

Online Discussions: Teacher Resources

Classroom Collaborize Registration and Set-up

- Getting Started
- Help Resources
- Conversation Management

Types of Online Discussion Forums

- Social
- Instructional
- Collective Knowledge

Designing Quality Questions

- Engaging Question Types
- Examples of Strong Questions

Roles and Responsibilities

- Moderator vs. Participant
- Student Guidelines
- Ensuring Participation – Common Roadblocks

Support and Assessment

Lesson Plans

- Introducing Online Discussions
 - Model

Classroom Collaborize Registration and Set-up

Classroom Collaborize is a free website for teachers to generate online discussion. This site is very easy to use and facilitates the creation of interesting online discussion questions with question tools. It is also easy to create classes for small group discussion or setting up a variety of classes in one place. The following instructions help get your classroom set-up and navigate the simple site.

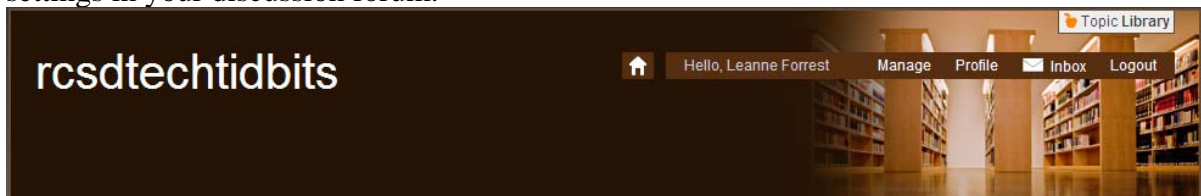
Getting Started

Step #1: Registration and Site Creation

Register: Go to <http://www.collaborizeclassroom.com/> and select “Sign Up”.

1. Follow the onscreen instructions to set up a **user account**. Note: You can have notifications sent from the site to the email address that you enter.
2. Set up your **classroom site**. You will be prompted to enter a name for your classroom. This will become the new address for your site. You will share this URL with the students.

Settings: Once you are registered at the site, you have some options to “customize” settings in your discussion forum.



1. **Profile** – Personal Setting Management: Navigate by clicking on the tabs in the window area.
 - a. Personal Info: change screen name, email address, and name.
 - b. My Topics: View topics
 - c. My Activity: Activity report for individual user to see their online participation in the discussion forum
 - d. Watch List: Build a list of topics or items to watch from the discussion forum
 - e. Inbox: Messages from members
 - f. Settings: Change settings for messages, announcements, and activity summaries.

2. **Manage** – Site Management: There are a number of options from the drop down menu.

- a. Members- approve, delete, block members, set up groups, view activity reports
- b. Send a Message to all users
- c. Invite New Members – invite new members by email addresses (remember, students can also be added without email....see below).
- d. Groups – organize members of the site into specific groups for discussions.
- e. Site: change site name, logo, and student access and set up categories for discussions. You can also change which categories are viewable to different groups.
- f. Reports: variety of reports can be generated including site activity report, user activity report, participation report, user activity report

Step #2: Student Registration

Once student permission has been obtained (see student lessons), you can begin having the students register for the site. Students DO NOT need an email to register for Collaborize Classroom. (Note: If all students do have email, you can invite them to the site rather than the registration process).

1. Send students to your classroom URL (ie. <http://rcsdtechtidbits.collaborizeclassroom.com>).

Note: When you set up your class, you will be prompted to print a student page to assist them with registration. It will include the classroom web address.

2. Students should click on the “Register Now” link.

3. Students complete the form. If they don't have an email, they can choose the option to enter a username instead. Be sure to enter the digits displayed for the validation code.

NOTE: If students don't enter an email, the teacher must contact the support team at Collaborize Classroom if the student forgets their password.

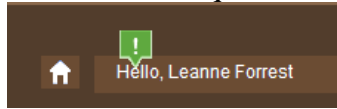
4. Students will get a message when complete that reads: “Thank you. Your registration has been sent to the moderator for approval. We'll notify you by email once it's been approved.”

5. If the students didn't enter an email address, the teacher will need to let them know in class when their account has been activated.

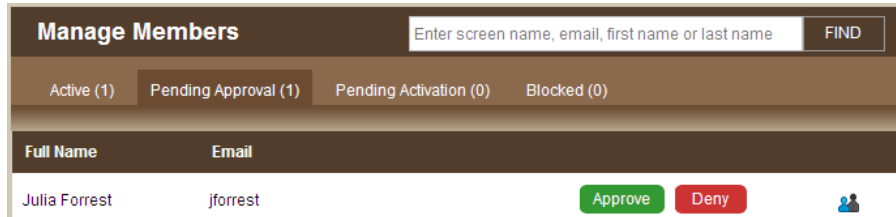
Step #3: Activate Student Accounts and Create Groups

1. Teacher log into Collaborize Classroom website.

2. A green speech balloon beside your name in the top right of the screen indicates new member requests. Mouse over this area and select “Approve Members”.



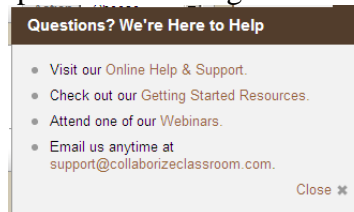
3. The list of pending memberships will be displayed. You can approve or reject the members.



4. The people icon will allow you to place members into smaller groups. This allows for multiple classes in one site or multiple groups within the classroom (ie. Literature Circle discussion groups).
5. You can manage classroom members and groups anytime from the “Manage” tab in the top right of the screen. Select the “Groups” option from the drop down menu.

Help Resources

In the bottom right of the screen, the banner with an arrow has links for a variety of help and resources. These are free to access and contain very useful information for getting started. Click on the arrow to open the following window:



Conversation Management

Your account is now active and ready for student participation. Each site has three standard classroom “icebreaker” discussion questions already posted for the students to practice online conversations.

Tip#1 – Organize the Discussion with Categories and/or Groups

In the set-up of the class, you will need to decide for each project whether it will be a whole group discussion or smaller group participation. Groups can be created and have specific categories viewable only to those groups. In preparation for a class debate, for example, you may want to keep the categories separate from the two groups as they build their arguments. Alternatively, you may teach multiple classes. Create a group for each class and remember to keep categories for each group assigned to only that group.

Tip #2: Group Set-Up

To set up a group, select “Manage” from the top right of screen. Select “Groups”. A new window will appear in the workspace. Select “Create New Group”. A new form will appear. Add the new group name and select from the list of all active members to assign to the group. You can also add new members to the site/group using these same steps.

	Full Name	Screen Name	Email
<input type="checkbox"/>	Helene Forrest	Helene	hforrest
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Julia Forrest	Julia	jforrest

Tip #3: Category Set-Up

It is best to set up categories before adding discussion questions. There are two levels to categories:

- Category Group – organizes all categories in that topic (ie. Starter Topics)
- Categories – sets up a sub-heading for the category group (ie. Icebreakers)

To create a category, select “Manage” from the top right of screen. Select “Sites”. A new window will appear in the workspace. Select the “Categories” tab.

There are default category groups and categories set-up in the space.

- Delete a category by placing your mouse over the category or category group and selecting the red “x”.
- Add a category by selecting the “+Add category” option. The “+Category Group” option is at the top of the list.
- Click directly on the name of the category or category group to rename it.
- Select the “edit” option to change the groups that will be able to see the category.
- Remember to select “save all changes” before closing this window.

Category/Group	Options
+Add Category Group	
Starter Topics	+Add Category
Icebreakers	Visible to Everyone edit
Class 1	+Add Category
Class 1 Discussions	Visible to Everyone edit x

Tip #4: Creating Discussion Questions

Once the work of organizing the forum and categories has been completed, it is time to build the questions that will generate discussion and participation. The cycle of good online discussion requires:

- A clear purpose for the discussion
- Thoughtful and engaging prompts
- Effective strategies to facilitate the discussion
- Assessment and authentication by making activities relevant to classroom learning.

There are a number of teacher and student resources in Collaborize Classroom and in the additional sections of this workbook to assist in developing strong questions and facilitating online discussions.

To create a discussion question, select “Start a Discussion”. Notice that a variety of “tools” can be incorporated in the question to deepen the discussion including:

- Question or discussion type tools (results are posted with the question when the discussion is closed). If you select to include a question or discussion type, such as multiple choice, the fields to enter the choices will appear.
- Files including images, video and documents for further information or ignite interest/wonder.
 - Note: Embed code is the code language that can be copied from the website and pasted to link directly to the video. For example, for a YouTube video you would select the “Share”, then “Embed” and copy the code.

Then paste the code into the Video Embed Code field on Classroom Collaborize. The video will then play from within the post.

The screenshot shows the 'Start a Discussion' interface. At the top, there are three buttons: 'Start a Discussion' (orange), 'Start a Discussion' (grey), and 'Comment & Vote' (green). Below these is a text input field for the question title, followed by a description field with a rich text editor toolbar. The 'Select Your Question or Discussion Type' section offers four options: 'Yes or No', 'Multiple Choice', 'Vote or Suggest', and 'Forum'. Below this is a 'Select A Category' dropdown menu, a 'Set an End Date' field with a calendar icon, and an 'Attach a File' section with radio buttons for Image, Video, and Document (PDF or Microsoft Office).

