Introduction

We know that learning in a group can be more fun than going it alone, so we've created this guide to help you make the most of Google Classroom. To get started, form a group of 4-6 teachers and follow this guide together.

Suggested guidelines

Commit to meeting at least once (and up to four times) for one hour, as you're all preparing for the school year ahead.

Commit to being present, engaged and supportive as you discuss, reflect and plan on how you'll use Google Classroom this year.

Pre-work

- Confirm teachers and students in your school have G Suite for Education accounts.
- Have a web-enabled device for each teacher in the study group.
- Spark ideas in advance of sessions by watching 1-2 videos from our Teachers Lounge.
- Familiarize yourself with the Google Classroom Help Center.

Potential study group topics

- Laying the Foundation: Setting up Google Classroom for the year ahead
- Online Communication: Leveraging the communication options in Google Classroom
- Problem Solving: Challenging your students through the assignments feature in Google Classroom
- Choose your own topics.

Share your intentions & lessons learned

Use #FirstDayofClassroom to share your experiences with our EDU community.
Laying the Foundation: Setting up Google Classroom for the year ahead

Objective

Your group will discuss what it takes to get started with Google Classroom and create a practice class so you get comfortable setting up your own classes for the year ahead.

Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes

Group activity

In this activity you will create a practice class for your study group.

Within your group, appoint one teacher for your study group. Note: if anyone in your group is using Classroom for the first time, they should still select their role as “Teacher” even if they’ll be a student for this exercise.

Visit classroom.google.com and have the teacher create a new class called “Classroom study group.”

Invite the other members of the study group as students by email or by code.

Add details of the study group to the About page and include any resources in the class materials section.

Explore the guardian summaries feature. If you don’t see the ability to view or invite guardians, speak with your school’s admin to turn on guardian emails.

Group discussion

Discuss the steps you took to create and set up your classes on Google Classroom.

Discuss how you intend to invite students to your classes, using either email or the class code.

Identify the resources and materials that you might add to the About section of your classes.

Discuss the advantages of guardian email summaries for your classes.

In your own time

For each class you will teach:
- Create the class or, if your admin has created it, accept the class.
- Add students by email or class code.
- Populate the About section.
- Invite your students’ guardians to your class, or ask your admin to invite guardians.
- Take a look at the Google Classroom Help Center articles on creating and managing classes.

Share your stories and questions using #FirstDayofClassroom
Online Communication: Leveraging the communication options in Google Classroom

Objective

Your group will explore the communication options available in Google Classroom, and assess which options can best foster communication in your classes.
Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes

Group activity

In this activity you will create an announcement and question in your sample Classroom class.

In your study group’s practice class, have the teacher create a new announcement for all students to see immediately.

Each student in your group should add a comment to the announcement.

Each student in your group should also add a post to the Classroom stream.

From the Students tab, have the teacher update the Student post and comment settings to “Students can only comment.”

Create a question, and explore the available student response settings: “Students can reply to each other” and “Students can edit answer.”

Group discussion

Discuss the types of communication needed on a weekly basis with students, including both online and offline.

Discuss how you might foster responsible online communication skills among students.

Google Classroom offers many ways for you to communicate with students, and for students to communicate with you and their peers, including:
- Classroom announcements
- Classroom questions
- Comments and feedback on documents, presentations and other G Suite for Education tools

How do you anticipate using these options to communicate with students?

How do you anticipate using Classroom’s communication options to help your students build their online communication skills?

In your own time

- Create the announcements and questions you expect to need for the first two weeks of your classes (you can schedule when they will be posted).
- If you’d like to develop the online communication skills of your students, design and build an exercise that allows your students to communicate with you and each other.
- Take a look at the Google Classroom Help Center articles on communicating with your students.

Share your stories and questions using #FirstDayofClassroom
Problem Solving: Challenging your students through the assignments feature in Google Classroom

Objective

As a study group you will create at least one Google Classroom assignment.
Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes

Group activity

In this activity you will create and grade an assignment in your practice Classroom class.

The teacher should create one document in Google Drive titled “My Google Classroom Plan.”

In your study group’s practice course, have the teacher create a new assignment titled “Assignment 1: Create a Google Classroom plan,” with a due date one week out.

The teacher should attach the document to the assignment, selecting “Make a copy for each student.” The teacher can add additional online resources, including videos, documents and online links, to the assignment.

Have each student from your study group open their assignment and add three ways they plan to use Google Classroom. Within each document, the teacher can add feedback using comments.

Once the document is finalized, each student should mark their assignment as done in Google Classroom, and turn in their document.

Have the teacher grade and return a private comment to each student.

Group discussion

Discuss the types of problem-solving assignments you’d like to create in your classes, whether online or offline.

Discuss the materials typically needed to encourage successful problem solving. What do you anticipate students would submit to complete the assignment?

Identify the steps needed to create a Google Classroom assignment and discuss where the supporting materials need to live (i.e. if they are online already, or if you need to upload materials to your Google Drive folder).

How do you anticipate grading assignments?

In your own time

- Design and create an assignment for your classes that requires your students to problem solve (e.g. create an artifact, conduct research).
- Take a look at the Google Classroom Help Center articles on creating and grading student work.

Share your stories and questions using #FirstDayofClassroom
Reflection:
Reviewing what you’ve learned as a group

Group discussion

Was everyone successful? Was it easy or difficult?

What roadblocks, if any, did you encounter? How did you get through them? What resources were most helpful?

Were you able to apply what you discussed and learned in your classes?

Do you still have questions about using Google Classroom?

Do you know who/where you can turn to to find solutions?

What is one thing will you continue to work on?

Tell us what you think

Share your candid feedback on this guide here.