

**Virtual Office Hours:
Best Practices**



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Our Session Today

- Literature
- Pedagogical uses
- Best practices
- Programs
- Getting started and support

Let's Take a Poll

- Do currently hold virtual office hours?

Literature

- Key Points
 - Faculty members should explore the impact of using IM/virtual office hours and the perceptions of students
 - Structuring virtual office hours
 - Provide guidelines and be cautious of becoming the 24 professor
- Edwards, J. T., & Helvie-Mason, L. (2010). Technology and Instructional Communication: Student Usage and Perceptions of Virtual Office Hours. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 6(1), 1-15. Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/edwards_0310.htm.

Literature

- Key Points
 - Virtual office hours are not only an important communication tool for online courses but a good addition to traditional courses
 - As student becomes familiar with the online classroom they may view virtual office hours as merely an expected norm
 - Use of IM technologies is expected to grow as higher education expands online course offerings
- Li, L., & Pitts, J. (2009). Does It really matter? Using virtual office hours to enhance student-faculty interaction. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 20(2), 175-185.

Literature

- Key Points
 - Virtual office hours provide students with the chance to communicate with their professor
 - Important to create an atmosphere where online students feel supported and connected
- Baker, C. T., & Edwards, J. T. (2011). A holistic approach for establishing social presence in online courses and programs. *The International HETL Review*, 1(7), 44-52.

Pedagogical Uses

- Virtual office hours
- Virtual presentations
- Virtual instruction
- Peer learning



Virtual Office Hours

- Time/location flexibility
- Share documents
- Text chat
- Virtual supervision



Getting started: hardware

- Built-in mic or headset
- Web cam
- High-speed internet connection



Getting Started with Blackboard IM

- It's a lot like Skype or Google Talk ...with more options... and some Facebook qualities ;-)
- Use Blackboard IM (Instant Messaging for text, audio or video chat and screen sharing)
- Activate Blackboard IM from any of your courses to automatically get a list of all students in your courses.
- Provide assistance, assign group work out of class, or hold virtual office hours.

Blackboard IM

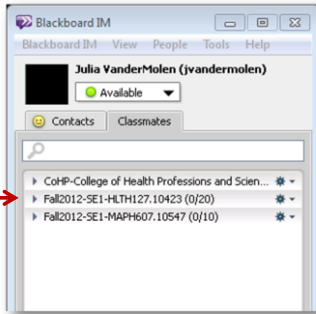
- 1. Log in to Blackboard and open any of your courses.
- 2. Click on Tools in the menu.
- 3. Click on the Blackboard IM icon.
- 4. Download Blackboard IM on every computer you use, and set up your password.
- You can now use Blackboard IM even if you do not have the Blackboard courses open.

Blackboard IM

It is important to remember your Blackboard IM Collaborate ID and password



Current Course List (Classmates)



Tips and Tricks

- Features
- How to clean up your IM
- How to create a group

Best Practices

- Quickly connect with classmates, staff, and faculty for informal learning and timely ad-hoc meetings.
- Check availability through presence to find others and interact on demand and live.
- Desktop audio provide rich interactions to save a drive to campus or even a visit across campus.

Questions and Comments

References

- Edwards, J. T., & Helvie-Mason, L. (2010). Technology and Instructional Communication: Student Usage and Perceptions of Virtual Office Hours. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 6(1), 1-15. Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/edwards_0310.htm.
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