

Digital Maestro Magazine

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Google Classroom Updates and review

Review the latest changes

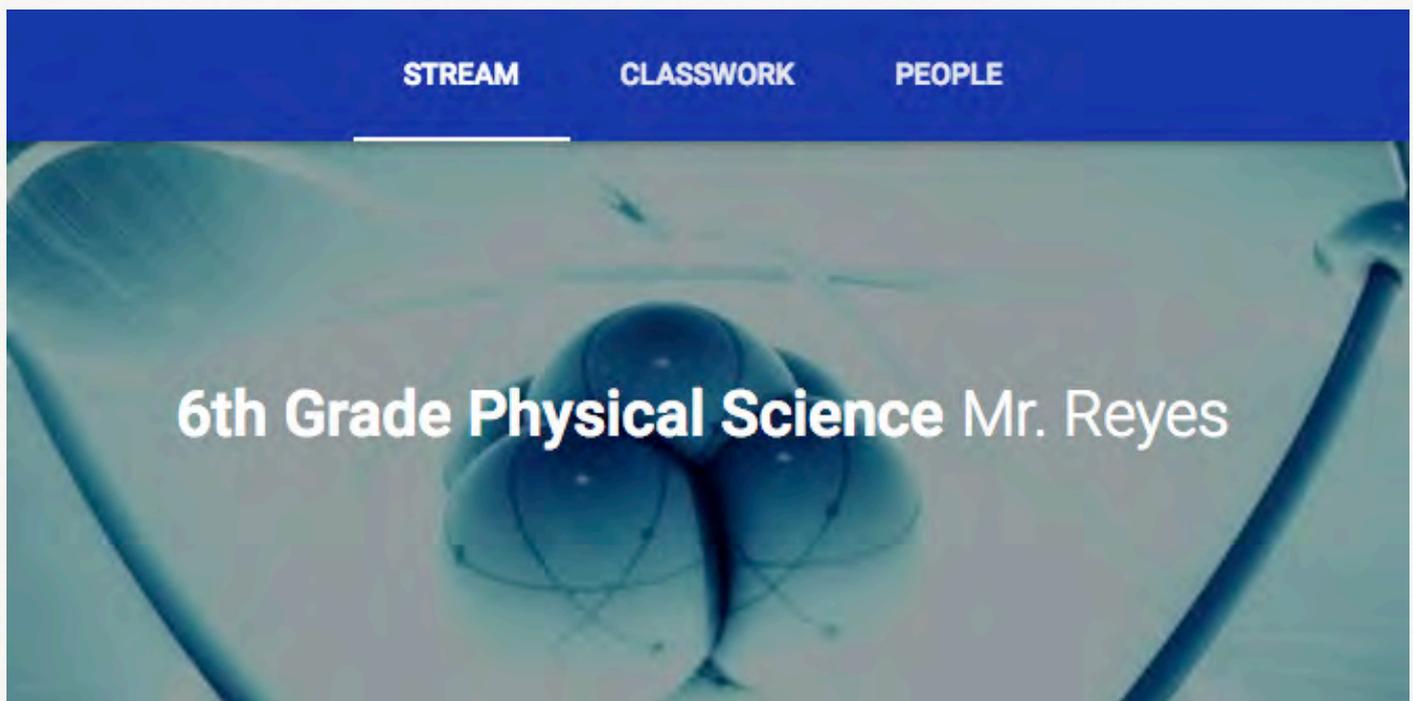
Revisit the process

Integrate Google Drive

August 15, 2018

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Introduction

Google Classroom is an assignment distribution and collection service. It was rolled out in August of 2014. Many school districts, including mine, were given a preview before it was released. The service is web-based so there is nothing to install. Any browser works with Google Classroom but I recommend using the Chrome browser.

The service was originally meant for school districts and teachers. Since then it has become available to anyone with a Gmail account. Personal accounts with Google Classroom work the same as those for school districts. Student accounts are limited to students that are thirteen years or older.

Google Classroom is different from services like BlackBoard and Edmodo.

Those are Learning Management Systems. Learning management systems are focused on online learning. Google Classroom is focused on a blended approach to learning. Google Classroom is useful if you are using the flipped classroom model.

Teachers use Google Classroom in a mix of classroom and online resources. Much like the blended learning model. Blended learning incorporates a host of other approaches. These approaches focus on personalized student instruction. Online paperless resources help teachers distribute and collect content digitally. In a paperless classroom, teachers are able to be more efficient.

Google Classroom is part of the enterprise suite of applications available to school districts. This requires the setup of service through Google. Part of the

setup includes student accounts. These accounts are managed through the Google Administration portal. They are crucial for access to any service. Not all of these services are directly supplied through Google.

Student accounts are provided with Gmail. They are part of Gmail but students do not need to have Gmail enabled. The account is what allows them to access a variety of Google services. These services are not available to students below the age of thirteen. This is why the Google Enterprise solution is best. Google works with school districts to set up this service.

Without an enterprise solution, students cannot access most of the services. Google Classroom is available without an Enterprise service but students enrolled in the classroom must have a Gmail account. This means students must be thirteen years or older.

Google Classroom is a distribution and collection system built around classrooms. Classrooms are used to distribute and collect content. New classrooms are usually created each year.

Creating new classes each year means assignments need to be recreated too. Google Classroom is tied to the core Google Suite applications. These applications include Google Docs, Sheets and Slides. These applications store documents in Google Drive. Google

Classroom facilitates the sharing of these resources.

The sharing of Google Suite resources enhances the use of Google Classroom. Teachers create resources in Google Suite and use Google Classroom to distribute those resources.

I use a lesson document to help organize and distribute my assignments. The lesson document is like a lesson outline with instructions for students. It contains links and other resources.

Mobile apps

Google Classroom has a mobile app for smartphones and tablets. I recommend getting the free app. You should also get the rest of the Google apps. All the apps work together.

The old and the new for 2018

The differences between the old and the new Google Classroom are subtle. The older version contained three main sections. These sections included Stream, Students, and About. Assignment distribution took place in the Stream section. The student's section was used to manage student assignments, grades, and enrollments. The About section was a placeholder for content and resources. This section was used to invite teachers to co-teach.

The update to Google Classroom keeps what works well and modifies things to work better. The Stream section is used to view distributed assignments or questions. The most recent distribution is placed at the top. The stream is a landing page with the most recent information presented to students. This information includes assignments, questions, and announcements. Think of it like a bulletin board.

The Classwork section has replaced the About section. The Classwork section is where we create assignments and questions. A Create button is now located at the top of the page. The create menu in the button includes options to create assignments, questions, reuse posts, and create topics. Topics are used to organize assignments and questions. Think of them like categories.

The People section replaces the student section. It is used to add students to the classroom. It is also used to add teachers. Each of these options requires an email account for students or teachers.

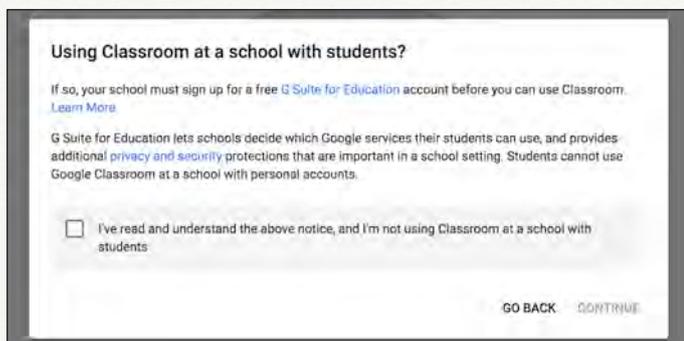
The classroom invitation code has been moved to the settings section. The settings section is accessed by clicking the gear icon in the button bar of Google Classroom. The option to display the code for students is still available. The code is reset and disabled here too.

Let's dive right into the new Google Classroom environment.

Creating a Classroom

The process for creating classrooms is the same for both the enterprise and personal version. Go to <https://classroom.google.com> and log in with your account. This account is either a district email or a personal email. Personal emails do not work with district Google Classroom accounts. Students and teachers must log in with a district assigned account.

Accounts not tied to an education domain will see an information box in the center of the page. Personal accounts do not allow for additional privacy and security. Student accounts must set up their personal Gmail account.



Using Classroom at a school with students?

If so, your school must sign up for a free [G Suite for Education](#) account before you can use Classroom. [Learn More](#)

G Suite for Education lets schools decide which Google services their students can use, and provides additional [privacy and security](#) protections that are important in a school setting. Students cannot use Google Classroom at a school with personal accounts.

I've read and understand the above notice, and I'm not using Classroom at a school with students

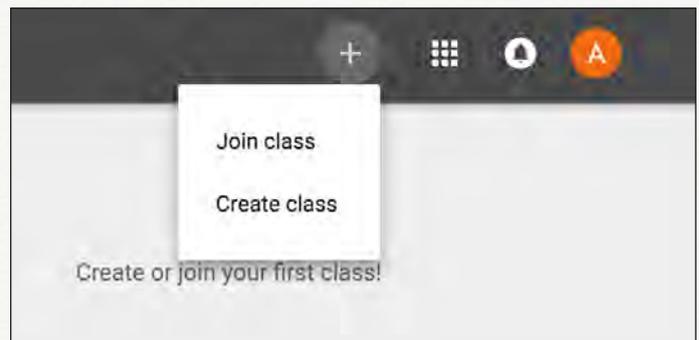
[GO BACK](#) [CONTINUE](#)

Place a checkmark to indicate you have read and understood the notice. Click the continue button.

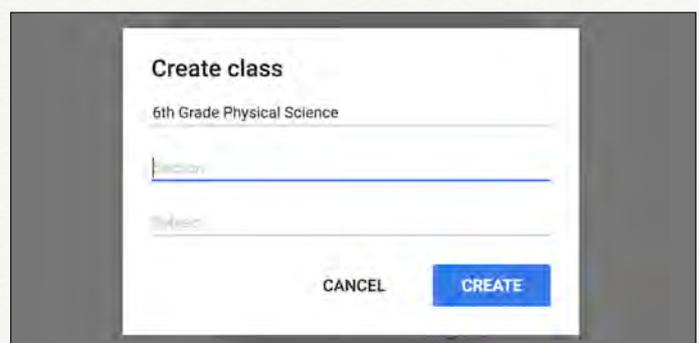
There is a dark grey bar at the top of the page. This is the Google Classroom button bar. There are four buttons on the right side. These buttons present menu options. Click the Plus button.



This button is used to create classes or join classes. Joining a class requires a class code. A class code is generated when the class is created. Each class code is unique. Click the Create class option.



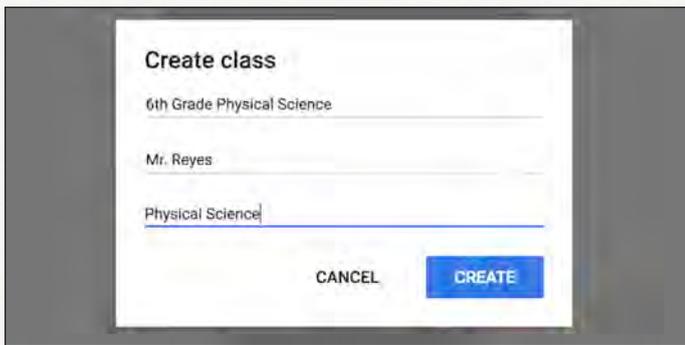
A Classroom information box will open. In this box, we will supply the classroom name, section, and subject. The Class name is the only required field. Provide a name for the class. Mine will be titled "6th-grade physical science".



The screenshot shows the 'Create class' form. It has three input fields: 'Class name' (with '6th Grade Physical Science' entered), 'Section', and 'Subject'. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'CANCEL' and 'CREATE'.

The next field asks for the class section. The section information is anything that applies to the class and the structure of your campus. I use my name for the Section. This identifies my class from those of other teachers.

The subject field might seem redundant but useful if the class name does not reflect the subject. The subject of my class is science. Entering science for the subject displays several recommendations from Google. Physical science is not one of the options.



Using the word Physical Science does not bring up anything either. We are able to use our own if one does not appear in the list of recommendations. Click the Create button.

The creation process

During the classroom creation process, there are several things going on. The classroom is being created with all the components that are common to all Google Classrooms.

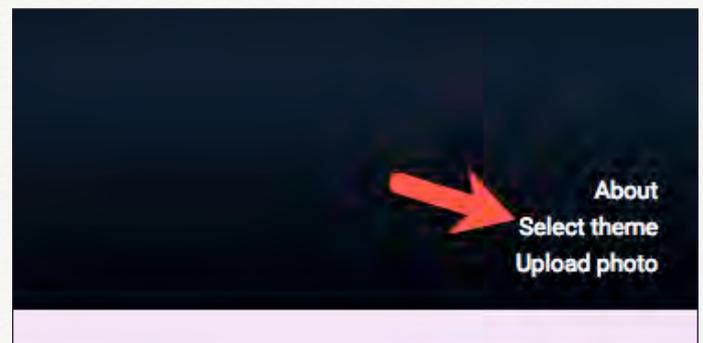
At the same time, a folder is created in your Google Drive. This folder is titled Classroom. This folder is used to organize student and assignment folders.

The folder is used to store distributed content. It is also used to store content collected from students. We don't need to access or open this folder. Google Classroom manages the contents of this folder for us. Don't ever delete this folder.

The class and theme

The class page is decorated with a theme. This theme is generated based on the class title. The theme in my example uses a banner image of a computer-generated cell. One of the colors in the image is purple. The color for this page is based on this color.

Let's change the theme. Click the Select theme option in the lower right corner of the banner image.



A gallery of banner images will display. Scroll down the list to find a banner image you like.

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Bob Beauprez

