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Brenton Center

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Bringing the
classroom
to the world!

Brenton Center

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Wimba Project Receives Funding



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Education

During FY09, several faculty and staff helped pilot test Wimba Live Classroom and Wimba Voice in their face-to-face and distance education classes. Feedback was positive and the uses ranged from live face-to-face class meetings for distance education classes, student meeting space for projects, web based meetings for sharing ideas and files, and faculty of-fice hours for distance education students.

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Distance Education, the Brenton Center for Agricultural Instruction and Technology Transfer, the College of Human Sciences Distance Education, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Distance Education, and the Language Studies Resource Center were successful in securing a grant to implement Wimba campus wide starting Summer of 2009. Wimba will be available to all WebCT course sections as well as all students, faculty, and staff at Iowa State University.

Wimba is a suite of synchronous collaboration tools that function inside WebCT, including a presentation environment, whiteboard, student chat, video, and desktop application sharing.

Wimba Classroom, Voice, and Pronto Support is available 24/7 and can be reached via phone at:

- US & Canada: 866.350.4978
- UK: 0800.007.6788
- Rest of World: +1 703.956.3816

Wimba Classroom TM

Wimba Classroom runs on Windows, Macintosh and Linux Computers. It is best to use a headset microphone although you can listen with only speakers. A webcam can be used to see the instructor or others that are in the WIMBA classroom. Wimba will work on a dialup connection but a broadband connection is preferred.

Wimba Classroom is a live, virtual classroom environment with robust features that include audio, video, application sharing and content display. Its pedagogical design and ease-of-use ensures that educators and students engage as if they were meeting face-to-face. Advanced features such as polling, white boarding, presenter on-the-fly, resizable chat areas and participant lists, usage analytics tools, and MP3 downloads enable further dynamic interaction between students and educators.

Wimba Classroom provides instructors with:

Multi-Way Audio (Voice Over IP) & Video: Replicate the dynamic dialogue of a face-to-face class with real-time, multi-way audio and video. A speaker's video is triggered by voice-detected switching, making the technology invisible while allowing a discussion to flow naturally. A telephone dial-in feature allows users to participate when traveling or acts as a backup if audio issues occur.

Public & Private Text Chat: Instant messaging allows students to communicate textually. Messages can be sent to the entire group or to individuals.

Wimba Support: <http://www.wimba.com/services/support>

Flexible Content Area: The wide variety of content shared within one class differs greatly from another, which is why Wimba Classroom's content area offers instructors the freedom to share files such as PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, web pages, images, movie clips, PDFs, or CMS pages.

Polls, Quizzes, Surveys & Electronic Whiteboard: Offering frequent classroom interaction is an instructional best practice. Wimba Classroom supports polls, quizzes, surveys and whiteboard exercises, which keeps students highly engaged.

Application Sharing: Application sharing facilitates collaboration that replicates side-by-side instruction or "over the shoulder" review as cursor movement is tracked—and even shared—from instructor to student.

Classroom Archiving: Classroom archiving preserves everything that takes place during a class – capturing voice, chat, and content—for access and review anytime and anywhere.

Expanded Whiteboard Options: Highlighter and rectangle tools provide visual indicators with which teachers can reiterate and enforce learning concepts.

Presenter On-The-Fly: Students engage peers through leading discussions and giving presentations while teachers customize their instruction to the particular needs of students.

Resizable Chat Area and Participant List: Chat area and participant window can be resized to accommodate course content. Students who use closed captioning can expand the chat interface to support accessibility.

MP3 & MP4 Downloads: Without the need for third-party tools, download the audio of an archived lesson or activity in a standard MP3 or MP4 format. Distribute MP4 files of lectures or discussions to WebCT, iTunesU, or other content management systems.

Technology Appropriate for Online Education: Student hardware, software, networks, and technology skills vary enormously which is why Wimba Classroom was designed to operate effectively in the most challenging user environments. The thin-client, low-bandwidth features allow for dial-up access, and our cross-platform support and intuitive user interface allow for virtually any

user, on a PC, Mac, or Linux machine, to fully participate with minimal instruction and setup.

Accessibility: Live and archived classes can be closed-captioned for the hearing impaired while keyboard shortcut keys, hot keys, and screen reader compatibility offers access of content and instruction to the visually impaired. These accessibility features help institutions meet many state and federal accessibility guidelines.

Wimba PRONTO™

Wimba PRONTO is the only instant messaging system designed for educators to advance and promote learning, Wimba Pronto includes unique features to specifically benefit students, teachers, and educational institutions including:

- Queued Chat for Tutoring and Office Hours
- Automatic Population of Classmates and Courses
- Application Sharing
- Blended Audio and Video Conferencing

Wimba Voice™

Wimba Voice is a web-based voice solution that facilitates and promotes vocal instruction, collaboration, coaching, and assessment. Wimba Voice incorporates the use of threaded voice boards, voice-enabled email, embedded voice within course pages, as well as live group discussions and debates, which increase the interaction and student engagement level of any online course.

Summary:

Overall, the Wimba tools has a variety of pedagogical uses. Online collaboration can occur easily. With Wimba, students may organize team meetings and continue discussions outside the regular classroom.

The major use will be to produce and broadcast live and recorded lectures and interactive sessions. These sessions can be accessed both synchronously and asynchronously to enhance learning at a distance. Another use of Wimba is to provide guest speaker sessions that can easily be facilitated and offered through the use of Wimba tools. An instructor can invite non-local guest speakers to make virtual presentations without the hassle of travel, time, and costs required for face-to-face sessions. Live virtual meetings and office hours are other popular uses.

“CALs Distance Education served 925 unique Iowa distance education students during FY09”

“CALs Distance Education served students from 80 Iowa Counties and 172 Iowa towns/cities during FY09.”

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