



Supercool School

MANUAL

FOR SCHOOL OWNERS

Content

updated Nov 27th 2009

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For information about Supercool School visit www.SupercoolSchool.com

Find additional support and request classes at [Educators 2.0](#)

or send us an email with your questions to support@SupercoolSchool.com

Starting your School

1. **Define the vision**, goals and target audience of your School. This is very important to make your School successful. You are about to build something from scratch.
Tip: Write an [executive summary](#)
2. **Get familiar with your new School** - especially the classroom technology. The classroom allows various model of teaching and learning. To become a good teacher online is a skill that you need to learn just as being a teacher offline.
Tip: Watch classes on [Educators 2.0](#)
3. **Record 5 short classes** before starting to market you school. Preexistent content will make new users of your School feel comfortable and skyrocket your conversions.
Tip: Make them 30 min or less
4. **Customize your School** in the Admin menu: upload a logo, add a description & more. Schedule and request a couple classes to give people an implicit direction on how they should behave and what they should expect.
Tip: Check out [Startup School](#)
5. **Market your school** and invite people. For low budget marketing we recommend to use social networks like facebook, linkedin, meetup, ning, etc. to reach out to your target audience. If you have some money to spend - use Adwords.
Tip: Use FB events for promotion
6. **Adapt your vision** and message based on the feedback that you receive. Most likely you will not find the right angle for your school right away - stay flexible.
Tip: Watch the [lean startup talk](#)
7. **Invite popular subject matter experts.** You can let them speak or interview them. This is a very effective way to build authority, trust and accumulate valuable content in your school. Linkedin and Forums are a good place to contact experts.
Tip: Don't be afraid to write them
8. **Do recurring events.** A weekly repeating class or meeting is a powerful way build momentum and attract people to your school. Focus all your marketing & pr efforts on that class.
Tip: Choose a catchy title
9. **Involve power users** in your school. Very active users are your most valuable asset. Embrace them and empower them to evangelize your school - give them a special standing in your external communication.
Tip: Reward your power users
10. **Blog about popular classes.** Extract some of the core messages into a blog post and mention all the participants. This way you have something people can use to write about your school. It will also help your ranking on Google.
Tip: Add screenshots from the class

Organize a Class from A to Z

- 1. Create the Class.** You can find the button “Create” in the global navigation. In order to offer a class you need to select “Teach” for the type of class. Depending if you want to pick the participants or let everybody join the class you can choose “Private” or “Public” access.

Tip: If you select “Learn” you don’t need to define a time and the class will be posted as a request. This is very helpful to test the interest level for a class.

- 2. Create order with tags.** Define categories, difficulty level, a class series or anything else to bring order to your school. The tags will help people to browse through your school.

- 3. Choose an accessible time.** With an online School your audience becomes global and one core task is to find the right time for a live class. Every event will be automatically converted into the respective time-zones of every user.

Tip: In order to cover as many time zones as possible - schedule sessions in the morning or evening.

- 4. Share your class.** With the “Add from my Address Book” button you can conveniently select people that you want to invite to your school. Twitter and Facebook are two of many ways how you can quickly share your event with your personal ecosystem.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Class' form with the following sections:

- Navigation:** Browse, People, **Create**
- Type of Class:** Learn - Request a class, **Teach**
- Access:** Public - everyone can join the class, **Private**
- Tags:** (comma separated) **Categories, Difficulty, Series**
- Date & Time:** (Pacific Time) 2010-1-13 @ 10 : 00
- 1. Invite your peers:** **ADD FROM MY ADDRESS BOOK**
- 2. Post the class on twitter or facebook**
- 3. Embed the class on your Blog or Website**

```
<iframe frameborder="0" marginheight="0" marginwidth="0" src="http://home.supercoolschool.com/classes/...">
```
- 4. Try the classroom and prepare**

Organize a Class from A to Z

5. Add your class to your calendar.

We highly recommend to use this feature in order to keep track of all your classes.

6. Feature important classes.

If you want the class to be always visible on the “Browse Page” then you can feature the class. The last class that was featured will be displayed on top.

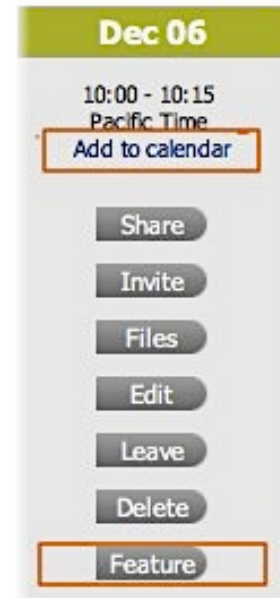
7. Add an agenda & resources to your class

to give the participants a way to inform themselves about the class. For public schools the class page becomes a landing page for visitors of your school. You can either start a wiki or add information to the description by pressing “Edit”. The wiki can be edited by all class participants and allows you to do more formatting. You can also upload files by clicking “Files” in the class menu.

8. Send a newsletter or write a message to all students.

With the newsletter you can reach out to all members of your school. The body of the message allows you to add html to format the text and add rich media.

Tip: Have one “Call to Action” in the subject field and keep the message as short as possible.



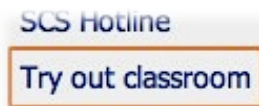
Organize a Class from A to Z

9. Market your Class. Especially in the beginning of your school you will need to spend some substantial time to market your classes. The cheapest way is to market through communities and social networks. Choose the platform depending on your target audience. If you want to hold a class about recruiting linkedin groups are most likely an excellent place to post you class - for a design class a designer forum or meetup group is probably better.

Tip: Schedule events on facebook or eventbrite. This way you have an initial landing page that people trust.



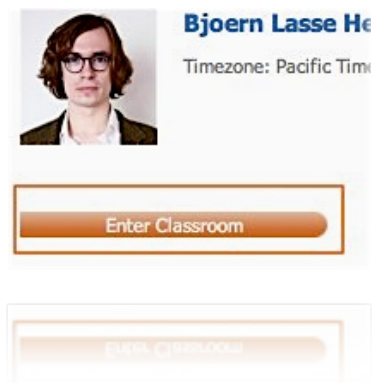
10. Prepare for the Class. If you have never tried the classroom we highly recommend to try it at least once. You will find a link in your admin menu to a test online classroom environment. On [Educators 2.0](#) you can watch a number of recordings about how to use the classroom. You can upload powerpoints, pictures and flash videos. You cannot upload pdfs, keynote files or open office files!



EDUCATORS 2.0

Counseling Session 4 School owners

11. Enter the class early! The classroom can be entered through the class page 30 min in advance. Only the host can start the class and by this open the class for the participants. We highly recommend to use this opportunity to deal with potential hiccups. Be prepared to use different browser in case something does not work. Check that you have a reliable internet connection and that all other programs are closed.



Organize a Class from A to Z

12. **Invite people last-minute** with a direct link to the classroom. People can enter the classroom without visiting the class page and without signing up on your school. This is very effective to get participants through twitter, facebook, instant messaging or chats. Check that you deselected “*Block Incoming Attendees*” before sending out the link.

Tip: This function is also very useful if you do an interview with a person who is not registered on your school.

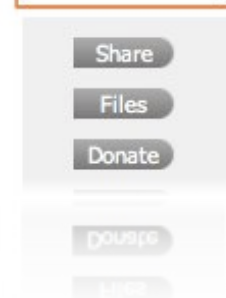
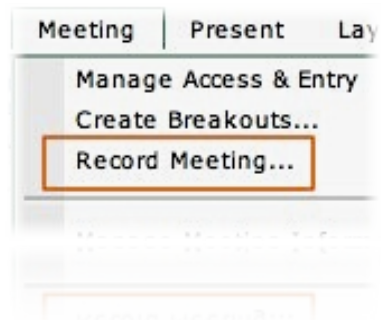
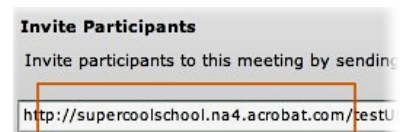
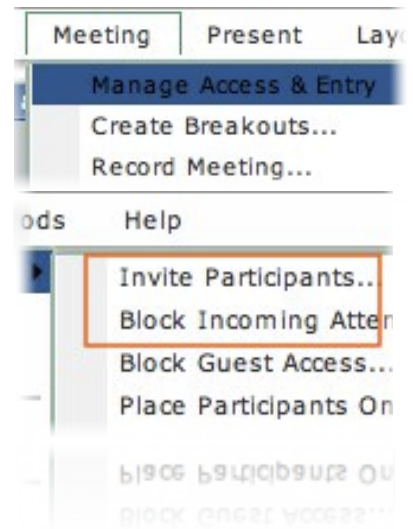
13. **Check all your equipment** and make sure that your internet works reliable. If you have a class with more than one person talking you should use headphones to avoid an echo.

Tip: If you don't have headphones just deactivate while you are not speaking.

14. **Record your class.** The recording is not started automatically so that you can choose when to start recording and if you want to record at all. You find the “*Record Meeting*” button in the top menu of the classroom. The recording will appear on the respective class page about 2-3 hours after the class.

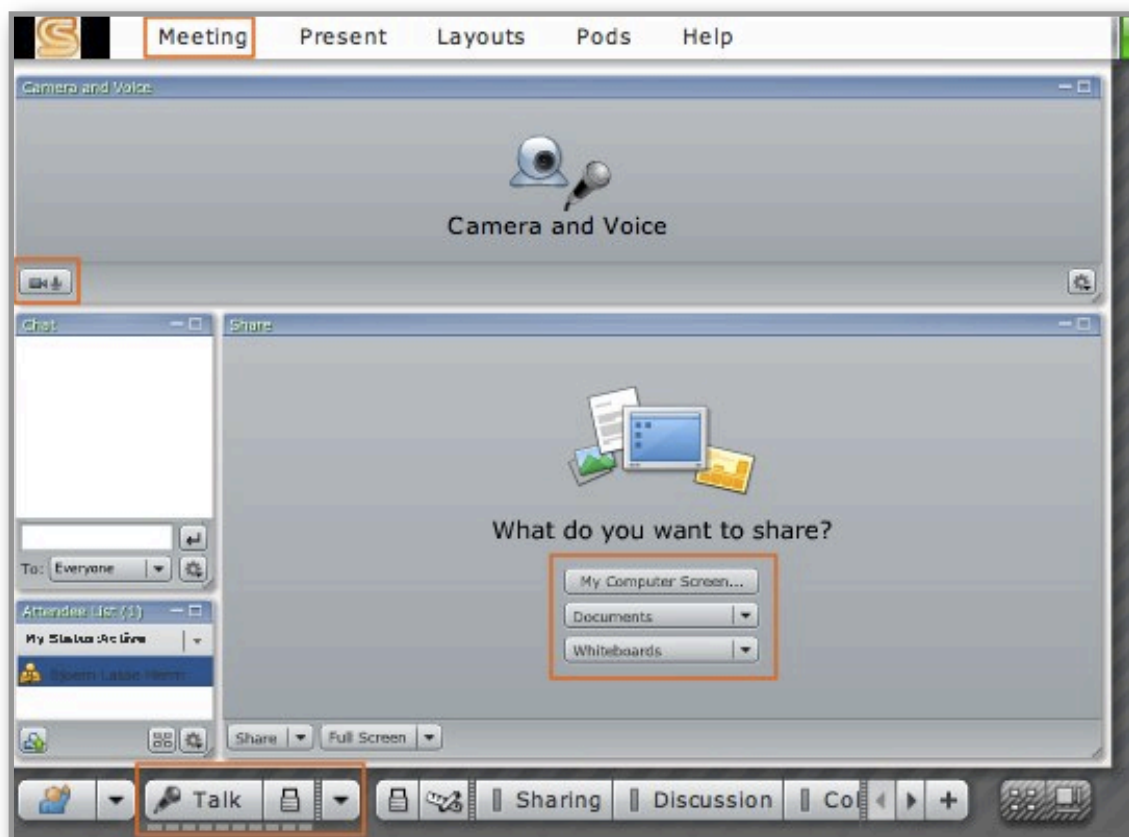
15. **Publish results from class.** Use the class wiki, your blog, podcast or video-channel to publish material from your class. It is a very good way to reuse the produced content.

Tip: Refer to the next class or a related session that is coming up.



Using the Classroom

The virtual Classroom is a powerful tool that allows an infinite number of use-cases. You can hold one-2-many classes, one-on-one tutoring sessions, organize creative brainstormings or record screen-casts. The more you use it - the better you will get. Be creative, experiment and be attentive on how people respond. To have a technically smooth experience have a microphone, a webcam, a good internet connection and make sure to close all other applications on your computer prior to starting the class.



(Illustration of the Classroom)

The surface of the classroom can be adjusted to your individual needs. You can add, hide and resize single pods. A pod is a window dedicated to a specific functionality. In an interactive sessions it helps to increase the size of the “camera and voice-pod” and reduce the size of the “share-pod”. This way the attention is drawn to the people. Unnecessary pods as the “file-sharing-pod” or the “poll-pod” can be hidden.

Using the Classroom

Functionality Overview

Audio & video

Audio & video are essential to create an effective learning experience. You can activate audio and video simultaneously by clicking the button **1** which is in the left lower edge of the “Camera & Voice” pod. To start & stop you microphone only you will find the button **2** on the lower left corner of the classroom. The lock icon activates hands free functionality.

If people cannot hear you it means you have either the wrong microphone input or your microphone is not loud enough. Both can be modified in the flash settings. You can get there by clicking right on the classroom surface if you use a PC or if you press left + ctrl if you use a mac.

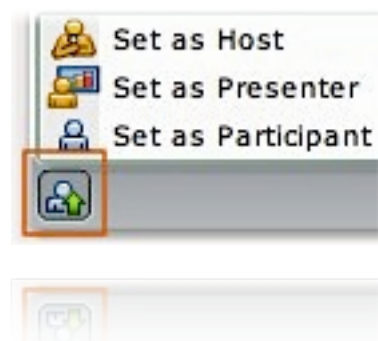
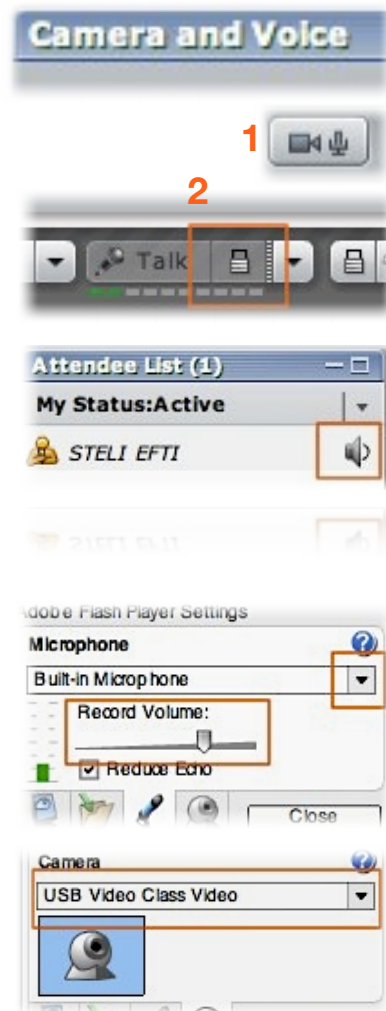
During interactive sessions make sure that everybody uses headphones to avoid echos.

Tip: If you have loud background noise switch your microphone off while you are not talking.

User rights

There are 3 general settings to define user rights. The “Host” has the maximum rights. It can be helpful to have a second “Host” in case your internet connection is not reliable.

The “Presenter” has slightly less rights than the “Host” and the “Participant” has no rights except using the chat.



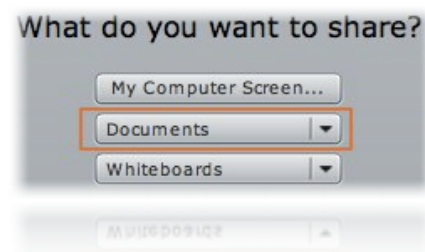
Using the Classroom

You can also modify the user rights individually. This especially makes sense if you want everybody to share their audio/video without giving them rights to change the layout or uploading presentation. In order to do that you need to select the user in the attendee list and press the “Settings Wheel” in the lower right corner of the “Attendee List pod”. Then you need to click the “Change Enhanced Participant Rights”.



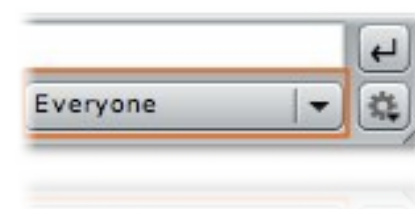
Presentations & media

You can upload Power Point Presentations, flash videos, pictures and audio files. You cannot upload pdfs. If you have problems uploading a presentation share your computer screen instead.



Text chat and Q&A

The text chat is a pod that should be always visible. It always add value by fostering the conversation between the participants. If you have a class with many participants a “Q&A pod” in addition to the “Text Chat pod” will help to not oversee questions.



Screen Sharing

Screen sharing allows you to stream your screen through the classroom. While you share your screen you cannot see the classroom. People will still be able to see and hear you.



Using the Classroom

File Sharing

In the “*File Sharing pod*” you can upload any type of file. The file can also be downloaded from the recorded file.



Whiteboard

With “*Whiteboard pod*” or the “*Whiteboard overlay*” for presentations you can do spontaneous markups or collaborative brainstorming sessions.

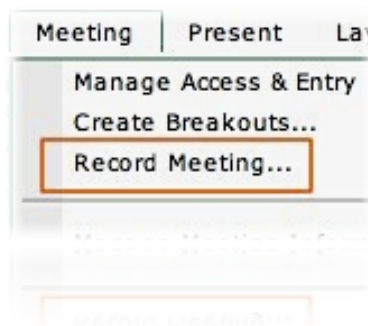
Polling and Multiple Choice

The “*Polling pod*” is a very effective tool to keep peoples attention during long presentations. It can also be used for testing students. Typically it is not shown in the classroom. You will find it in the top menu under “Pod”.



Recording

The recording is started be started by selecting “*Meeting*” in the top menu and clicking “*Record Meeting*”. The recording will appear on the class page about 2-3 hours after the class is finished.



There are many more functionalities such as breakout sessions or bandwidth optimization. To learn more about that check the recordings on Educators 2.0, request a class or send us an Email to support@supercoolschool.com.

Using the Classroom

Dry run before your first class

Tip: Schedule a private class on your school for the dry run.

1. Check the Browser and Hardware Requirements
2. You should have no less than DSL/ Cable for your internet connection
3. Click here to complete the Adobe Connection Test.
4. Check if you have the latest Version of FlashPlayer Installed
 - Schedule a dry-run with your peers to confirm all technology settings are working properly.
 - Complete the Audio Setup Wizard in the classroom
 - Check your microphone
 - Start Recording (Under Meeting > Record Meeting menu option – available to Host role only)
 - Upload a file in the file sharing pod
 - Share a powerpoint presentation
 - Share you desktop and check if you have any performance issues

Using the Classroom

Tips & Tricks for the Class

Prepare with the following

- Preload your content before the class starts to ensure that everything works
- Create the Layout you need before the class starts
- Create polls that you need before the class starts
- Watch the Beginner Tutorial
- Check out Tips for Designing Presentations

Live Tips

- If participants use the text chat for questions, make sure you repeat the question so it is picked up in the recording.

Good to know

- Depending on the activity your needed bandwidth and hardware is different. Screen sharing needs a lot of resources

School Management

Customize your School

In the admin menu you can customize your school by adding a description or uploading your logo.

Community Management

One core task for every School Owner is to keep in touch with their School community - including students, teachers, guest speakers, experts, etc. Supercool School has a newsletter tool and a forum integrated. Both are very helpful. Nevertheless community work does not end here. You need to reach out to your community on social networks, forums, groups and instant messaging services that they already use.

Content Management

In order to keep your school easy to use - feature important classes, delete useless content and adjust tags of existent classes. Push your community to contribute to class wikis, to rate and give references. A good content management can boost the school content's value significantly.

Market your School

Finding students/users

The best way to find students/users is to find their native ecosystem online or offline. If you look for designers you will most likely get lucky in one of the many very active design communities. If you want to open a tutoring school you might be more successful handing out flyers at a local school or university.

Recruiting speakers/teachers

It is surprisingly easy to reach out to high quality speakers and teachers with an online school. The commitment is considerably less and there are no costs for logistics. The best ecosystems to contact speakers or teachers are typically social networks like facebook or linkedin.

Build momentum

To build a school that is successful longterm you need to build momentum.

- have compelling vision and value proposition
- increase the bond with your community using tools like twitter or Facebook pages. You need to reach people in their native ecosystems. Do not force them to use new tools.
- produce teasers of your school and publish it. This could be for example a blog post about the last class.

Technical Requirements

Microsoft Windows Vista Home Basic, Home Premium, Ultimate, Business, or Enterprise (32-bit edition)

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 or later
- Mozilla Firefox 2

Microsoft Windows XP Professional or Home Edition Service Pack 2

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, 7
- Mozilla Firefox 1.x, 2.x
- Mozilla 1.x or later
- Netscape 7.x

Microsoft Windows 2000 with Service Pack 4

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.x
- Mozilla Firefox 1.x, 2.x
- Mozilla 1.x
- Netscape 8

Windows hardware requirements

- Intel Pentium II 450MHz or faster processor or equivalent (1GHz recommended when screen sharing)
- 128MB of RAM (512MB recommended)

Mac OS X v10.4, 10.5 (Intel)

- Firefox 1.5.0.3, 2.x
- Safari 2.x

Mac OS X v10.4 (PowerPC)

- Safari 1.x, 2.x
- Firefox 1.x
- Mozilla 1.x
- Netscape 7.x or later

Mac OS hardware requirements

- PowerPC G3 500MHz or faster or Intel Core Duo 1.83GHz or faster processor (1GHz recommended when screen sharing)
- 128MB of RAM (512MB recommended)

Additional requirements

- Adobe Flash Player 9 or later
- Bandwidth: 56 DSL/cable (wired connection recommended)

Recommended Hardware

1. Webcam

Logitech QuickCam Pro 9000

Price: about 85\$

Comment: Not optimized for Mac

[link to](#) 



Microsoft LifeCam VX-5000

Price: about 35\$

Comment: Not compatible with Macs

[link to](#) 



Logitech QuickCam Orbit

Price: about 175\$

Comment: built in microphone, face tracking

[link to](#) 



2. Headset

FREETALK Wireless Headset

Price: about 65\$

Comment: wireless

[link to](#) 



Plantronics .Audio 625

Price: about 25\$

Comment: flexible connection choice

[link to](#) 



Logitech ClearChat Pro

Price: about 50\$

Comment: noise canceling microphone

[link to](#) 

