

Virtual Classroom

The **Virtual Classroom** tool allows you to communicate in real-time with your class. It gives you more tools than are found in a Lightweight Chat session—you can draw on a whiteboard, create slides, browse the web with your class, and field questions and answers. Note that you may not have access to all the tools mentioned below—it depends how your instructor has configured the Virtual Classroom.

Entering a Collaboration Session

From the **Student View**:

- 1) Click into the content area where Collaboration sessions are kept (this varies from course to course, but is usually the **Communication** area).
- 2) Click the **Collaboration** link.
- 3) You will see a list of all collaboration sessions in alphabetical order by session name.
- 4) Find the collaboration session you wish to join.
- 5) Click the **Join** button to the right of the collaboration session name.
- 6) You will see a page that says “Chat Loading.” Depending on your connection speed, it may take a few minutes for everything necessary for the chat to run to download.
- 7) A new window will appear. This is the **Virtual Classroom**.
- 8) The Virtual Classroom window has four major panes. On the upper left, you see a list of all the tools available in the Virtual Classroom (the **Course Map**, the **Whiteboard**, the **Group Browser**, the **Ask Question** tool, and the **Question Inbox**). On the upper right, you see the currently active tool. On the lower right, you see all messages sent to the group. On the lower left, you are shown a list of all users currently in the chat room.

Changing Your Viewing Options for Private Messages

You can set your chat window to display private messages either *inline* (with the other messages you send and receive) or in a *separate frame* (which creates a new pane in the Virtual Classroom window which contains only private messages).

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **View** button.
- 2) A new window, labeled **Session Options** will appear.
- 3) Select the radio button next to **Show in-line** or **Show in separate frame**.
- 4) Click the **Ok** button.

Sending and Receiving Messages

In the Virtual Classroom, the lower left pane of the window is dedicated to group information. The large pane toward the upper right is used to display whichever tool you are currently using (e.g., **Whiteboard**, **Group Browser**). The lower right pane is used to display messages and login information (and depending on how you have configured your options (see the “Setting the View” directions for more information) may include private messages as well. To send a message:

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) The lower right pane of the Virtual Classroom window has all messages sent to the group. If you have just joined, you should see a message saying that you have joined the session (and a timestamp).
- 2) To send a message, click in the field just to the right of the **Compose** button.
- 3) Type your message and click the **Send** button (or press return).
- 4) In the window above the text field, you should see your name (or your username, depending on your privacy settings), followed by your message text, followed by a date and timestamp.
- 5) The message you have just sent will appear in the same box for everyone currently in the chat session. In addition, if you are recording an archive, the message will appear there (for more information on this, see the directions on recording archives).
- 6) Messages that other users send will appear in the same pane yours did.

Sending Longer Messages

You may occasionally wish to send a longer message than will fit in the compose field. If you'd like to send a longer message, you can do it by using the **Compose** button.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Compose** button.
- 2) A window labeled **Compose Message** will appear. You can type your message here. While typing, pressing **Enter** or **Return** will insert line breaks; however, these line breaks will not appear when the final message is sent.
- 3) When your message is complete, click the **Send** button.
- 4) The smaller window will close and your message will be sent to the class.

Sending a Private Message

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click on the name (or User ID) of the participant you wish to send a private message to in the **lower left** pane. The user's name, role, and status should highlight in purple. If you'd like to send a private message to two or more users, you can shift-click or control-click on the names to select more than one user.
- 2) Click the **Private Message** button.
- 3) A new window, labeled **Compose Private Message**, will appear.
- 4) Type your message into the text field of the **Compose Private Message** window.
- 5) Press the **Send** button.
- 6) Your message will appear in your chat window (depending on how you've set the options, it may appear inline or in a frame on the right) and in the window of the user you've sent it to, but will not appear in any other user's chat window.

***Note:** Private messages will not show up in the archives for the chat. Note that this is a change from earlier versions of Blackboard.*

Clearing Your Display

You can clear out your record of previous chat messages.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click on the **Clear** button.
- 2) Your chat window should clear.

Viewing Participants

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) The lower left pane will show you a list of all current participants in the chat.
- 2) The number of current participants appears at the top of the list (in parentheses, after the word "Participants").
- 3) Users who have set their name to publicly available in their **Privacy Settings** will have their first and last names appear here. Users who have not set their name to publicly available will have their user ID displayed.
- 4) Next to each participant's name, an icon displaying the user's **role** will be displayed:
 - a. Users who are **Moderators** of the chat have a **Globe** icon.
 - b. Users who are **Active Users** have a face in profile icon.

- c. Users who are **Passive Users** have the same face icon, but it is grayed out.
- 5) To the right of the user role, there is a column for the **Raised Hand** icon. If you have set users to **Passive Users** roles, they can raise their hands to ask questions—for more information on this, see the directions to **Call on Users with Raised Hands**.

Sorting the Participant List

You can sort participants by **name**, **role**, or **order in which they raised their hands** (if you are using active and passive users).

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) In the lower left pane, click on the criteria you wish to sort by.
- 2) If you click on the **Participants** tab, you will sort participants in alphabetical order by user name or last name, depending on each user's privacy settings (you only see first and last names of users who have made that information available).
- 3) Clicking on **Role** will sort users by role (moderators, active users, and passive users).
- 4) Clicking on the **Hand** icon will sort users by whether they have their hand raised, and if they do, by the order in which they raised their hands.
- 5) Clicking on a sort button again will reverse the order of the sort.

Viewing User Info

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click on the name (or User ID) of the participant whose info you wish to view. The user's name, role, and status should highlight in purple.
- 2) Press the **User Info** button.
- 3) A new window will appear with all information from the user's profile that is publicly available (this depends on the user's privacy settings, but may include name, email, address, job title, and phone numbers).

Using the Classroom Tools

The big difference between the **Virtual Classroom** and the **Lightweight Chat Tool** is that the Virtual Classroom gives you access to the **Classroom Tools**, which you can use to display web pages, draw on the board, display pages from your course, &c. There are five Classroom Tools: **Course Map**, **Whiteboard**, **Group Browser**, **Ask Question**, and the **Question Inbox**. You can tell which tool is currently being displayed to users by looking at the Classroom Tools pane—the tool with an arrow to the right of it is currently being seen by all users.

Note that you may not have access to all of the classroom tools—see the section on **Active versus Passive Users** for more details.

Using the Course Map

The **Course Map** tool lets you display pages from the content areas of your class to all users in the collaboration session.

Displaying Content from your Course to Users

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Course Map** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) A list of the Course Content Areas will appear in the pane below the Classroom Tool pane.
- 3) Move through this as you would the Course Map. Click on folders to open them.
- 4) When you have found the content you wish to display, click on it. It should be highlighted in purple.
- 5) Immediately below the Course Map area, select **Display to Class** in the drop-down menu.
- 6) Click the **Go** button.

Note: *The **Course Map** tool will not directly display files that have been added as attachments, tests, or assignments. You can use the tool to display the folder or area these things are in, but you must ask students to click on the link from that folder.*

Previewing Content from your Course in a New Window

If you'd like to see how different areas will look before displaying them to the class, you can preview content.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Course Map** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) A list of the Course Content Areas will appear in the pane below the Classroom Tool pane.
- 3) Move through this as you would the Course Map. Click on folders to open them.
- 4) When you have found the content you wish to display, click on it. It should be highlighted in purple.
- 5) Immediately below the Course Map area, select **Preview in New Window** in the drop-down menu.
- 6) Click the **Go** button.

- 7) A new window will appear with the selected course information, exactly as it will appear to others if you choose the **Display to Class** option.

Refreshing the Tree in the Course Map Area

Recently posted material may not show up in the Course Map area unless you refresh the tree—this checks the course map against the actual course content and updates it.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Course Map** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) A list of the Course Content Areas will appear in the pane below the Classroom Tool pane.
- 3) Immediately below the Course Map area, select **Refresh Tree** in the drop-down menu.
- 4) Click the **Go** button.
- 5) The Course Map should now reflect all recent changes to your course content areas.

Using the Whiteboard

The **Whiteboard** lets you draw, write, and create slides for your class.

Using the Drawing Tools

The Whiteboard features a simple version of the same drawing tools you find in programs like Paint. There's a **Select** tool to move objects around, a **Line** tool to draw straight lines, a **Marker** tool to draw freehand, an **Equation** tool to insert equations, a **Rectangle** tool to draw rectangles, an **Oval** tool to draw ovals, and a **Text** tool to insert text. Below each tool are a number of options—you can change colors, size, and font.

Drawing a Straight Line

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Line** button (it looks like a diagonal line) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Set the color and thickness of the line in the drop-down menus below the button. The **Pen Color** will determine the color of the line (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The **Line Width** determines its thickness. The other options are not used by the Line Tool.

- 5) Move the mouse pointer to where (in the upper-right frame) you want the line to begin
- 6) Press and hold the mouse button.
- 7) Move the mouse to the endpoint of the line. The line will appear.
- 8) Release the mouse button.

Freehand Drawing using the Marker Tool

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Marker** button (it looks like a marker) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Set the color and thickness of the pen in the drop-down menus below the button. The **Pen Color** will determine the color (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The **Line Width** determines its thickness. The other options are not used by the Marker Tool.
- 5) Hold the mouse button down to draw in the whiteboard pane.

Inserting an Equation

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Equation** button (it is a Sigma) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Set the color and size of the equation in the drop-down menus below the button. The **Pen Color** will determine the color of the equation (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The **Font Size** will determine the size of the equation. The other options are not used by the Equation tool.
- 5) Move the mouse pointer into the whiteboard area. It should change from an arrow to a cursor.
- 6) Click the mouse where you'd like the equation to begin.
- 7) The **Equation Editor** window will appear. Use it as you would anywhere else in the classroom.
- 8) Click the **Insert Equation** button when you are finished. The equation will appear on the whiteboard.

Drawing a Rectangle

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.

- 3) Click the **Rectangle** button (a drawing of a square) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Set the color of the rectangle in the drop-down menus below the button. The **Fill Color** will determine the color of the rectangle (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The other options are not used by the Rectangle Tool.
- 5) Click and hold the mouse button in the whiteboard area to draw a rectangle.
- 6) Release the mouse button to draw the rectangle.

Drawing an Oval

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Oval** button (a drawing of a circle) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Set the color of the oval in the drop-down menus below the button. The **Fill Color** will determine the color of the oval (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The other options are not used by the Oval Tool.
- 5) Click and hold the mouse button in the whiteboard area to draw an oval.
- 6) Release the mouse button to draw the oval.

Inserting Text

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Text** button (an uppercase T) in the **Tools** tab.
- 4) Select the pen color, font, and size for your text from the drop-down menus below the button. The **Pen Color** will determine the color of the text (if you need a color not available in the drop-down menu, see directions on **Setting a Custom Color**). The **Font** will determine the font used. The **Font Size** is the size of the letters in pixels. The other options are not used by the Text tool.
- 5) Click the mouse button where you want the text to begin.
- 6) The **Whiteboard Text Input** window will appear.
- 7) Type the text you wish to insert.
- 8) Press the **Insert** button.

Setting a Custom Color

If you'd like to use a color that isn't available on the dropdown menu, you can select a custom color for either the **Fill Color** or the **Pen Color**. You can do this by picking from a set of swatches, from a palette, setting the hue, saturation, and brightness, or setting the red, green, and blue levels.

Setting a Custom Color using Swatches

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) In either the **Fill Color** or **Pen Color** drop-down menu, select the **Custom Color...** option.
- 4) The **Choose Custom Color** window appears. The **Swatches** tab will be selected.
- 5) Click on the color you would like from the series of colored boxes that appear on the tab.
- 6) The color you have chosen will appear (shown next to black, white, text, and as a solid box) in the **Preview** area.
- 7) Click the **OK** button.

Setting a Custom Color using the Palette

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) In either the **Fill Color** or **Pen Color** drop-down menu, select the **Custom Color...** option.
- 4) The **Choose Custom Color** window appears. The **Swatches** tab will be selected.
- 5) Click on the **HSB** tab.
- 6) A large colored box showing all shades of a particular hue will appear. To the right of the box is a column showing all hues.
- 7) Move the slider to the hue you'd like.
- 8) Click on the color you would like in the large box.
- 9) The color you have chosen will appear (shown next to black, white, text, and as a solid box) in the **Preview** area.
- 10) Click the **OK** button.

Setting a Custom Color using Hue, Saturation, and Brightness

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.

- 3) In either the **Fill Color** or **Pen Color** drop-down menu, select the **Custom Color...** option.
- 4) The **Choose Custom Color** window appears. The **Swatches** tab will be selected.
- 5) Click on the **HSB** tab.
- 6) Enter the **Hue** (from 0 to 255) in the **H** field (to the right).
- 7) Enter the **Saturation** (from 0 to 255) in the **S** field.
- 8) Enter the **Brightness** (from 0 to 255) in the **B** field.
- 9) The color you have chosen will appear (shown next to black, white, text, and as a solid box) in the **Preview** area.
- 10) Click the **OK** button.

Setting a Custom Color using Red, Green, and Blue Levels

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) In either the **Fill Color** or **Pen Color** drop-down menu, select the **Custom Color...** option.
- 4) The **Choose Custom Color** window appears. The **Swatches** tab will be selected.
- 5) Click on the **RGB** tab.
- 6) Set the red level (from 0 to 255) using the **Red** slider (or enter it in the corresponding text field).
- 7) Set the green level (from 0 to 255) using the **Green** slider (or enter it in the corresponding text field).
- 8) Set the blue level (from 0 to 255) using the **Blue** slider (or enter it in the corresponding text field).
- 9) The color you have chosen will appear (shown next to black, white, text, and as a solid box) in the **Preview** area.
- 10) Click the **OK** button.

Using the Select Tool

The **Select** tool lets you move, rescale, delete, group, copy, cut, and paste figures (lines, freehand drawings, text, equations, rectangles, and ovals). Unlike the other Whiteboard tools, options for the **Select** tool are set using the buttons directly above the Whiteboard, not the drop down menus on the tools tab.

Selecting a Figure

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.

- 3) Click the **Select** button (a drawing of a mouse pointer) on the tools tab.
- 4) Click on the figure in the drawing area you'd like to select.
- 5) Eight boxes should appear along the outline of the object.

Selecting Multiple Figures

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Select** button (a drawing of a mouse pointer) on the tools tab.
- 4) Click on the first object in the drawing area you'd like to select.
- 5) Eight boxes should appear along the outline of the figure.
- 6) Hold down the **Shift** key and click on the second figure you'd like to select.
- 7) It, too, should now have eight boxes along its outline.
- 8) Repeat until all figures are selected.

Selecting All Figures

You can quickly select all the figures on the whiteboard.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Select All Figures** button (it looks like two cubes surrounded by a frame, and is directly above the Whiteboard area).
- 4) Eight boxes should appear around each figure in the Whiteboard area.

Grouping Figures

You can group objects so that the whiteboard will treat them as one object. In this way, you can easily copy and paste, move, and resize drawings made up of many different lines, text, shapes, and equations.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select all the figures you want to group together (see the directions for **Selecting Multiple Figures** or **Selecting All Figures** above).
- 2) Click the **Group Figures** button. It looks like three large cubes, and is directly above the Whiteboard area.
- 3) The figures will now all be surrounded by a single set of eight boxes. They can be moved, resized, and copied and pasted as one.

Note: A grouped figure that contains text, freehand drawings, or equations cannot be resized.

Ungrouping Figures

If you have grouped figures but need to make changes to them individually, you can ungroup them.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figures you want to ungroup (see the directions for **Selecting Figures** above).
- 2) Click the **Ungroup Figures** button. It looks like three small cubes, and is directly above the Whiteboard area (to the right of the **Group Figures** button).
- 3) The single set of eight boxes surrounding the figure should be replaced by many sets of boxes around each individual figure. They can be moved, resized, and copied and pasted individually.

Moving a Figure

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure you'd like to move (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**).
- 2) Click and drag inside the figure to move it.

Resizing a Figure

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure you'd like to resize (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**).
- 2) Click and drag on one of the eight boxes that surround the object.
- 3) Moving these boxes resizes the object.

Note: You can not resize objects (or grouped objects) that contain text, freehand drawings, or equations. You must recreate these objects using a different font size or redraw them.

Deleting a Figure or Figures

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure or figures you'd like to delete (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**).

- 2) Click the **Delete Figure** button (it looks like an X and is directly above the Whiteboard area).

Cutting a Figure or Figures to the Clipboard

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure or figures you'd like to cut and paste (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**)
- 2) Click the **Cut Figure** button (it looks like a pair of scissors and is directly above the Whiteboard area).
- 3) The figures will disappear. They are now on the clipboard and may be pasted into another page of the Whiteboard. See the directions below on **Pasting a Figure or Figures from the Clipboard**.

Copying a Figure or Figures to the Clipboard

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure or figures you'd like to copy (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**)
- 2) Click the **Copy Figure** button (it looks like two sheets of paper and is directly above the Whiteboard area).
- 3) The figures are now on the clipboard and may be duplicated on this page of the Whiteboard or pasted into another page of the Whiteboard. See the directions below on **Pasting a Figure or Figures from the Clipboard**.

Pasting a Figure or Figures from the Clipboard

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Cut or copy the figure or figures you'd like to paste (see the directions above on **Cutting a Figure or Figure to the Clipboard** or **Copying a Figure or Figures to the Clipboard**).
- 2) Navigate to the Whiteboard page you'd like to paste the figures into (see the directions for **Displaying a Whiteboard Page** or **Adding a New Whiteboard Page** below).
- 3) Click the **Paste** button (it looks like a clipboard and is directly above the Whiteboard area).
- 4) The figures on the clipboard will be placed in the center of the Whiteboard. You can quickly move them by following the directions above for **Grouping Figures** and **Moving a Figure**.

Moving a Figure or Figures to the Background

By default, the most recently created figures are in the foreground and overwrite any figures they overlap. You can regroup figures by moving them to the background.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure or figures you'd like to move to the background. (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**)
- 2) Click the **Send Figure to Background** button (it looks like an arrow pointing down on top of a rectangle and is directly above the Whiteboard).
- 3) The figure or figures you have selected will be moved to the background and any figures they were covering will now be placed in front of them.

***Note:** When moving multiple figures to the foreground or background, their relative position is unchanged.*

Moving a Figure or Figures to the Foreground

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Select the figure or figures you'd like to move to the foreground. (see the instructions for **Selecting a Figure**)
- 2) Click the **Send Figure to Foreground** button (it looks like an arrow pointing up on top of a rectangle and is directly above the Whiteboard).
- 3) The figure or figures you have selected will be moved to the foreground and will now be in front of any figures they were covered by.

***Note:** When moving multiple figures to the foreground or background, their relative position is unchanged.*

Adding a Snapshot of the Whiteboard to an Archive

If you'd like an image of the current contents of the whiteboard to be added to an archive, you can create a snapshot. You must be recording an archive for this feature to be available (see the directions on **Recording an Archive** below).

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Tools** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click the **Snapshot** button (it looks like a camera and is directly above the whiteboard).

- 4) A **Message** window reading “A Snapshot of the whiteboard has been taken” will appear.
- 5) Click the **OK** button.

Clearing the Whiteboard

You can quickly erase all figures on the Whiteboard.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Clear Whiteboard** button (it looks like an eraser and is directly above the Whiteboard).
- 3) The **Clear Document** confirmation window will appear.
- 4) Click the **OK** button.

***Note:** This only affects the currently displayed Whiteboard page. To remove a Whiteboard page entirely, see the directions for **Deleting a Whiteboard Page** below.*

Whiteboard Pages

As you’ve probably noticed, creating a diagram with any detail on the Whiteboard is pretty labor-intensive. Fortunately, the Whiteboard allows the creation of multiple Whiteboard pages, which you can navigate through. These pages remain in the Virtual Classroom even if you leave it, so you can create a series of Whiteboard pages ahead of time and navigate through them as your collaboration session progresses). Because your instructor can create multiple collaboration sessions (see the directions on **Managing Collaboration Sessions** for details), you can create different sets of Whiteboard pages for different sessions, and these will be saved until you are ready to use them. Pages are controlled through the **Controls** tab of the **Whiteboard** tool.

Adding a Whiteboard Page

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Controls** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) The **Whiteboard** controls will appear. This displays an icon for each Whiteboard page—by default, you have only one, called Page 1.
- 4) Click the **Add Whiteboard Page** button (it looks like a plus sign and is in the upper right hand corner of the **Controls** tab).
- 5) A new page will appear on the **Controls** tab.

Note: When you create a new page, the Whiteboard does not automatically display it. Follow the directions for **Displaying a Whiteboard Page** below to move to the new page to edit it).

Displaying a Whiteboard Page

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Controls** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click on the page you would like to display in the **Controls** tab.
- 4) Click the **Display** button in the controls tab.

Deleting a Whiteboard Page

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Whiteboard** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Controls** tab in the Whiteboard pane that appears.
- 3) Click on the page you would like to delete in the **Controls** tab.
- 4) Click the **Delete Whiteboard Page** button in the **Controls** tab (it looks like an X and is in the upper right of the **Controls** tab).
- 5) The **Delete Document** window will appear.
- 6) Click the **OK** button.

Using the Group Browser

The **Group Browser** lets you display web pages to everyone in a collaboration session. Unlike previous versions of Blackboard, however, the Group Browser does not display a new page for everyone if you click on a link—you must enter each page separately.

Displaying a Web Page

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Group Browser** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Enter the URL you wish to display in the **Address** field.
- 3) Select **Display to Class** in the drop-down menu below the address field.
- 4) Click the **Go!** button.

Previewing a Web Page in a New Window

This feature lets you look at a website before displaying it to the class.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Group Browser** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Enter the URL you wish to display in the **Address** field.
- 3) Select **Preview in New Window** in the drop-down menu below the address field.
- 4) Click the **Go!** button.
- 5) A new window will appear with the URL you specified. If you'd like to display it to the class, simply close the window, select **Display to Class** in the drop-down menu, and click the **Go!** button again.

Using the Ask Question Tool

The **Ask Question** tool is designed for students to ask questions of the instructor. These questions are stored in the **Question Inbox** tool and are not displayed to all users until they are answered by the instructor.

Asking a Question

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Ask Question** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Enter the question in the **Enter Question** field.
- 3) Click the **Send** button.
- 4) The question is sent to the **Question Inbox** tool, where it remains until answered.

Asking a Long Question

If a question is too long to fit in the **Enter Question** field, the **Compose** button can be used instead.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Ask Question** button in the **Classroom Tool** pane (upper left).
- 2) Click the **Compose** button in the **Ask Question** pane.
- 3) The **Submit Question** window will appear.
- 4) Enter the question in the **Compose Your Question** field.
- 5) Click the **Send** button.
- 6) The **Submit Question** window closes and the question is sent to the **Question Inbox** tool, where it remains until answered.

Breakout Sessions

You can create a Breakout Session during a Collaboration Session. This is a new Virtual Classroom window that can be used for a smaller group discussion.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Breakouts** button.
- 2) The **Create Breakout Room** window will appear.
- 3) Select the users you want in the breakout session from the list by checking their names.
- 4) Click the **OK** button.
- 5) A new Virtual Classroom window will appear with the selected users as members. This window will be labeled with the name of the collaboration session plus the word "Breakout."
- 6) When you have finished the breakout session, end it as you would end any other collaboration session.

Ending a Collaboration Session

When you have finished a collaboration session with the Virtual Classroom tool, you have the option of expelling all users as you close the session.

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Press the **End** button.
- 2) The **End Session** window will appear.
- 3) Click the **OK** button.
- 4) All users will be expelled from the collaboration session and the session will be over.

Active v. Passive Users

Depending on how your instructor has set up the Virtual Classroom, you may not have access to all the features mentioned. Sometimes, instructors will set users to **Passive** mode, which will not give you access to all the tools. If you have been set as a **Passive** user, and you'd like access to more options, you can **Raise your Hand** and wait to be called on by your instructor.

Raising Your Hand

If you have been set as a **Passive User**, you have the option to raise your hand. The Virtual Classroom keeps track of the order in which people raised their hands. To raise your hand

From the **Virtual Classroom**:

- 1) Click the **Hand** icon. The hand icon is located in the bottom right of the left pane—to the right of the **Private Message** button.
- 2) A hand with a number will appear in the user information pane, to the right of your name. This indicates to your teacher that you have requested **Active User** status.
- 3) When your teacher calls on you, the hand will disappear and you will have **Active User** status. This will give you access to more of the Virtual Classroom tools described above (exactly which ones depends on how your instructor has set up the collaboration session).

More Information

Q. I recently put content in my course and I'd like to display it to my class using the **Course Map** tool. However, the items I've added do not appear in the Course Map. What's going on?

A. Recently added items don't appear unless you **Refresh the Tree** on the Course Map. See the directions above.

Q. I want to send a message/send a private message/use a course tool, but those tools are grayed out! What's up?

A. Your teacher may have turned off access to these tools for all users, or set you as a **Passive User**. Contact your instructor to see how they want you to use the Virtual Classroom tool.

Q. What are the system requirements for using the **Virtual Classroom** tool?

A. The Virtual Classroom, for full functionality, requires a java-enabled version of Internet Explorer. Netscape users can access the Accessible version of the Virtual Classroom—however, some features are not available.