

Google Classroom Q & A

Q; Why did the district decided to switch to this platform?

A: Our Houston County School District has been using Google Classroom to some extent since last spring. Some of our teachers used it throughout this past year in a flipped classroom format. Plus, our district uses Chromebooks for student devices in our schools, so the use of Google Classroom was natural and already happening.

Q: How does it make learning from home better?

A: Google Classroom makes accessing and completing assignments simple. On computers, there is no need to install software and on mobile devices, there is an app.

It is a one-stop shop for students to:

- (1) communicate with their teacher without the need of emails,
- (2) complete assignments, and most importantly,
- (3) continue their educational growth!

Google Classroom also allows for real time feedback. A teacher can collaborate with students on a document in real time, or, if the teacher creates a group assignment, students can work together on the assignment in real time. It really is amazing being in a document and watching another person edit one part while you are editing another. Also, the way that everything is accessible from one place makes at-home learning much easier. Even if a source from outside of Google Classroom needs to be accessed, i.e. a website, it can be linked right there in Google Classroom.

Q: What tips do parents need to know to help their kids navigate through it?

A: Most importantly, be sure your child knows how to access Google Classroom and that their child is checking in and responding to their teacher. Parents should be sure to check out our district's Google Classroom page by going to www.hcbe.net and clicking on Google Classroom at the top of the home page. We have many resources, including a video on how to access Google Classroom.

The navigation is intuitive. For example, click on the Classwork tab to view any available assignments. Click the "Turn in" button to submit assignments. This same assignment screen is where feedback from the teacher will appear – students and parents don't have to go somewhere else to see this information! As a parent myself, I prefer everything in one place. It is easiest for the student, the parent, and the teacher.

Q: What are some of the most useful features that are now available?

A: There are so many great features to choose from! It is very simple to use and allows for a wide variety of student interactions. Don't think just your traditional paper assignment, but digitized. Students can still create a paper or slide show, but they can also create multimedia projects, or record themselves playing an instrument, reading a book, or speaking a foreign language so their teacher can continue to facilitate their growth. Google Classroom is very flexible with both the type and size of files students submit. The flexibility of the platform while maintaining a very intuitive work flow is simply amazing! Also, the real time collaboration between not only the teacher and students, but also between classmates allows for teamwork that mirrors the experience in the classroom itself.

Q: When will students start using it?

A: We actually have students that have been using it since last spring! Starting on Monday, April 6, the Houston County School District will use Google Classroom as its digital learning platform for the remainder of the school year.