Collaboration and Social Media in Canvas

TLTC Learning Technologies

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Collaborations and Social Media in Canvas

This workshop will introduce participants to the Canvas Collaborations and Social Media Integration tools.

Introduction to Collaborations

The Collaborations tool in Canvas lets teachers and learners work together with the online authoring tools Google Docs and EtherPad, an open source collaboration tool. Any Canvas user can create a collaboration and invite other users to join in. Both options include online word processors that allow users to create and format text documents and collaborate with other people in real time. Word documents and Excel spreadsheets can also be uploaded for collaboration.

How do I activate Collaborations?

The first step for using the collaboration tools in Canvas is to enable the Collaborations component in Canvas. Canvas components are enabled when they appear black in the navigation bar to the left.

If the Collaborations component is inactive (grayed out) in your section:

1. Click Settings, then the Navigation tab.
2. Drag the Collaborations cell to the top list.
3. Click Save.

Click and drag the Collaborations tool to the list above to activate
How do I start a new Collaboration?

Once the **Collaborations** component is enabled,

1. Click on the **Collaborations** link in the navigation menu.

2. Click **Start a New Collaboration**.

3. Select either **Google Docs** or **EtherPad** from the “Collaborate Using” drop-down menu. The two options are described in more detail below. (More information about **Google Docs** and **EtherPad** can also be found at their respective websites.)

4. Enter a **Document Name** (required), and a **Description** (optional).

5. Select either individual **Users** or **Groups** to collaborate with, who will be given editing rights for this document.

6. Click **Start Collaborating**.

**Google Docs**

Non-UMD participants will need a **Google** account in order to participate in Google Docs collaborations.

1. Follow the steps above, selecting **Google Docs**.

2. Click **Start Collaborating**; you will be prompted to authorize Canvas to access your Google Account by signing in to your gmail account.
(If this is a user’s first time ever using Google Docs, they will receive a message that “Google Docs is requesting access to your account.” This is referring to access that allows working with this document only.)

3. Once access has been granted, collaboration can begin:

![Group Project #2](image)

**Chat Feature**

Google Docs offers a chat window for real-time discussion by collaborators. When more than one person is viewing the collaboration, their name will appear in the upper right hand corner of the window. Google chat is only visible within Google Docs when there are two or more people viewing the document.

![Chat Feature](image)

**Comment Feature**

Google docs allows you to comment on documents in a sidebar, as well as respond to other users’ comments. Comments can be hidden or opened by clicking on the Comments button.

![Comment Feature](image)

**EtherPad**

1. Click Start a New Collaboration, and select EtherPad from the dropdown “Collaborate Using” window.

2. Begin Collaborating:
Chat Feature

EtherPad also has a chat window within the document space. This appears in the lower right-hand corner of the EtherPad document screen, whether there is one user or multiple users viewing the document.

Note: Users who are selected to collaborate on a document are either (1) automatically authorized (if they've already added their Google Docs/EtherPad info to their Canvas Profile) or (2) sent an invitation. Either way, a notification goes to the student according to his or her notification preferences in Canvas. The student then logs into Canvas, clicks the link for that collaboration, and is taken to the Google/EtherPad login page (if he or she is not already logged in).

Activity 1: Create a Google Docs Collaboration

1. Click on the Collaborations link in the navigation menu.
2. Click Start a New Collaboration.
3. Select Google Docs from the “Collaborate Using” drop-down menu.
4. Enter a Document Name (required), a Description (optional).
5. Select names or Groups from the “Collaborate With” list (optional).
6. Click Start Collaborating.
7. Begin Collaborating by typing some text into the document window.

How to edit a Collaboration

Click Collaborations in the navigation menu to go to the Collaborations page.

1. To Edit the Collaboration information, click the pencil icon to the right of the Collaboration you want to change.
2. Now you can change the title or description, and add or delete collaborators.

To access and edit the actual collaboration document, click on the title of the collaboration to be taken into either GoogleDocs or EtherPad to edit the document.

**How to delete a Collaboration**

To **Delete** a Collaboration, click the trash bin icon. *Google Docs* will give you the option of deleting just the link just from Canvas, or deleting it from Google Docs as well.

![Delete Collaboration](image)

*EtherPad* will only ask if you are sure you want to delete the document.

*Note:* Once an EtherPad document is deleted it cannot be retrieved.

![Are you sure you want to delete this collaboration?](image)
Discussions

Canvas provides an integrated system for focused and threaded Discussions, which allows both instructors and students to start and contribute to as many discussion topics as desired. Discussions can also be created as an assignment for grading purposes (which is then integrated with the Canvas gradebook), or simply serve as a forum for topical and current events.

Discussions are organized into three main areas:

**Pinned Discussions.** These are discussions that you want your students to see at the top of their page. Pinned discussions can be arranged in any order. Students will only see this section heading if there are discussions within this section.

**Discussions.** These are current discussions within the course. Discussions can remain open indefinitely, or you can specify a date range (as designated by the available from/until date). Discussions are ordered by most recent activity. Students will only see this section heading if there are discussions within this section.

**Closed for Comments.** These discussions have been manually closed for comments, or the discussion is past the available from/until date. These are discussions that are only available in a read-only state. Closed for comments discussions are also ordered by most recent activity. Students will always see this section heading, even if there are no discussions within this section.

**Starting a discussion**

1. Click on **Discussions** in the navigation menu. (Canvas components are enabled when they appear black in the navigation bar to the left. If the **Collaborations** component is inactive (grayed out) in your section, you will need to go to **Settings** to enable it.)

   **Note:** You will automatically be subscribed to any Discussion you create, which will send you a notification of activity within this Discussion. Subscribing to Discussions is covered in more detail below.
2. Click on the blue button to **Start a discussion**, which will open a new discussion window for you to introduce and edit content. (As Discussions are created, they will be listed here. For more information on ordering Discussion topics, see “Pinned Discussions,” below.)

3. Use the **Rich Content Editor** to manipulate text (font size and character, highlighting, left-, center- and right-justified), insert pictures, create hyperlinks, etc.
4. You can also include course materials (links, files and images) from the right content pane:

5. Choose from the Options available to a Discussion. (These are covered in detail below.)

6. Click Save.

**Draft State: Published/UnPublished Discussions**

When you first create and save your Discussion it will be in an Unpublished state, and will not be visible to students. To Publish, simply click on the Publish button.

As long as a Discussion has no replies, you can also Unpublish by hovering your cursor over the green “Published” button, which will turn red and offer you the chance to unpublish.
Discussion options

A Discussion can take on a few different flavors depending on the options you select. Below is a brief primer on these options.

Allow threaded replies

Threaded Discussions extend the range of posting to allow for discussions in which different and new threads to be originated by students and instructors alike. As in a focused discussion, the structure of a threaded discussion is hierarchical. (By default a Canvas Discussion is created as what is known as a “focused discussion,” which is structured for: the initial posting, replies to that posting, and side comments (a reply to a reply) for a total of two layers of nesting.)

With Threaded Discussions, you can see when a student replies to another student’s reply. Replies are hierarchical.

In this example, Emily Boone replied to the discussion topic [1]. Canvas Student replied to Emily Boone [2], and Bruce Jones replied to Canvas Student [3]:

![Threaded Discussion Example](image-url)
**Delay posting**

Setting specific dates for availability lets you create and finalize the content for a discussion post and set a date and time for that content to be made available to students. This allows you to preload a Discussion and, using the calendar feature, select the date and even the time for the discussion to be available to participants in the course. If you don’t want a Discussion to be closed for comments, leave the **Until** field blank.

![Available From and Until fields](image)

**Locked Discussions/ Closed for Comments**

To manually stop students from posting replies to discussion posts, use the “Close for comments” link under the gear icon on the main Discussion dashboard.

![Close for comments button](image)

You can also drag discussions to the closed for comments section on the discussion index page.

**Users must post before seeing replies**

Ticking this option, which withholds from participants access to a discussion beyond the initial posted content until they post a reply to that content, seems best suited to practice quiz and testing situations.

**Enable podcast feed**

Ticking this option means that the discussion will be distributed via an RSS feed that one sets up at the Course level (under settings). An option to allow student replies will appear once this option is chosen.
**Use for grading**

Ticking this option registers the Discussion in question in Calendar, Assignments, and Syllabus (if all are visible to the students) as a graded assignment.

By default, the Discussion will be available for the entire duration of the course unless you want to restrict the dates that the Discussion appears.

If you want to make it available to students only a few days or weeks before the due date, enter an **Available From** date. If you want the assignment to be hidden from students after a certain date, enter an **Until** date:

**Subscribing to Discussions**

Users can subscribe to – and unsubscribe from – Discussion threads directly on the course Discussions index page by locating the Discussion and clicking its Discussion icon.

Hover over the gray Discussion icon, and then click on the green “check” to subscribe:
Users are still automatically subscribed to any Discussion they create; however, they will no longer automatically receive notification of activity for any Discussion in which they participate.

**Note:** Instructors should note that they will need to subscribe to any Discussions created by TAs or students if they wish to receive notifications of activity for those Discussions.

**Activity 2 - Create a Discussion**

1. From the course home page, click on **Discussions** link.

2. Click on blue **“Start One Now”** button.

3. Type in the Topic Title: **First Discussion: Introductions**

4. In the rich content editor, type: **Please tell your classmates a little about yourself. What is your name, what are you studying, and where are you from?**

5. Click on the calendar icon to set a Due Date.

6. Click **Save.**
Social Media & Web Integrations

Canvas integrates with numerous outside social media and web sites, allowing the instructor to easily communicate with students through their preferred online modes of communication.

Social media preferences are established by the individual users via their profile settings. If you will be requiring the use of any of these tools in your course, be sure to notify your students that they will need to have a registered account for that service. All of the accounts listed below offer free registration for users.

Products that can be integrated in Canvas

LinkedIn
LinkedIn is an online networking site designed for professionals. It’s sometimes described as “Facebook for grownups.” It is a place where users can post online resumes and make connections with other individuals and groups in their industry.

Facebook
Users with Facebook accounts can install the Canvas app and receive course notifications on their profile. Users can specify which types of notifications they want and how often they’d like them sent.

Twitter
Students may also choose to receive notifications through a Twitter account. An added feature of Twitter is that users are not restricted to having one single account, so a user could create an account solely for schoolwork, even just for one course. Users will receive a Twitter message that they have a Canvas notification.

Skype
Skype is a service that allows users to communicate over the Internet via microphone, web cam and instant messaging. Connecting a Skype profile to a Canvas
user profile enables a Skype Status icon to appear in several places in Canvas to indicate if the user is logged into Skype.

**Delicious**
Delicious is a tool that lets you store and share your bookmarks with others. Canvas's rich content editor will let you search your Delicious tags to easily link from within Canvas to other resources you find useful.

**Checking Students’ Registered Services**

To see what services your students have registered for:

1. Navigate to your course site.
2. Click on the **People** link.
3. Click on **View Registered Services** on the right side of the screen.

**ACTIVITY 3: Connecting to social media accounts**

1. Click on your name at top of page
2. Click on **Edit Profile**
3. Click on **Manage Registered Services**
4. Choose one of the **Other Services** to register.
5. 

**Integrating YouTube Videos into Canvas pages**

Using the integration for YouTube creates an icon in the Rich Text Editor, letting you quickly search for videos and embed them right in your course pages.

**Steps to integrate the YouTube App in your course**

1. In your course space, click on **Settings**.
2. Click on the **Apps** tab.
3. Click on the link in “Click here to see some LTI Tools.”
4. In the **Search** Box, type in **YouTube**.
5. Click on the first **YouTube** box.
6. In the next window, highlight & copy the **Configuration URL**.
7. Go to your Canvas course window, and click on the blue **Add New App** button.
8. Type in a Display Name (for your use only)
9. In the **Consumer Key** window, you must type something – anything. You can literally type the word: *something*

10. Click the drop-down menu under **Configuration Type** and select **By URL**.

11. Paste in the URL you copied in step 6 above.

12. Click **Submit**.

13. You should now see YouTube listed on your **External Apps** page.

**Adding a YouTube video to your page**

1. Navigate to the page where you want the video to appear.
2. Click **Edit this Page**.
3. You should now see the **YouTube icon** listed in the toolbar of the Rich Text editor.

If you have multiple **External Apps** in your course, they may be hidden underneath a “V” symbol on the toolbar. Click the V to access them.

4. Click on the **YouTube icon** in the toolbar.
5. In the next window, type a topic or title in the **Search box**.
6. Click the **Enter/Return key**.

7. Scroll through the search results. When you find a video you want, click **Embed for the default size of video, “Large.”**

If you want a smaller video screen to appear, click the drop-down arrow next to the word “Embed” and choose “Small” or “Medium.” Choosing “Return Link” makes a hyperlink appear on the page with a small video screen.

8. Click **Save**.
9. Your video should now appear on the page. (Be sure to test it by hitting the “play” arrow.)

Because you integrated the YouTube App into your **course**, you can follow these steps to embed a video on any page within the course.