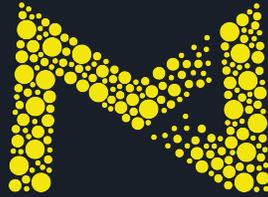


How to launch your class website



If you take nothing else away from this guide, it's this.

**You have everything you need
right now to create a beautiful
website your students will love.**

When you choose to create a community for your students to meet each other and keep the discussion going between in-person sessions, you're opening up a whole new opportunity for your students to do more and learn faster.

This guide reflects the successful experiences of thousands of educators like you over the past decade, so you too can quickly get up and running with your own beautiful class website—and create a new kind of personal connection between you and your students.

Ready? Let's go.



Who do you want to serve with your new class website?

If your community is for everyone, it's for no one.

The clearer and more specific you define the interests of your students or what makes them unique, the better your new class website can serve them.

The most obvious place to start is with **you**. Your unique combination of experiences or take on the world may be just the hook that attracts your students to join and participate in your new community.

So, who are you motivated to bring together?

- People who are **taking the same class**
- People who share the same **specialty**
- People who share the same **profession**
- People with the same **interests**
- People who care about the same **cause**
- People who **follow your work**
- People at the same **stage in life**
- People who can **benefit from your class**
- People who care about the same **issues**
- People with a **common condition or diagnosis**

Who do you want to bring together? The more specific, the better.

What are the 5 or 10 characteristics or experiences that define your students?



Why will people be motivated to join?

With so many apps available today, you might think that your students are too busy to join a new community. You'd be wrong.

In 2017, busy people from all walks of life remain highly motivated to join a community of people like them when it will help them achieve a common goal or feel less isolated.

There are three overwhelming reasons people join a class website:

- Access exclusive content, conversations, and experiences
- Meet people like you for support, encouragement, and to learn from each other
- Get answers from your fellow classmates or students
- Navigate topics that don't have easy or obvious answers (the stuff you can't Google)

Reinforcing the "why"—or the motivations for joining—in your invitations, your social media posts, or your emails will make it much easier to get your students to join your new class website.

Which of these reasons will most appeal to your students?

What other benefits would your students want to see from joining your new class website?



How will you make your class website stand out?

People decide if something is right for them in the first few seconds. The best way to seize this moment is with a memorable name—or “hook”—that captures your unique take on the world.

The easiest place to start is with **you**. You can feature your name and your story as the focal point of your new class website. Or, you can come up with a fun name that reflects the topics or interests you will be covering together in your community.

A few of our favorites include:

- **Change School** for educational leaders
- **Hairbrained** for craft hairdressers
- **Beyond Type 1** for people thriving with Type 1 diabetes
- **The Offbeat Bride Tribe** for brides who are looking for non-traditional wedding inspiration
- **Beat Infertility** for women navigating fertility issues

Don't yet have a name you love? Grab a friend and generate as many names you can think of below. The more you generate, the faster you'll find a name that will click with your students.



What do you want your students to do together?

There are a number of activities that are proven to build real relationships between students who are part of a community together:

- Connect students to each other based on where they live or their common interests
- Organize conversations and activities by specific topics they care about
- Use polls to crowdsource answers to specific questions that are relevant to their experiences
- Use questions to gather stories, experiences, and practical feedback
- Post your own story and experiences, and encourage your students to post theirs
- Host virtual events like live chats (with text chat, photos, and emojis) or a video conference
- Host real world meetups or conferences

What do you want your students to do together? Jot down as many ideas as you can for the best results.



What questions will help your students break the ice?

Connecting your students in a community isn't so different from your first day at camp or kicking off a retreat. A round of icebreaker questions goes a long way in getting people talking to each other right from their very first session.

Here are a few of our most popular icebreaker questions:

- What do you want to get from joining this class?
- What's the one thing you want to accomplish today?
- What is your main goal for 2017?
- What is your favorite part of being a _____?
- What's one new thing you're hoping to learn from the other people here?

Whether you choose something general or more specific, these questions are proven to put your students at ease and get them talking.

What are a few of your favorite icebreaker questions?



What topics are important to your students?

Topics are a great way to organize all the resources you're sharing and the great conversations happening between you and your students within your class website.

What do we mean by topics? Let's take one example. In a community for people who are taking a creative writing class together, the topics could be:

- Goal setting
- Accountability
- Daily prompts
- Story structure
- Short stories
- Poetry

What topics do *your* students care about? We recommend defining between 4 and 10 to start.



How will you measure success for your class website?

You're almost there! The last step before inviting in your students is the most important one. How will you measure success for the investment of time and energy you're making in your new class website?

Think about how you want to measure success. We recommend starting with:

- Number of students who join
- Percentage of students who contribute by commenting or attending virtual events
- Popularity of specific polls, prompts, posts, and event
- Percentage of students who are returning every week

How will you define success for your new class website?



You're ready to invite!

Congratulations! By following this guide, you've defined a strategy for your new class website that reflects the most successful experiences of other educators like you who are bringing together their students and creating unique opportunities for them to meet and learn from each other.

Now you're ready to invite in your students. Who are the best folks to invite upfront? This is where a clear definition of who your class website serves will come in handy.

If you have an email list already, start there. If you're building one from scratch before you launch your new class, your best bet is to:

Browse your contacts and pick 10 or 20 friends who fit the profile you've laid out for your students:

From there, make a list of friends who can provide recommendations for who to share it with next:

Congratulations! You're ready to go.

You now have everything you need to launch a beautiful class website for your students where they can meet, learn from each other, and keep in close communication between sessions.

Have questions or want to go to the next level with your Mighty Network? Join us in **Mighty Creators** at creators.mn.co 💪

See you on the other side!

