UWCSEA Fulfills Its Learning Principles With the Help of MindMeister and G Suite

SUCCESS STORY

REGION

South East Asia

INDUSTRY

Education

WEBSITE

www.uwcsea.edu.sg

- IT solutions support pedagogical philosophy and learning principles

- Facilitate collaboration between students and teachers

- Activities are more student centric, learning is more explicit, more authentic

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The United World College in South East Asia (UWCSEA) is a K-12 international school with just over 5,000 students and 500 teachers. Its diverse student body is formed by learners 4 to 18 years of age from over 70 different nationalities.

UWCSEA's learning program enables students to develop the skills and qualities embodied by the school's profile1, which include critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, among others. Named IT School of the year 2013 in the 21st Century Learning International awards, UWCSEA specifically invests in IT solutions that support its pedagogical philosophy and learning principles2, which is how both G Suite and MindMeister first came to its attention.

Ben Morgan is the Director of IT at UWCSEA as well as a member of the college's executive board. Ben has

been responsible for the introduction of **G Suite and MindMeister** to the college. "Collaboration is one of the core skills we teach students at our school. We consciously chose G Suite as our main online solution because it facilitates collaboration between students - and teachers - like no other tool," says Ben Morgan, who knows about the needs of both learners and staff from his first-hand teaching experience. "We created our G Suite domain in 2010 and ran tests for about a year before we adopted it for the entire faculty and replaced our old email system with it. Within about six months we had migrated everyone's email, moved documents to **Google Drive** and set up the **single sign-on**."

Challenge

"We then specifically started looking for a concept or mind mapping tool that would enable students to plan out

G Suite

their learning, collaborate and reflect on it. As an online tool with a big focus on collaboration MindMeister seemed perfect for that. It isn't necessarily designed for primary education, but it is part of our strategy to introduce students to adult tools from the start, which we think benefits them later on in life."

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Learners construct meaning by making connections between knowledge and concepts. Therefore, learning experiences need to be organised around core concepts.

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Solution & Benefits

The school added MindMeister to G Suite account in 2011. Now, the tool is actively used by over 2,000 students and faculty members of UWCSEA. They use it for **ad hoc**

brainstormings as well as for **planning purposes**. "Planning projects and papers is extremely intuitive with MindMeister. The mind maps are open-ended, which facilitates organic planning and enables continuous changes of content over a longer period of time.

Our grade 3 students for instance are using MindMeister to support their electricity unit 'It's Shocking'. They began the unit by telling their teacher their initial understandings of the topic; then they embedded the MindMeister map into their learning journals and their class site, which we created with **Google Sites**. They continue to add to the mind map as the unit progresses.

"Mind mapping is great and has loads of potential, it's just a question of encouragement, I think. Once teachers see how it is better than paper mind mapping, e.g. not running out of paper, easy to add images, mutable, social... they're usually convinced."

Many teachers are especially fond of MindMeister's history view, which

allows a playback of the entire change history of a mind map and thus enables both teachers and students to reflect on their work.

Through a **single sign-on system** users are automatically logged in when they open MindMeister from the Google universal navigation. The integration allows a seamless import and export of mind map files between Google Drive and MindMeister as well as creation, sharing and co-editing of maps directly in Google Drive. Students also use the MindMeister add-on for Google Docs, added in 2014, which lets them turn bullet point lists into mind maps and automatically inserts them into their documents.

"Using MindMeister in combination with G Suite tools like Drive, Gmail, Docs or Sites has significantly changed the learning process at UWCSEA. The activities are more student-centric, learning seems more explicit, more authentic somehow. The change is definitely tangible, if not quantifiable."