



Why Use the WeCollabify Suite of Collabified Educational Apps? Supporting Social Learning

Learning From Each Other - Learning With Each Other

Intergalactic Mobile Learning Center

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Social learning – learning from each other, learning with each other. At the dinner table, shopping in the mall, shooting baskets; we engage in social learning all the time. Indeed, learning isn't anytime, anyplace, learning *all-the-time, everywhere!*

Towards supporting social learning – and towards supporting the development and use of the key 21st skill of collaborating and working productively and enjoyably with others, we – the digital cobblers in the Intergalactic Mobile Learning Center – have developed the WeCollabify Suite of “collabified” apps – apps that

enable two or more students, each student working on his/her own computational device, co-located or NOT co-located, to co-create or co-edit a text document (using WeCompose), a concept map (using WeMap), a KWL chart (using WeKWL), or a drawing or animation (using WeSketch). Key is that the students can be talking full-tilt as they engage in synchronous collaboration, as they co-create or co-edit their artifact.

While you can't see it, the young woman, in the picture on the left, in the red shirt, is *talking* to her collaborators *while* she is identifying the key concepts in her textbook and *while* she is co-creating a concept map, a visual representation that reflects the group's evolving understanding, which in this case, is of an issue in communicable diseases. In collaborating – as opposed to cooperating – the goal is to develop a common, shared understanding.

It always happens: while working on homework outside of school, a learner will get stuck, will get confused. Using the WeCollabify Suite of collabified apps, a student with a question or a confusion can reach out to her or his peers, teachers, or other experts and work collaboratively to resolve the question or confusion. *A student never has to learn alone again.* The WeCollabify Suite supports *social* learning.

The WeCollabify Suite of Educational Apps are *free* and, most importantly, as they are written in HTML5 they are device-agnostic: all the WeCollabify apps will run on a smartphone, a Windows laptop, an iPad, a Mac desktop, a Chromebook, etc., etc., etc. Ease of use is paramount; start up WeCompose to answer some teacher-provided questions, ask your friends to join in; one brings up the Google search engine, while the third collaborator brings up Bing; click to a suggested website, read, digest, converse, and then



hit the WeCompose tab in the browser (*any* browser – Chrome to Edge, IE to Safari, etc.) and enter a response to the question! Each WeCollabrify app is just a webpage, a tab in a browser; having several webpages/tabs open at the same time is an easy and effective way to learn – especially when one (or more!) of the tabs supports social learning – supports synchronous collaboration.

Web 2.0 software has supported asynchronous collaboration. But Social 3.0 apps – those support synchronous collaboration. Technology keeps moving; mobile devices and Wi-Fi are ubiquitous, while 4G is increasingly becoming available. Thus, it's easy to predict: in 2-4 years, *all mobile apps and all websites will be collabrified – a student – “short” or otherwise – never has to learn alone!*

Those school districts that have gone BYOD – Bring Your Own Device – now have a new and powerful resource for teaching and learning! The WeCollabrify Suite of Educational Apps. iPad schools? Android tablets? Windows' smartphones? No problem! Those schools going with Chromebooks now have free and easy access a suite of apps *tailored specifically for young learners!* And, the students can leave their school-purchased devices in their classrooms but continue working on their documents from their home computers – on *whatever* computer is available at home.

Pedagogically, the WeCollabrify apps scaffold learners collaborating by encouraging them to engage in the discourse patterns (e.g., questioning, narrating, revising) that are the hallmarks of good collaborative conversational behavior.

The WeCollabrify Suite of collabrified apps saves the students' work in a Google Drive, under their Google email address. (We also interoperate with Google Classroom, if the school is using that LMS.) Teachers can then easily review their students work. As well, analytics are available to give teachers a window into the collaboration processes that the students are engaging in.

Teachers: Please contact us (Cathie & Elliot) for a free, quick, and personal live demo! Use your iPad, Chromebook, etc. and work with us to co-create a concept map or a KWL chart, in real-time – actually, in virtually no-time!! Invest 15 minutes and you will be mightily rewarded; our collabrified apps will be your best “app discovery” -- ever!! Send an email to WeCollabrify@umich.edu and you will hear from us immediately - if not sooner!

Here's how to access and use the free WeCollabrify apps:

1. Open a browser (any browser) on your computational device
2. Go to: <http://www.imlc.io/#apps>
3. User manuals for each of the four apps are available right next to the apps
4. Tap/click on a WeCollabrify app and sign in using your Google email address
5. Tap/click “New File” and invite a peer to start collaborating!

At: www.imlc.io/#support we have short documents to help get you going. Check out: “First Timers Start HERE” – that document will walk you, step by step, through how to set up a simple contacts list and how to invite peers to collaborate.

Thank you for your interest in Social Learning and in how the WeCollabrify Suite of collabrified apps can support students and teachers in being effective social learners. Please, do not hesitate to contact us with your questions. Send an email to WeCollabrify@umich.edu and you will hear from us immediately - if not sooner!