

## **Employment of Google Tools in English Language Education: A Review**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Google Workspace for Education offers various tools that are believed to be beneficial for both educators and learners. This paper aims to review the benefits of core tools in Google Workspace for Education and employment of the tools in the context of teaching and learning English. The paper is hoped to bring a better understanding of the usability of the tools for English language educators to make use of in order to digitally transform their classroom effectively.*

**KEYWORDS:** Google Workspace for Education, benefits of Google tools, English teaching and learning,

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In February of 2006, Google introduced a set of tools called Gmail for Your Domain. Google Apps for Your Domain was introduced in the same year as an extension of the suite. Soon after, in 2016, it was renamed G Suite. The suite was renamed Google Workspace in 2020. There were 6 million paying companies using Google Workspace as of April 2020, with an additional 120 million users using Google Workspace for Education (Yeskel, 2020).

Google Workspace for Education is a collection of Google technologies and services that are designed to facilitate collaboration, expedite education, and maintain a secure learning environment in schools as well as homeschools. Google Workspace for Education provides a variety of choices to fulfill the requirements of your company, including Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals, Google Workspace for Education Standard, Google Workspace for Teaching and Learning Upgrade, and Google Workspace for Education Plus.

Google Workspace for Education Standard is comprised of the same technologies as Google Workspace for Education Fundamentals; however, it also includes more sophisticated safety options and stronger administrative controls.

Education Fundamentals or Education Standard version may be upgraded to include the Teaching and Learning Upgrade, which provides expanded video-communication capabilities, Classroom add-ons, and other features and tools.

Included in Google Workspace for Education Plus are all of the capabilities included in Education Standard as well as Teaching and Learning Upgrade, as well as additional functionality for some services. For example, tracking attendance in Google Meet is one of these additional features.

Free access to Education Fundamentals is provided to all institutions that meet the requirements. All three of these options need a paid subscription: Education Standard, Teaching and Learning Upgrade, and Education Plus.

### **Core Tools in Google Workspace for Education**

Google Workspace for Education is a set of tools that can help you expand possibilities for critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity while supporting your students' learning objectives. These tools are free, ad-free, trustworthy, and secure. They are already widely used by millions of students around the world. These tools are relevant to students, simple to use, and provide numerous new learning opportunities. Drive, Sites, Classroom, Google Meet, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Calendar, Keep, Google Forms, and Google Chat are just some of the tools that are provided to you as part of the fundamentals of Google Workspace for Education.

- Google Docs is the text processing program. You may use this to create interesting documents using text, images, drawings, tables, and hyperlinks.
- Spreadsheets may be created using Google Sheets and then utilized to analyze and visualize data.
- Google Slides, on the other hand, makes it simple to create presentations that the audience will find fascinating. While the more conventional Gmail may be used for email and scheduling activities,
- Google Forms can handle event registrations, quickly poll your audience, generate assessments, and much more. As the responses come in, you receive results immediately. Charts and graphs can also be used to quickly summarize survey data.
- Google Meet is an app that allows for video conferencing and conversation.
- Google Classroom also makes it easy for you to communicate with each of your students. As a result, both teaching and learning may be accomplished more successfully and with less effort. With only a few clicks, students can quickly set up a virtual classroom and start working on their assignments. You may use Google Classroom to keep track of your students' progress, see who is working on what assignment, who has finished it, who still needs help, and who has questions.
- Google Drive helps is the central location where all the content is automatically saved and viewed from anywhere utilizing the cloud.
- Google Sites is a wiki and website builder with a structured interface that may be used as part of the free, web-based Google Docs Editors package. Google Keep, Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Drawings, Google Forms, and Google Docs Sheets are all part of the service. You can only access Google Sites using the web

browser. Users may create, edit, and share files online in real-time using this app's collaborative features.

### **Benefits of Google Workspace for Education**

The use of Google Workspace for Education tools comes with a plethora of benefits, the most notable of which are improvements in terms of cooperation and communication. Teachers and students may easily get in touch with one another and work together on assignments thanks to the tools in this suite. The new gadgets come with capabilities such as email, a calendar, the ability to edit documents, and chat. All schools and districts that have a Google Workspace for Education account may now make use of the features that are accessible through Google Workspace for Education. The most significant obstacle for teachers is figuring out how to connect effectively with their pupils.

Google (Google for Education, n.d.) indicate that using the Google Workspace for Education Tools can improve classroom education. Better communication and cooperation may be achieved using user-friendly educational resources. It's meant to increase output. The tools help teachers and students save time by centralizing the processes of producing, storing, sharing, and evaluating. Improve your students' work using Google Workspace for Education tools. Students are able to provide their finest work possible thanks to these straightforward resources for education. Protecting students' work, identities, and personal information with proactive security measures and controls, Google Workspace for Education is a great tool for schools to use to safeguard their data.

Aucott (2022) argues that the migration to cloud-based solutions may be accomplished in a straightforward and expedient manner thanks to Google Workspace for Education, which provides a number of advantages, including (1) The security of data; (2) the avoidance of file exposure threats; (3) the detection of spam and malware; (4) the facilitation of cooperation and the sharing of information; (5) the ability to store and manage huge volumes of data; and (6) the simplicity of implementation and deployment.

According to website Happy2HostEducation (2022), ever since its first debut, Google Workspace for Education has been transforming the classroom and giving four significant benefits for both students and teachers. These benefits include the following: 1) User-friendly, collaborative, and easily shared; 2) Developing necessary digital skills for the future; 3) Improving the efficiency of teaching staff; 4) Securing sensitive school information. Among the mentioned benefits, the website stresses the feature of developing digital skills by presenting that digital literacy is not only a "nice to have" for students; rather, it is a necessary component that institutions of learning need to prioritize in order to provide their pupils with the skills necessary to tap into the potential of emerging technologies to improve the educational experience.

The numerous advantages that Workspace for Education provides have left Docrat (2022) quite impressive. The following are the four benefits that the author highlights:

- Productive Collaboration and Sharing - Both students and teachers are able to access, share, and update documents, resources, and homework assignments from any location. As a result, this is an obviously helpful tool for situations including limits imposed by the government, home-schooling, and remote learning.
- Simple to Understand for Administrators, Educators, and Students– Google provides a wealth of free training support materials, including documents and videos, for users to use in order to come up to speed. Learning how to use Google Workspace for Education is not overly difficult because to its straightforward user interface and shallow learning curve.
- Advanced Data and Cybersecurity Protection – With the exception of universities, very few educational institutions in South Africa truly have the resources or the technical know-how to defend their data against determined cyberattacks. This is one of the most important aspects of advanced data and cybersecurity protection. By utilizing Google's Workspace for Education, the vast majority of your work is delegated to the company.
- No Cost — Any organization that meets the requirements can utilize the Fundamentals plan at no cost (government-recognized, formally-accredited educational institutions up to Grade 12). Before committing to a paid plan, tertiary institutions have the option of participating in a free trial period lasting thirty days.

Rogers (2021) points out 6 key benefits of Google Workspace for Education, which make a great option for educators. The benefits are:

#### (1) Protects Against Data Threats

Google workplace protects your data. This cloud-based solution prevents data breaches and loss. In a time when cloud security is vital, you need a reliable company. Google Drive's encrypted data is safe from attackers. Users can select file access. You can safeguard files from users without reader, commenter, or editor access. These features will keep your information safe and help you track file access.

#### (2) Easy To Collaborate and Share

Google Workspace makes it easy to collaborate and share files. Collaboration and communication are crucial in educational institutions. Google Workspace's collaborative features assist increase your institution's structure and efficiency. This helps with group tasks you can't accomplish in person. Easily working on files concurrently and seeing real-time modifications can help you or your students collaborate. Google Workspace eliminates the need to save your work or track who has access to it. Users may watch, comment, modify, and more. Autosave features protect your data and projects. Google Workspace syncs and shares Google calendars. It will let students and instructors in your school system arrange meetings, online classes, and activities.

### (3) Great Storage Options

Google Workspace's unlimited storage is one of its best features. Most customers only get 15 GB of storage; however, you may improve your subscription. Google Workspace's online storage saves PC space. Instead of saving files on your hard disk, use the cloud. This keeps your machine operating quicker. Google Drive and cloud storage provide limitless file storage. It's easy to exchange files safely, avoid data risks, and monitor data users. You may arrange files by project and team with cloud storage. Keeping files in team-specific folders helps you discover critical papers and keep coworkers updated on initiatives.

### (4) Easy To Learn and Implement

Google Workspace is straightforward to understand and implement. Google provides training resources for new users.

### (5) It Is a Great Learning Tool.

Google Workspace is a fantastic educational resource that has many uses for both students and educators. Google Classroom is a fantastic starting point if you are in search of teaching materials. This online learning system facilitates effective feedback, displays real-time progress, and requires little training time for instructors.

### (6) Free For Qualified Educational Institutions

Google Workspace is free for qualified instructors and students. This is just the basics. It is possible to upgrade to paid packages for additional classroom-useful features.

## **Previous Studies on Google Products in English Language Education**

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of research that investigate the usage of Google products in the context of English instruction and education. It would appear that Google Docs, Google Classroom, and Google Sites are some of the Google tools that are most appealing to researchers.

The majority of research that has been done on Google Docs relates in some way to the process of developing collaborative writing (Fathi, et al., 2021; Mahmood, 2017; Metilia & Fitrawati, 2018; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022; Rahayu, 2016; SriRahayu, 2016; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). The researchers point out that applications like Google Docs have the potential to serve as useful tools for collaborative writing, which would allow students to take part in writing activities and develop their own writing abilities.

As a learning management system during the Covid-19 epidemic, Google Classroom has also attracted a lot of interest in the classroom setting of teaching English. Studies by Asyiqin et al. (2022), Azhar, (2018), Hussaini et al. (2020), and Octaviani and Agustina (2022) evaluate the

instructors' and students' perceptions of Google Classroom in the context of teaching and learning English respectively. According to the findings, Google Classroom enjoys widespread support among users due to the numerous benefits it provides for educational endeavors on both the student and instructor sides.

Academics use Google Sites in a variety of different ways to accomplish their research goals. E-portfolios on Google Sites are being used by Phan et al. (2018) to assist university students in Vietnam in developing their independence within the context of the credit-based training system. During their time working on their "E-portfolio" on Google Sites, students developed a sense of responsibility and motivation, increased their professional knowledge, and improved certain personal qualities that an English teacher should have. The findings show that this led to a number of positive outcomes for the students. In Teaching English for Academic and Professional Purposes for Grade 11 students, Data (2022) utilizes Google Sites as a one-stop center for students to access modules, interactive worksheets, relevant resources, video lectures, and reminders. The findings of descriptive statistics provide evidence that the intervention was successful in promoting students' engagement, autonomous learning, convenience, good time management, and the submission of outputs. Based on these statistics, it appears that making use of Google Sites as a learning platform during this period of time of remote learning was a successful strategy. Jusriati et al. (2021) use Google Sites as an e-learning platform to teach English to university students in Indonesia during Covid-19. These students are from Indonesian universities. Students studying English as a foreign language can benefit from using Google Sites, which has been shown to be successful and draw the students' attention.

## CONCLUSION

Google Workspace for Education tools are bringing about an important change in the manner in which educational institutions communicate with one another, collaborate on projects, store information, and access it. By constructing their educational infrastructure on top of the cloud-based technologies offered by Google, educational institutions are able to provide their teaching staff, administrative personnel, and students with the tools and channels of communication that are essential in the modern educational environment. Google Workspace for Education naturally offers solutions that are simple to use and efficient for usage in educational settings.

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