



## Collaboration Tools

Collaboration tools allow users to participate in real-time lessons and discussions. Examples of these sessions include real-time, online classroom discussions, guest speaker led discussions and live question and answer sessions. You can create recordings of sessions and make them available for review.

### Chat

The chat tool allows you to interact with other users using a text-based chat. Use the chat tool when real-time discussion is required.

### Virtual Classroom

The virtual classroom environment includes a text-based chat area, shared whiteboard, a group browser, a question and answer box, and a map that you can use to navigate to places in your course. The session moderator established which tools in the virtual classroom users can access.

Use the following steps to create either a chat or virtual classroom session.

1. On the course menu, click the **Tools** link. On the **Tools** page, select **Collaboration**.  
-OR-  
On the **Control Panel**, expand the **Course Tools** section and select **Collaboration**.
2. On the **Collaboration Sessions** page, click **Create Collaboration Session** on the action bar.
3. On the **Create Collaboration Session** page, type a **Session Name**.
4. In the **Schedule Availability** section, you can set sessions to display on a specific date and time and to stop displaying on a specific date and time. Select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes to enable the date and time selections. Display restrictions do not affect the session availability, only when it appears.
5. Next to **Available**, select the **Yes** option.
6. In the **Collaboration Tool** section, select **Chat (or Virtual Classroom)** from the drop-down list.
7. Click **Submit**.

### Best Practices

- It's not possible to use the map to open a document outside of Blackboard such as a Word or PowerPoint file. Email the document to the students ahead of time or tell them where the document is located within the course.
- Recording the Virtual Classroom will only take "snapshots" of the white board for the archive. Private messages are not saved in the recording.
- Control permissions must be adjusted each time a Virtual Classroom is created.