

A Review of *Google Apps Meets Common Core* by Michael J. Graham

by Jacqueline Nenchin

Michael S. Graham, *Google Apps Meets Common Core*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2013.

As a long-time user of Google, I wondered if the book *Google Apps Meets Common Core* by Michael S. Graham would really have anything to offer me. A thorough reading of it reveals Graham's breadth and depth of information on Google Apps and his thorough explanations of their ready applications to pedagogy. Graham, an instructional technologist and Google Apps for Education certified trainer, has provides educators with ways to integrate the technology of Google Apps for Education into their instruction while maintaining the rigor required by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and 21st-century life and careers.

The target audience for Graham's book is all PK–12 educators, curriculum specialists, administrators, college instructors, and teacher educators. The book offers an outreach that promotes the implementation of technology in the classroom to this broad spectrum of educators in the second decade of the 21st century, as the Digital Age goes into full swing. ESOL educators can clearly benefit from reading this book as they assist their students in developing their social and academic language, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The organization of the book facilitates the reading and use of the material Graham presents. There are 11 chapters, followed by a 35-page section of resources, which includes 14 lesson plans and a glossary. The first chapter explores the connection between the CCSS and technology as represented by Google Apps, which is "device neutral" (p. 4)—that is, usable on eight different operating systems and many types of devices (tablets, desktops, laptops, and so on). Chapter 2 presents an overview of the Google Apps for Education: Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Docs, Google Video, and Google Sites; the chapter also includes an explanation of Google as cloud-based and of the advantages of Google Apps from the standpoint of school administrators—that it is free and that there is no need to install new hardware or software. Chapters 3 through 8 discuss Google Docs and the related applications through which students can create, collaborate, and share: Google Presentation, Spreadsheet, Drawing, Forms, and Drawing, all of which can contribute to their sociocultural and linguistic development (Vygotsky, 1978). Chapter 9 explicates the possibilities of Google Calendar, which helps users to organize their assignments, while Chapter 10 reveals the benefits of using Google Drive for the storage of all work. The final chapter explores additional apps that are not packaged and controlled by the administrator of the school, but support the Google Apps for Education package: Google Search, A Google a Day, Google URL Shortener, QR Codes and goo.gl, Google Chrome, Panoramio, Maps, and Scholar. The chapters are well organized, each with a "Key Features" section, an introduction, clearly delineated sections and subsections, connections to the CCSS, a summary, and resource links.

Google Apps Meets Common Core is a welcome addition to all second language teachers' instructional toolkits, one that can facilitate the implementation of technology in the classroom by both tech-savvy and tech-challenged teachers. One shortcoming of Graham's book is that it does not take into account that technology in education, especially adult education, lags well behind personal technology, and it is difficult for teachers to count on either being available. Another is that it focuses on Google alone, though there are other excellent apps available for education, e.g., Edublogs, but then it does not purport to cover anything else. Overall, though, Graham successfully links technology to the Common Core in his book for every teacher's use

and for the benefit of English language learners as they prepare for 21st-century education and careers.

References

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

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