

Preface

As a technology trainer, I've developed a number of courses to help teachers utilize computers and the Internet. A few years ago, I looked to create a new class that tapped into an expressed need for modern educators: Where can teachers find high-quality, free tools that allow their students to achieve the skills outlined for 21st century learners? The answer came back in a word—Google.

In the past decade, Google has expanded its role from simply being the leader in online searching, to transforming the way in which we communicate with one another. In an era when teachers are being asked to provide more information with little to no financial resources, using Google's free resources may be the best solution to "leave no child behind." And yet, many teachers have a limited idea of the various tools included in the Google library. This book will explore the wide array of Google tools from a K–12 educator's perspective, not simply focusing on how to use the tools, but also answering the larger questions of why use these tools and how can my students accomplish 21st century learning goals if we utilize Google tools.

This book is broken down into three major areas. Each of these areas reflects a core objective from the Skills for 21st Century Learners. They are as follows: Communicating and Collaborating, Creativity and Innovation, and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving. As we explore these different pedagogical elements, you'll find that various Google tools are used to illustrate how teachers can reach these objectives.

As we discuss the various tenets of 21st century learning skills, I hope you'll find this book addresses three essential areas for K–12 teachers:

1. Which Google tools are essential for achieving 21st century learning skills?
2. How can these tools improve learning and help teachers in their everyday classroom activity?
3. What are some practical lesson plan activities teachers can use with different Google tools as part of their student-centered projects?

To help in digesting key points and features, for each of the main Google tools, you'll find the book has a highlight—Five Things to Know About—at the beginning of the chapter. Also, classroom activities and projects are separated with their own unique heading. This will make the step-by-step instructions easier to find and follow. At the end of most of the chapters, you'll find two other highlights for teachers—More Ideas for Going Google and Tips for Going Google. These are quick ideas meant to further your use of the tools and provide an additional framework for classroom application. You will also find a

useful glossary at the end of the book. Glossary terms in the text are denoted by boldface italics. Buttons or menu items to select on your computer screen, such as Save or Translate, are denoted by boldface type.

Another important feature found throughout *Going Google* is the use of screen captures. These images are designed to help illustrate concepts and provide guidance for accomplishing activities. The screen captures are time sensitive, so their content won't be relevant forever, but they provide a valuable resource to help you and your students visualize different Google tools in action.

Going Google: Powerful Tools for 21st Century Learning should be seen as a handy reference to use with all the other tools in your digital teacher tool belt. I hope you'll learn some new things about the Google you thought you knew. Thanks for joining me in the journey.