced Google Apps for Education to about 100 teachers and they encouraged 600 more teachers to adopt the technology. Now, 4,000 students and teachers are active on Google Apps every day, a dramatic increase from 200 students two years ago.

“Teachers who have been at the college for 20 years have told me they’ve seen greater collaboration and more innovative ideas in the past two years than in their entire time at the college.”

*—Yousef Fouda, chief technology office,
Warwickshire College Group*



“Google Classroom has made a real difference to both lecturers and students,” says Richard Pearce, professor of veterinary nursing. “It saves me a great deal of time and has made me think about approaching my teaching differently because of the collaborative potential.”

Teachers who have worked at the college for 20 years say they’ve seen more collaboration and innovative ideas emerge in the past two years than in their entire tenure. They can connect with teachers in other classrooms and get inspiration from their teaching methods.

Cost savings

Google Apps for Education provides tools that would cost WCG billions of pounds to build from the ground up. Hangouts, specifically, has saved WCG £15,000 and 100,000 miles of traveling. After connecting with industry experts from around the world on Google+, teachers bring speakers such as a Florida Institute of Technology professor and expert from an Australian zoo to their classrooms via Hangouts.

Teachers and students no longer have to print thousands of pages of paper every year. They’re saving money on paper, printers and ink and are decreasing their footprint on the environment with Google Apps for Education. Nick Howard, professor in the sports and rugby department, calculated that for a class of 20 students, WCG saves between 300 and 500 pieces of double-sided paper. With documents living in the cloud, teachers can also archive students’ work at the end of the year rather than filling up filing cabinets.

Introducing Google Apps for Education wasn’t just about the technology; it was about switching teachers’ and students’ mindsets to think about how they can use the tools to make their work for efficient and collaborative.

Benefits

Collaboration through conversations

With Google Apps for Education, teachers provide feedback as students work on an assignment, and students can ask questions. Teachers and students can discuss a topic until it’s resolved using the comments feature, regardless of whether they’re in the classroom. “I don’t call it commenting in a document anymore,” Fouda says. “I call it a conversation because that’s what it is.”

Students can also collaborate in real time and communicate even if they’re on separate campuses or at home. With previous learning systems the online

About Google Apps for Education

Over 30 million students, faculty, and staff use Google Apps for Education worldwide. Google Apps is a free suite of hosted email and collaboration applications exclusively for schools and universities. You can learn more and sign up to try it out by visiting our website:

www.google.com/edu

About Google Chromebooks

Chromebooks are fast, portable computers that give students access to the web's rich educational tools & resources. Educators can manage Chromebooks easily from their web-based Admin Console. And starting at just £199 per device including Google Apps for Education for free, these computers make technology affordable for schools. You can learn more here:

www.google.com/edu/products/devices/

experience was lonely for students. Teachers could interact with students, but students felt like they were the only ones using the virtual learning system. With Google Apps they feel more like a community.

Teachers also create an online group where they share best practices and resource documents with their colleagues, including those they haven't even met in person. Each department has a Google Drive folder with presentations, worksheets and quizzes that teachers upload, rather than storing them on a personal memory stick. This collaboration encourages teachers to experiment with new ways of teaching while reducing time spent on administrative tasks.

Transparency into student work

Teachers can see when students open, start and edit an assignment in Classroom. In particular, this transparency is helpful for teachers to track who's contributed to group assignments, eliminating the need for students to sign a witness statement verifying that their classmates participated. The collaborative feature of Classroom allows teachers to give credit where credit is due.

Mobile compatibility

Instead of saying, "No phones in class," teachers encourage students to use their phones as educational tools. Paul Rabone, professor of electrical construction and rugby, says, "Google Classroom has been transformational, enabling students to learn wherever they are."

With more than 250 Chromebooks, WCG created a flexible learning environment so students can work independently regardless of their location.

Students can complete an entire assignment on their phones using Google Classroom, and continue learning on their mobile devices beyond the walls of the classroom. Whether students are in the library, at home or on vacation, they can communicate with classmates about a group assignment, submit assignments and receive feedback from teachers.

"Google Apps enables us to create a learning community everywhere," Fouda says. "Everywhere learning is being able to ask a question regardless of where you are physically."

Teachers, who often teach more than 20 hours of class per week, stay connected using Chromebooks when they aren't at their desks. The devices are lightweight and have a long battery life so teachers don't have to worry about the device dying.