

Del Mar Schools uses Google for Education to help meet Common Core State Standards in writing



At a Glance

What they wanted to do

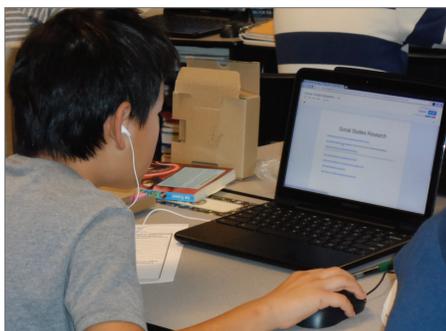
- Use technology to help students improve their writing and meet the Common Core State Standards requirements in English

What they did

- Provided Google Chromebooks to all fourth and fifth grade students, along with Google Apps for Education

What they accomplished

- Increased motivation and appetite for learning among students
- Doubled number of students reaching the top 'highly proficient' accreditation in the state writing tests



Background

Del Mar Union School District (DMUSD) serves 4,400 students across eight schools in San Diego, California. Students come from a variety of backgrounds and the district has a strong academic record with the highest academic performance index (API) in the county and the third highest in California. Del Mar is rigorously focused on its obligation to equip students to excel in the rigorous curriculum requirements and prepare them for the modern workplace, with an emphasis on writing, presentation and collaborative learning skills.

Challenge

Del Mar follows the Common Core State Standards, which stress the use of technology to foster critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. The DMUSD leadership team wanted to change the way lessons were taught, both to improve students' writing skills and to develop modern workplace skills, such as collaboration and content creation.

Del Mar believed that students could work faster and more easily if they adopted technology tools in support of the learning process. Instead of focusing on basic grammar and spelling errors, students could hone in on the writing process and content. After working with teachers to develop a more effective way to teach writing, the DMUSD leadership team realized they needed to offer students their own laptops for learning.

Del Mar's Director of Technology, Mike Casey, explains, "At Del Mar we have a curriculum-first approach to teaching, which means that any move towards using technology must have strong educational benefits."

"The use of Chromebooks with Google Apps has been remarkable. In fact, the number of students reaching the top 'highly proficient' accreditation in the state writing tests has doubled since the introduction of Chromebooks."
—Stephanie Sullins, Teacher, Del Mar Union School District

Solution

After testing a number of tablets and computers, Del Mar decided that Google Chromebooks were the most practical and affordable for their aims. Chromebooks are simple, fast laptops that allow students to securely access the resources of the web. The total cost of ownership for Chromebooks is very low for schools since the system auto-updates and administrators can easily setup and manage a fleet of devices from any browser through the web-based management console.

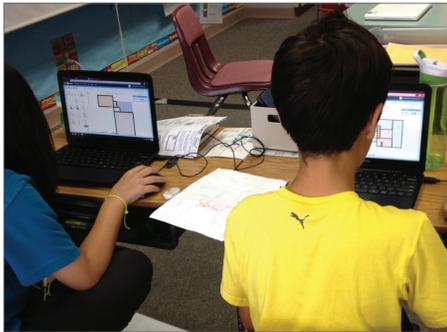
The schools had also been using Google Apps for Education, the web-based productivity suite with email, calendar, and documents, free for schools, for years. However, since students previously only had access to Google Apps when they were in computer labs, there was limited potential for use during lessons.

About Google for Education

Google for Education provides open technologies to improve learning for everyone, anywhere.

- **Chromebooks** – fast, secure, portable computers that allow students to collaborate and share their work. Devices start at \$249
- **Tablets with Google Play for Education** – an affordable 1:1 tablet solution that you can set up and manage in minutes. Explore thousands of teacher-approved apps, books, and videos.
- **Google Apps** – a suite of communication and collaboration tools free for schools including email, calendar and documents accessible from any device, at any time

For more information visit:
google.com/edu/gogoogle



The easy access to Google Apps was another strong incentive for adopting Chromebook. Del Mar began by piloting 200 Chromebooks to 4th and 5th grade students in two of its schools.

“Introducing the Chromebooks to teachers and students was very quick and painless. They were up and running in seconds and students couldn’t wait to start using them,” says Casey.

Benefits

Improvements in writing

The quality and quantity of students’ written work has improved dramatically since introducing Chromebooks. Students now work faster and more independently in a Google Doc, without checking everything with the teacher. As teachers have access to all their students’ Docs, they can provide feedback on assignments in real-time, with comments and suggestions. This allows students to progress faster without a delay in waiting for feedback.

The use of Chromebooks and Google Apps has been vital in meeting the overall Common Core State Standards in writing. Each student now has their own Google Site where they blog about a novel they are reading and thus learning how to critique and analyze literary material.

Fourth grade teacher Stephanie Sullins comments, “The use of Chromebooks with Google Apps has been remarkable. In fact, the number of students reaching the top ‘highly proficient’ accreditation in the state writing tests has doubled since the introduction of Chromebooks.”

“I’ve also noticed their vocabulary has increased and they’re using what we call ‘million dollar words’ instead of ‘five dollar words’. They’re not afraid to have a go on the Chromebook as making a mistake doesn’t involve crossing things out if they get it wrong the first time,” she adds.

Increased student collaboration

Students now use Google Docs to collaborate on group projects, as they can all write in one document or presentation at the same time. Joint projects previously required a group of students to contribute content separately and one at a time to a single designated student. This often meant that the workload was weighted towards more extroverted students or those with neater handwriting. Instead, with Google Docs, individuals can sit separately but contribute simultaneously to joint presentations together.

Increased parent involvement

“We made sure that we explained our technology integration strategy when introducing Chromebooks to parents. We are now able to showcase a portfolio of their student’s work on Google Sites at parent evenings. Parents feel more involved in their children’s education and have really gotten behind the project, with PTAs and individuals donating funds to extend the provision of Chromebooks. Next year, fourth and fifth grade students across the District will begin the school year with their own Chromebooks,” explains Casey.

“The Chromebooks themselves were the perfect learning tool for our strategy; easy to use for content development and internet access, quick to start up and affordable, we couldn’t have managed without them.”
—Mike Casey, Director of Technology, Del Mar Union School District

