Collaboration Tools

What you need to know

The Collaboration Tools let the Instructors and students communicate outside of the traditional classroom. It is a virtual classroom. There is a white board, which can be drawn on and there are functions similar to an AIM chat. It allows you to reply back and forth. It has a chat room in which students may talk with each other and exchange information even if the professor is not present.

How do I get to it?

1. Enter the course in which you want to chat. For example if you want to talk to classmates in your History 118, click on the link for your History 118 course in Blackboard.

2. On the left hand side click on Communication in the menu.

3. A list will appear, click on Collaboration.

Collaboration Tools: What are they?

Virtual Classroom: it allows users to enter a real-time discussion with instructors and other students. You can access the web while in it. You may also engage in question and answer sessions. The Whiteboard is also available to display text and images.

Lightweight Chat: Lightweight chat is a text only chat tool. Similar to AIM.

What do the buttons on the collaboration page do?

Filter: click the arrow next to the drop-down list and select the session you
want displayed. Click Filter. There are four kinds

- **Show All**: this will show all the Collaboration Sessions
- **Open Rooms**: it will display all the sessions that are being used at the moment
- **Rooms with Archives**: displays completed sessions that possess an archive.
- **Rooms Available in the Future**: displays sessions that will occur in the future.

**What is your Role, active or passive?**

There are two roles in the chat. You can either be active or passive. This is decided by the instructor. If you want to participate and your professor has given you a passive role, simply click on the hand in the upper left hand corner. This will “raise their hand” like you would do in a real classroom setting. The professor can then make you active so that you may participate. A student icon will appear in the Role column next to those students who are active. Also, you can send private messages if the professor gives you that option.

Macintosh and Accessible Collaboration Tool

The Lightweight Chat Tool is accessible to users using screen readers to access course content. Users running Macintosh Operating System 8 or 9 should also use this version of the collaboration tool as the Virtual Classroom is not available for these operating system versions.

On the launch page, which opens when Join is selected on the Collaboration Sessions page, a link to this version appears. This link will open the Accessible version / Macintosh OS 8 and 9 version of the Collaboration Tool, which resembles the Lightweight Chat. Links to items that appear in the Virtual Classroom, such as items in the Course Map and Group Browser, will appear in this version. Documents created on the Whiteboard may be viewed if the Instructor takes a snapshot of them, using the Snapshot button on the Whiteboard action bar. A link will be created to the snapshot for users to view it.

When a user, using the Accessible Collaboration Tool, enters or exits the room the sound of a door opening or closing will be audible to all participants in the Collaboration Session.

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