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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *50+ Tech Tools for School Counselors* by Angela Cleveland and Stephen Sharp. In this excerpt, the authors recommend Flipgrid, a video discussion tool where prompts are provided by the educator for each discussion topic and then participants respond via video responses, allowing for more in-depth responses than surveys and text allow.

LEARN MORE about this title, including Features, Table of Contents and Reviews.

FLIPGRID

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY	EASY	MODERATE	A LITTLE MORE ADVANCED
COST	FREE	FREE TO USE PAY TO UPGRADE	FREE TRIAL PAY TO ACCESS

As counselors and educators, one of our goals is to capture authentic student responses to drive a learning experience. Seldom does a whole class’ survey responses or questionnaires reflect our students’ rich and diverse thoughts and insights. Flipgrid is a video discussion forum. The underlying mechanics are similar to any other online chat group or discussion board. The facilitator has a grid; a grid is a community of learners or a classroom. Prompts are provided by the educator for each discussion topic, and then participants respond via video responses (normally 90 seconds). Each response can be viewed by all the participants and responded to by other participants, creating a platform for rich insights and discussion.

To begin, as an educator, simply go to flipgrid.com. Users can log in using your Google or Microsoft account. You can also log in using a school email address and creating a “SUPER SECRET PASSWORD” (may we suggest using the password DJTanner4Life).

Once logged in, you’re ready to set up a grid. A grid is your virtual space for a community. The community can be a classroom, professional learning network (PLN), Grid Pals (a space for networking, mentoring, and discussion), Families (a space for parent engagement, updates, and providing information to a Full House), or a customized Grid. Ultimately, when setting up the Grid, think less about “What is the name of the community?” and more on “How do you want the community to engage with you, the discussions, and each other?”

Once you select a type of Grid, it will ask you to set up a Grid Password. You can select an auto-generated secure password, or customize your own (e.g., FULLHOUSE). Once a password is set up, Flipgrid will let you know Your Grid is Ready. You can click All Set in the lower right-hand corner to get started; but we prefer you click on Customize your Grid.

Customizing your Grid is an easy way to increase the accessibility and user experience. First, you can change the FlipCode from the auto-generated randomized code to something more personalized or specific like FULLHOUSE. PLCs or Public Grids can be password-protected either with a random password or a customized one (e.g., HaveMercy). The type of Grid can be changed, and here you can also preload students manually or via a CSV (comma-separated values) file. Students can also be assigned a random ID via Flipgrid.

Features such as notifications, downloads, and privacy can also be set. Finally, images can be added for a Grid Cover from either Flipgrid’s bank of cover images or uploading a JPEG file thru Upload or Drag/Drop. After clicking Update Grid, you’re ready to go. A Copilot can be added to monitor or facilitate a grid, as well.

Once a grid is set up, you’re ready to start a discussion. A description of the grid to frame the purpose or provide guidelines or goals can be added. Flipgrid provides

preformatted Topic/Discussions dependent on which grid type you've select. Here you can review or change the prompts and/or discussion questions and adjust the time for response.

Most responses are 90 seconds but can be adjusted from 15 seconds up to 5 minutes. Videos can be moderated, requiring the grid owner's approval before becoming visible, or the privacy can be set to unmoderated allowing for immediate viewing and responses. Resources to engage participants, like an emoji, GIF, or short video, can be added, as well as topic resources by simply pasting a URL and title.

Finally, video response rules can be set up. Rules for allowing responses, selfie decoration, permitting emoji responses, and the privacy level of responses are the key features in the section. Topics can be downloaded from the Disco Library (discovery library), where users can sort via audience, subject, or goal; or simply type a keyword in the search bubble. Privacy should be considered before launch. Is the discussion topic one you, as the facilitator, wish to view by yourself or spark a conversation across the community?

Here are the guiding prompts that can be provided to participants prior to starting a discussion:

1. Read the prompts or guiding questions.
2. Jot your ideas down (or even a script) using the stickies.
3. Press record (or upload a previously recorded video).
4. Hit next and review your response.
5. Take a selfie (decorations are appreciated, but not required).
6. Add information, name, or email, if so desired.
7. View submissions.
8. Reply with a video response.

The topic and/or discussion can be shared via URL, embedded into a website, or QR code. Participants only need the Flip Code and possibly a password. When logging in, participants may be prompted to enter a Flip Code. Once the participants see "Shh, this Grid is Locked," the Grid Password should be added. Participants don't need to register or download anything; they simply need a web browser and camera to participate. An app is available for iOS and Android for participants to use, if so desired. You're ready to view, moderate, and participate in these great discussions.

Counselors can use Flipgrid to supplement or modify traditional small-group or lesson content. Small groups can be flipped to spark thought-provoking discussion prior to the group sitting together or to modify existing class discussion to drive a discussion or exploration no longer dependent on a student's literacy level or native language. Sensitive topics of stress management or attitudes toward school or peers can be delivered to a whole class, with individual responses delivered privately back to the instructor. A student who would normally give single-word responses, or say "You got it, dude," may deliver deeper, thoughtful feedback through the comfort of a camera. Managing the flow of communication and interactions in a group shifts to a process of planning rather than the balancing acts of negotiation, mediation, and interpretation of member feedback.

