Lights…camera…collaboration!

Badda boom BB font

Using Google Docs in the Classroom

Here are a few snapshots of students using Google Docs to create their "Common Craft" Westward Expansion videos; here you can view an example of the finished product.

You can also use Google Docs for other purposes

Google Docs has done amazing things in terms of increasing collaboration, productivity, and the quality of work among my 8th grade students. For the uninitiated, Google Docs is essentially a set of free, online, and easy to use tools for word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, and survey collection that can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection,

any time. Did I mention free? Oh, and an added bonus is the auto-save feature...no more "I forgot to save". All of these features are great, but the beauty of Google Docs is the real-time collaboration that takes place when used. Here's an example...

Every Spring we do a Westward Expansion project where students create "Common Craft" videos on an assigned topic. They are in mixed-ability groups of four, and their end goal is to produce a 3-5 minute "Common Craft" video. With Google Docs there are two students writing the script, on different computers, at the same time. They can tackle different parts at once. While the writers are hard at work, the illustrators have the scrip on the screen to read along and create illustrations without the need to stop and discuss. Lastly, the script is "shared" with me, so I can monitor progress and provide written comments within the document...multiply this by 6 or 7 groups and I am easily able to provide feedback to all groups in a quick and efficient manner.

Added Bonus: A student is serving In School Suspension and is able to continue to work with their group at the same time. No more concerns that "Bob isn't here, we can't do anything!" (This actually happened this year!)