

Enhancing Blackboard and WebCT



Enhance your Blackboard and WebCT environments with Voice Tools. Listed below are some ideas for each tool.

 Indicates uses in Blackboard only.

 Indicates uses in WebCT only.

Using Voice Boards

Idea:

- **Create a “Community” Voice Board for students.**
 - Allow students to post or reply to messages about topics outside of class discussion.
 - *WebCT: post it in a separate “Community” Organizer Page.* 
 - *Blackboard: post it in the Communications Area* 

Idea:

- **Provide vocal feedback on assignments (WebCT).**
 - Create a Voice Board called “Assignment Feedback” at the beginning of the semester for each student. Each student can refer to this board after the instructor has graded an assignment.
 - Release each Voice Board only to the appropriate student.
 - Inform students that they can visit their “Assignment Feedback” Voice Boards anytime for feedback on returned assignments.



Idea:

- **Ask students to copy/paste an excerpt and vocally record feedback on the excerpt.**
 - Especially useful in humanities courses.

Idea:

- **Ask students to vocally record a reading of a text excerpt that you have posted.**
 - Especially useful in foreign language courses.

Idea:

- **Create an exercise, assignment, or assessment**
 - Each top-level post you create is a question within the assignment.
 - (Do not allow students to create new threads.)
 - The text within the posting is as an open-ended question.
 - Supplement your text with a voice recording, within the posting (for additional instructions or information about your question).
 - Do not allow students to view messages posted by one another.
 - *Blackboard: use a single Voice Board.* 
 - *WebCT: create a separate Board, using Selective Release.* 

Idea:

- **Hold online discussions in foreign languages.**
 - Practice both speaking and writing in a foreign language by using the text and voice tools within the Voice Board.

Idea:

- **Allow student groups to collaborate on projects or discuss topics.**
 - Create a Voice Board for each group. (With WebCT, you can use Selective Release.)

Idea:

- **Construct answers to questions through collaborative sharing and discussion.**
 - Announce a discussion topic or problem to solve, as a posting.
 - Students reply to the posting, with their answers. Vocal collaboration may add more meaning to the conversation. Answers can be expressed more clearly, and sensitive issues can be handled more appropriately.
 - Thoughts and answers to the discussion topic are generated through collaboration.

Idea:


- **Use Voice Boards combined with graphics to generate descriptions from students.**
 - Especially useful in foreign language courses.
 - Have students describe persons, rooms, activities, etc.
 - Allow students to listen to each others' postings before contributing.

Idea:

- **Create a "Get-to-Know-You" Voice Board.**
 - Have students post descriptions of their personalities, their likes and dislikes.
 - Good way for students to become acquainted in online learning environment.

Using Voice E-mails

Idea:

- **Notify students of an upcoming assignment or event through Voice E-mail.**
 - Use voice to elaborate on the assignment, to give encouragement to students, or to convey what students will gain out of completing the assignment. ("Footnotes")
 - *WebCT: create a Voice Email template with all students' e-mail addresses in the "To:" field and "CC" yourself. (Do not allow students the ability to edit this field). Students may use this template to send an email to all students in the class in reference to this assignment.*
 - *Blackboard: create a Voice Email template To: All Students* 

Idea:

- **Create an exercise, assignment, or assessment using Voice E-mail.**
 - Blackboard: Enable reply links so students may respond directly to you
 - WebCT: Create a response template for students to reply to assignments

Idea:

- **Offer feedback and respond to students in more real and human ways.**
 - Students can better interpret feedback listening to tone of voice.
 - Struggling students may especially benefit from a more personal approach.

Idea:

- **Send general assignment critiques to all students with a single Voice E-mail.**
 - Summarize general observations and trends observed across all student assignments.
 - This method does not require creating a Voice E-mail for each student.

Idea:

- **Respond more quickly / efficiently to student and faculty questions.**
 - Especially useful when answering questions or conveying complex ideas.
 - Allows more freedom and flexibility in response; speaking generally takes less time than typing.

Idea:

- **Hold private vocal critiques between teacher and individual students.**
 - Teachers and students can correspond privately through Voice E-mail.
 - Provides a contrasting avenue of communication from publicly available message boards.

Idea:

- **Give students feedback on pronunciation.**
 - Especially useful in foreign language courses.
 - Select a group of specific words or sounds to record and send back instructor.

Using Voice Authoring



Idea:

- **Annotate a complex diagram or graph with a clear, vocal explanation.**
 - Especially useful for science and engineering courses.
 - If you want an accompanying image, edit your page in HTML and:
 - Use a Voice Board resource instead. Record your audio and export the message to extract the HTML code. (Appropriate for Designers or advanced users.) - OR -
 - Use the Voice Tols Manager. Create a Voice Authoring applet and add the JavaScript to your HTML page.

Idea:

- **Annotate a complex thought or concept with bullet points, along with a clear, vocal commentary.**

Idea:

- **Provide commentary on a literary passage or image.**
 - Especially useful for humanities courses.
 - *Blackboard: Post a notice for students to access the Voice Authoring resource within a Content Area. Faculty can do this on their own.* 
 - *WebCT: Post a notice for students to access the Voice Authoring resource within an Organizer Page. Faculty can do this on their own.* 

Idea:

- **Provide a vocal welcome / introduction of the course or a specific learning module to all students.**

Idea:

- **Create a Voice Authoring applet, and insert that applet on a page with the returned assignment.**
 - Use the Voice Tools Manager (instead of the CMS environment) to accomplish this task.

Idea:

- **Create a listening glossary of professional vocabulary and technical jargon that may be difficult to pronounce.**

Idea:



- **Make general music listening exercises available to web-enhanced classes.**
 - Note: Consider using higher quality audio codecs when recording music. Higher quality requires better Internet connections.

Using Voice Direct

Idea:

- **Create an “Office Hours” Voice Direct conference.**
 - Offer students the ability to schedule office hours with the instructor, during a weekly time slot (i.e., Wednesdays between 2 to 4pm).

Idea:

- **Create a “Study Group” Voice Direct conference.**
 - Students can use this room to work on group assignments and study for upcoming exams.
 - Encourage students to schedule meetings on their own.
 - Study Groups can be Archived for later review by the students.
 - WebCT: Create and release a separate conference for each group 
 - Blackboard: Create a separate conference for each group and direct students to use only the relevant conference 

Idea:

- **Invite a guest lecturer to present in a Voice Direct conference.**
 - Because of conflicting students’ schedules, these sessions need not be mandatory.
 - Guest Lectures can be archived for later viewing by the students.

Idea:

- **Recruit a volunteer and archive a mock dialogue between people.**
 - Especially useful for FAQs in the form of a mock-dialogue between teacher and student.
 - Archives (which are available as Read-Only Voice Boards) become study tools for students.

Idea:

- **Practice speaking skills in a live environment.**
 - Especially useful for foreign language courses; speech and debate courses; courses where role playing (i.e., clinical environment) is important.
 - Real-time communication provides necessary contrast to public message boards.

Idea:

- **Hold team meetings / internal staff meetings.**
 - Provides a more flexible solution to scheduling face-to-face meetings.
 - Archive it for those who can’t be present.

Idea:

- **Conduct lab hours for science courses (such as chemistry or physics).**

Idea:

- **Hold student interviews in groups or pairs.**
 - Especially useful in foreign language courses; business courses. Students interview one another, perhaps in a foreign language.
 - Interviews can be archived for review by instructor.