

# Adding Collaboration

## Ways to Create a More Advanced Online Writing Course

**Add Multimedia:** So, you want to get beyond the basics of an online writing course that is solely text-based, and you're thinking about incorporating some multi-media elements, such as PowerPoints or videos.

These are great ways to create a more interactive, engaged environment, but added technology comes with accessibility risks. Below are a few of the ways you can enhance your course with technology in a way that's available to as many students as possible.

See: [Multimedia](#)

## Virtual Classroom or Real-Time Collaboration Space

Virtual classrooms like these often use tools such as [Adobe Captivate](#), [Adobe Connect](#), [Blackboard Collaborate](#), [WebEx](#), or [Skype for Business](#).

The options available to you are likely limited by what your university offers either as part of an LMS bundle or as a separate tool. Your IT or eLearning department typically offers both online and face-to-face training opportunities, so take advantage of these opportunities. You can often learn quick tips and tricks from these trainings, even if you've worked with the tool before.

You can also take advantage of university resources, like Lynda.com, a database of web tutorials if your university offers access.

While creating a more advanced course may take more time and resources, the ability to better mimic the face-to-face classroom is beneficial to both you and your students as they create more opportunities for authentic classroom interaction and connectedness.

Below are resources that can help create these real-time settings, as well as trainings and seminars that go more into depth with accessibility and Universal Design for Learning.

## **Online Classroom Software**

The software options listed below are the most commonly found tools at colleges and universities.

### ***Authoring Tools (Creating your own content)***

#### **Adobe Captivate**

[Captivate](#) is an authoring tool specifically for e-learning that helps create interactive demonstrations, simulations, or quizzes through a variety of formats, including video, audio, and web-based delivery.

There are many resources available to help with Captivate. Some of these include:

- [Captain Captivate](#): an Adobe Captivate blog that includes several tutorials and discussion boards. The blog is a little dated (2008), but there are still many helpful tips for navigating Captivate.
- [Learn and Support page for Captivate](#): a site that includes components of Captivate divided by category and linked to descriptions about that content.
- [“Accessibility Best Practices”](#): a page from Adobe specifically for Captivate, walking you through how to make your Captivate project as accessible as possible.

## ***Collaboration Tools***

### **Adobe Connect**

[Adobe Connect](#) is used to create online training materials, learning modules, and web conferencing for the online classroom. Below are links to two YouTube videos to give you a better overview of what Connect can do for the online classroom and also an article on Connect Accessibility.

- [Adobe Connect for eLearning](#) (video length: 3:49): a YouTube video that provides an overview of what Adobe Connect can do for the online classroom
- [Adobe Connect for Instructors](#): a series of 26 videos lasting no longer than 5 minutes each from Brandman University. Some of these pertain more specifically to Brandman, but as a whole, the advice can be applied for any instructor using Adobe Connect.
- [Improving Accessibility in Connect Pro Meetings : Adobe Connect's User Community site that provides tips and guidance on including Adobe Connect in an accessible way](#)

### **Cisco WebEx**

[WebEx](#) is a web-based video conferencing tool used for online meetings, webinars, presentations, or courses that allows for screen sharing and collaboration. Below are links to two YouTube videos to give you a better overview of what WebEx can do for the online classroom and also an article on WebEx Accessibility.

- [WebEx for online instruction](#): a series of five videos that last approximately 30 minutes from Colorado Northwestern Community College on setting up Webex in an online classroom. Some parts of this video series apply more specifically to Colorado Northwestern, but most of the advice can be applied universally.
- [Using WebEx in the Classroom](#): a two-minute YouTube video from San Jose State University explaining how

instructors can use WebEx in their classrooms.

- [Accessible WebEx Meetings](#): a page from University of Minnesota's Disability Resource Center's website explaining the accessibility options for integrating WebEx into an online classroom.

## **Blackboard Collaborate**

[Blackboard Collaborate](#) is a browser-based web conferencing tool that helps increase classroom collaboration. Access to Blackboard Collaborate is often only available when packaged with a Blackboard LMS. You should ask your eLearning or IT department about the availability of Blackboard Collaborate at your institution.

- [LearnNow BC Collaborate Workshop](#): a series of YouTube videos approximately two hours long that cover the basics of Blackboard Collaborate.