



Virtual Classroom

Introduction

This quick sheet will assist you in navigating within Virtual Classroom as an Instructor. Before you start, please take a moment to review the technical prerequisites and conventions used within this document.

Technical Prerequisites

You will need access to:

- An Internet connection
- A Web browser such as Netscape 4.0 or higher and IE 4.0 or higher that can accommodate both JavaScript and Java
- An e-mail account

Conventions Used in this Material

There are several formatting conventions used throughout this document. Please take note of the following formatting styles:

- Tasks you perform are listed as STEPS.
- Within the steps, buttons and other parts of the Virtual Classroom screen are indicated in **BOLD**.

Virtual Classroom

Each course includes a synchronous chat room for student and group communications. Virtual Classroom, as we call the chat room, can be used to hold “live” classroom discussions, TA sessions, and office hour type question/answer forums. You can even have guest speakers and subject matter experts talk with the class in the Virtual Classroom.

When developing an activity that requires a Virtual Classroom, consider the following:

- The Virtual Classroom is a Java application and may initially take a few minutes to load into a browser window. Before developing assignments that require the Virtual Classroom, be sure that all students have Java enabled browsers.
- Due to the synchronous nature of the Virtual Classroom, multiple users must participate at the same time. Be sure to notify students about a scheduled Virtual Classroom session to ensure attendance.
- Sometimes a Virtual Classroom session can be overwhelming if there are too many users. Consider grouping students into several small groups to keep the conversation manageable.

Accessing Virtual Classroom

To access the Virtual Classroom:

Step 1: Within **Communication** in the **Course** view, click **Virtual Classroom**.

Enter Virtual Classroom

In order to participate in the Virtual Classroom, you must have a **Java** Enabled browser.

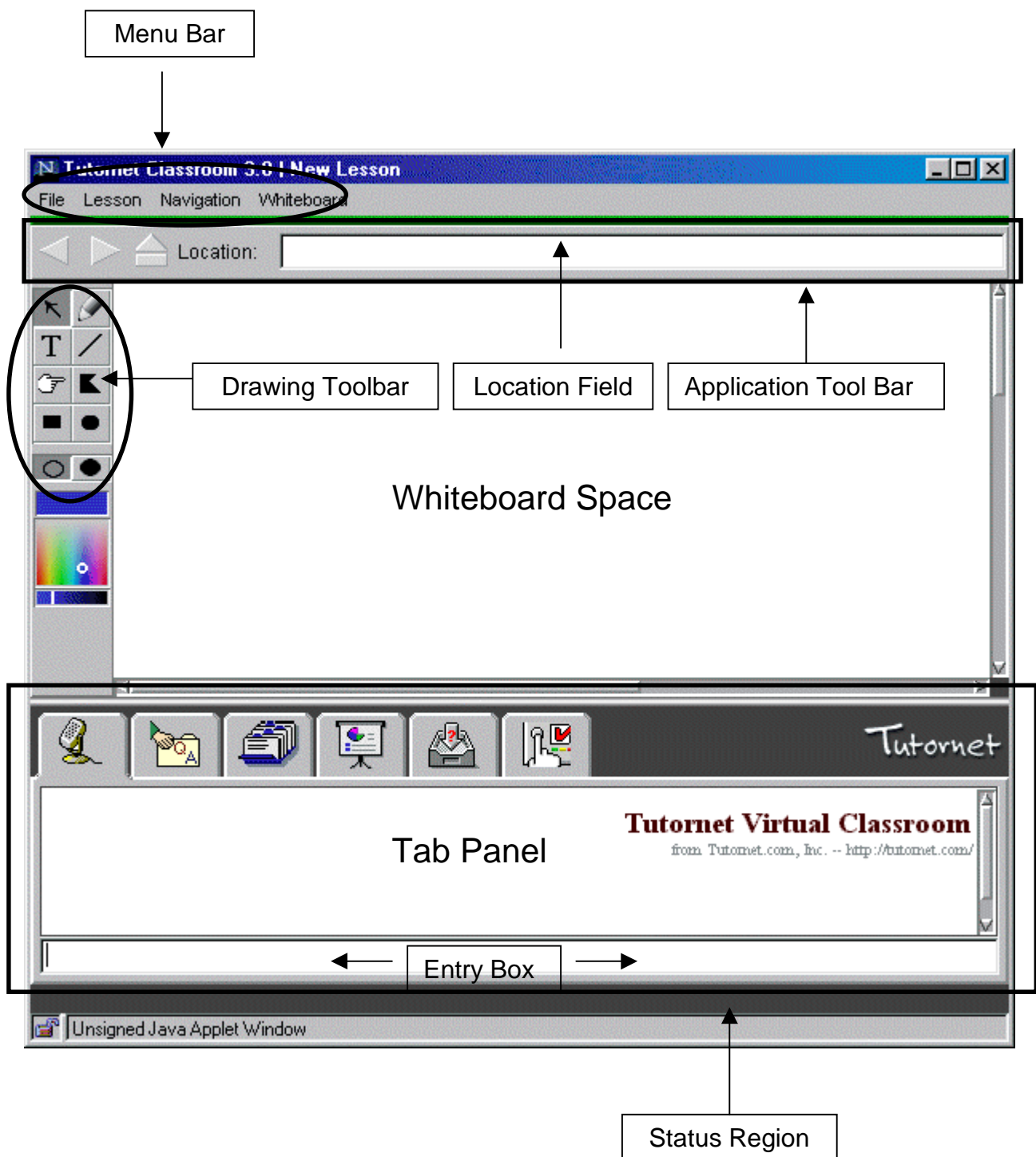
View Archives

You can find all the archives for your Virtual Classroom, sorted by date, here.

Click either **Enter Virtual Chat** to begin a chat session or **View Archives** to look at previous chat sessions.

Step 2: Click the **Enter Virtual Chat** link.

Overview of Virtual Classroom



A Virtual Classroom contains several distinct areas:

Whiteboard Space	You can display web pages on the whiteboard space, which is the large center area. You can also write or draw on this space using the drawing toolbar.
Menu Bar	Use the menu bar to change the information that appears on the whiteboard space, such as selecting a font to use on the whiteboard space and moving an object on the whiteboard space behind another object. You can also prepare lessons, navigate slides displayed on the whiteboard space, and clear the Group Discussion tab and Questions and Answers tab (refer to the Tab Panel description for further information on these tabs).
Application Tool Bar	The application toolbar contains tools for navigating web pages.
Location Field	Use the location field to enter the URL of a web page you would like to use during your Virtual Classroom session. The web page is then displayed on the whiteboard space. Users can also write or draw on the web page with the drawing toolbar.
Drawing Toolbar	Use the drawing toolbar to write and draw on the whiteboard space.
Status Region:	Status messages are displayed at the bottom of your Virtual Classroom window in the status region. View important system messages as well as information about many Virtual Classroom controls in this space.
Tab Panel	Use the tab panel to chat with students, respond to students' questions, control classroom behavior, and view information about the students in the Virtual Classroom. To select a tab, just click its tab; the tab's features and functions will then appear on the screen.

The following tabs are available:

Name of Tab	Purpose
Group Discussion	Use this tab to talk with the students in the Virtual Classroom.
Questions and Answers	If a student uses his/her Questions tab to submit a question to the instructor, the instructor can then answer the question using the Incoming Questions tab. Thereafter, the instructor can view a log of their dialogue regarding the question on the Questions and Answers tab.
Participant Information	Use this tab to learn about the students in the Virtual Classroom, such as their names.
Slides	Use this tab to prepare and present a series of slides. (See Options in Preparing Lessons). The tab is only available to the Instructor.
Incoming Questions	If a student uses his/her Questions tab to submit a question to the instructor, the instructor can then answer the question using the Incoming Questions tab. Thereafter, the instructor can view a log of their dialogue regarding the question on the Questions and Answers tab. The Incoming Questions tab is only available to the instructor.
Access Control	Use this tab to control students' ability to conduct the four Virtual Classroom activities: Question, Chat, Drawing, Navigating. The tab is only available to the instructor.

Virtual Classroom Basics

Options in Preparing Lessons

To add a web page to your lesson:

Step 1: In the **location field**, type the URL of the web page that you would like to add.

Step 2: Add the web page to your lesson with one of two options available on the **Lesson** menu.

- **Option 1: Quick Add from Display**



Note: **Quick Add from Display** automatically appends the slide to your lesson and changes the slide title to the web page URL.

- a. Click the **Lesson** menu.
- b. Click **Quick Add from Display**.

- **Option 2: Add Slide**



Note: **Add Slide** allows you to assign your own title to the slide, change the size of the slide, add a slide description, and indicate the position of the slide within the lesson.

- a. Click the **Lesson** menu.
- b. Choose **Add Slide**.
- c. Choose **From Current Display**. You will then see the screen shown here.
- d. Enter a title for the new slide.
- e. If you wish, you can also enter a slide description as well as change the size and position of the slide.
- f. Click **Create Slide**.


To add a blank slide to your lesson:

- Step 1:** Select the **Lesson** menu, then choose **Add Slide**, then choose **New Slide**.
- Step 2:** Enter a **title** and **description** for the new slide.
- Step 3:** Enter **1000** as the **width** and **height** of the slide.
- Step 4:** Select the position of the slide within the lesson (for example, **as first slide**, **as last slide**, or **after the current slide**).
- Step 5:** Click **Create Slide**.


Processing Floor Requests

If you see a name listed on the left side of the Access Control tab, then a student has requested access to additional Virtual Classroom activities (drawing, chatting, navigating, and asking questions). These requests are called “floor requests.” You can either grant or deny the floor request.

To grant the floor request:

- Step 1:** On the **Access Control tab**, highlight the requestor's name, then click the  icon.

To deny the floor request:

- Step 1:** On the **Access Control tab**, highlight the requestor's name, then click the  icon.

Viewing Archives

You can view previous archived chat sessions within Virtual Chat.

To view archived chat sessions:

- Step 1:** Click **Communications** from the navigation area of the *Main Course Window*.
- Step 2:** Click **Virtual Chat**.
- Step 3:** Click the **View Archives** link.

To learn about instructional features, refer to the Blackboard.com Instructor Manual.

Contact Information

Please contact Blackboard Inc. for information on upgrades and enhancements to Blackboard.com by using the following contact information:

Web Page	Address	Phone Number
www.blackboard.com/company	1899 LStreet, NW	1-800-424-9299
	5th Floor	
	Washington, DC 20036	

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