

BLACKBOARD SUPPORT (Faculty)

Chat

Introduction to the Chat Tool

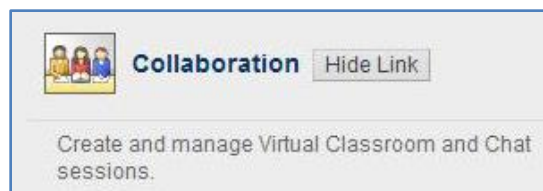
Collaborative sessions comprise two real-time "chat" tools that allow faculty and students to interact synchronously. One of the tools, chat, will be discussed in a separate tutorial. The other, the subject of this tutorial, is the Virtual Classroom. The Virtual Classroom tools offers a more robust interface and interactive tools to enhance the synchronous chat experience. And over the course of this tutorial, we will learn how to make use of it in our courses.

Getting Started with the Chat Tool

Blackboard allows you and your students to access the chat tool, either by going to the "Tools" area of the course and selecting "Collaboration" or by adding a link to it in any Content Area of your choosing. Whichever option you choose, you will start by pointing your web browser to Bb Home, <http://bb.wpunj.edu> and logging on with your university username and password.

Accessing via the Tools Area

To access the Chat tool via the Tools area, start by making sure you have a link to the tools area in your Course Menu. While you, as the instructor, could access the tools area even without the Course Menu link, your students would not be able to.



Once in the Tools area, you should see existing links for "Lecture Hall," which uses the fuller Virtual Classroom interface that will be covered in its own tutorial, and for "Office Hours," which uses the simpler Chat tool. Clicking on the link will launch the Chat tool, so long as you are on the system that meets the required specifications.

Session Name	Tool	Start Date	End Date
Lecture Hall	Virtual Classroom		
Office Hours	Chat		

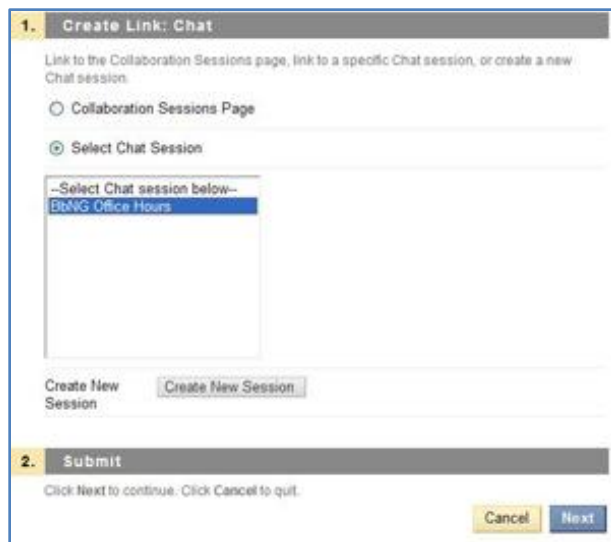
Displaying 1 to 2 of 2 items | [Show All](#) | [Edit Paging](#)

Accessing via Content Areas

Additionally, you can add a link to the Virtual Classroom in any Content Area. To do so, enter any of your Content areas, while in Edit Mode, mouse over the “Collaborate” button and select “Create Chat.”



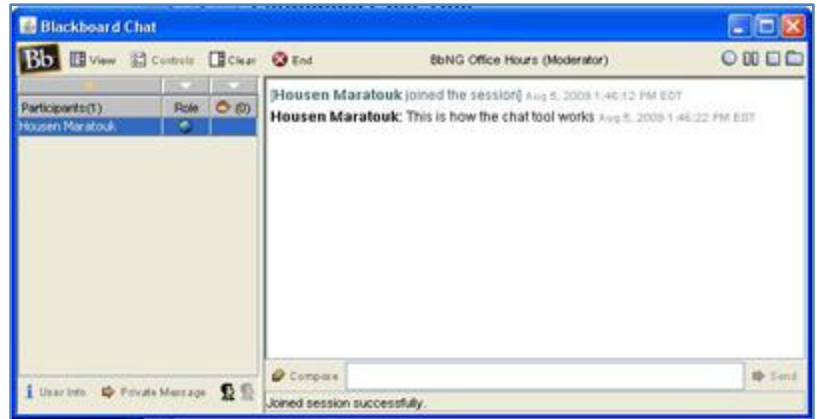
In the resulting screen, choose whether to link to the Collaboration sessions page (which lists all Chat areas and Virtual Classrooms), link to a specific Chat, or create a new one.



Using the Chat Tool

The Chat interface is simple and easy to use. Along the left-hand side of the tool, you will see a list of participants who are currently active in the chat room, while to the right of it appears a white area that is populated by messages from all participants. One may Clear the chat window or End the session by selecting from the options along the horizontal top axis.

Also useful is the ability to record sessions, using the record button near the top-right corner of the screen, which will save transcripts of your chat sessions. To access the transcripts, you and/or your students need only go to the Collaboration sessions screen, click on the options arrow of the desired chat room, and select the "Recordings" option.



The bottom portion of the collaboration window, finally, features the "chat" portion of the interface. The left-hand pane lists the class members involved in the chat (only one in this example!) and the right-hand pane depicts the text of the chat itself. One word of caution: students are comfortable with online chat and the text can scroll by very quickly. You may need to remind your students to slow down and contribute thoughtful missives. Finally, the space one uses to enter text is at the bottom of the interface: Compose.