

## ***Using the Collaboration tools***

The **Collaboration** tools can be an effective way to conduct "live," real-time conversations ("virtual chats" / "instant messaging"). Online chats have been used for office hours, small group project work, tutoring sessions, and exam reviews.

Two options are available:

- **Chat** – online chat (text-based messaging)
- **Virtual Classroom** – an online chat with additional tools for drawing, opening web pages, and presentations.

## ***Creating Collaboration Sessions***

You can post a link for a Collaboration session in advance by creating a link which includes the date and time of the session.

1. Select **Collaboration** from the **Tools** menu in the **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Create Collaboration Session**.
3. Give the session a name (replace the default course ID) and enter start and end dates and times. Be sure to make the session available by clicking **Yes**.
4. Select the tool you wish to use: **Chat** or **Virtual Classroom**.
5. Click **Submit**.
6. You can use the drop-down menu to the right of the Session name to Edit or delete the session.

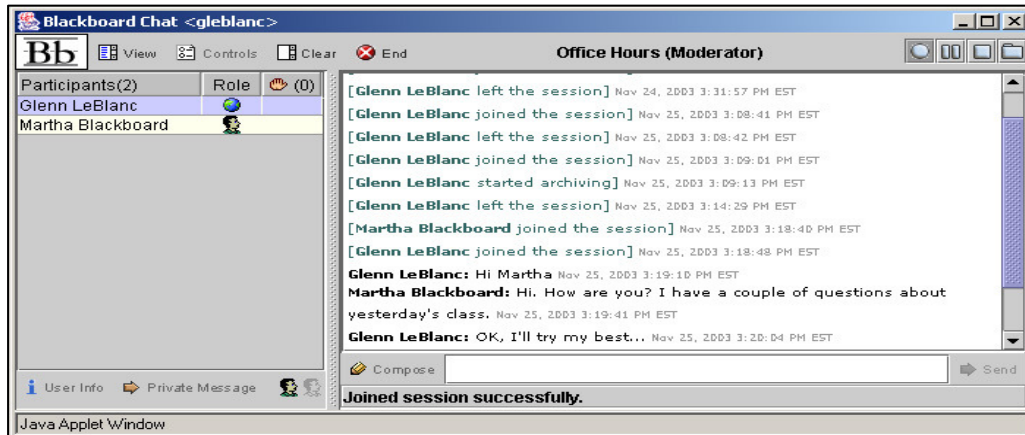
## ***Using Chat***

Most faculty who use the Collaboration tools use only the most basic text-based tools of the **Chat**. (As UMS gradually adopts GoogleMail as the standard for staff and students, GoogleTalk might be a better option for synchronous chat.)

1. To access a **Chat** session, click **Tools** in the course menu, and then click **Collaboration**.
2. To enter a session, click the session name, which is an active link. You'll be prompted to download and install a Java plug-in the first time you launch the **Chat**. Follow the

instructions and prompts on the screen. (If you use Safari on a Macintosh computer, be sure to disable Pop-Up Window Blocking.)

3. You'll see this screen when you enter a session.



4. Type your message into the *Compose* field and click Send. The discussion appears in the window.

The *Virtual Classroom* option adds additional capability to a chat session:

- **Course Map** – allows participants to view a document in the course; click on any part of the course map to show it in the shared window
- **Whiteboard** – allows use of tools for drawing and creating simple graphics
- **Group browser** – allows participants to view a web site in the shared window
- **Ask Question / Question Inbox** – allows participants to ask questions either publicly or privately; questions are cued in the Inbox.