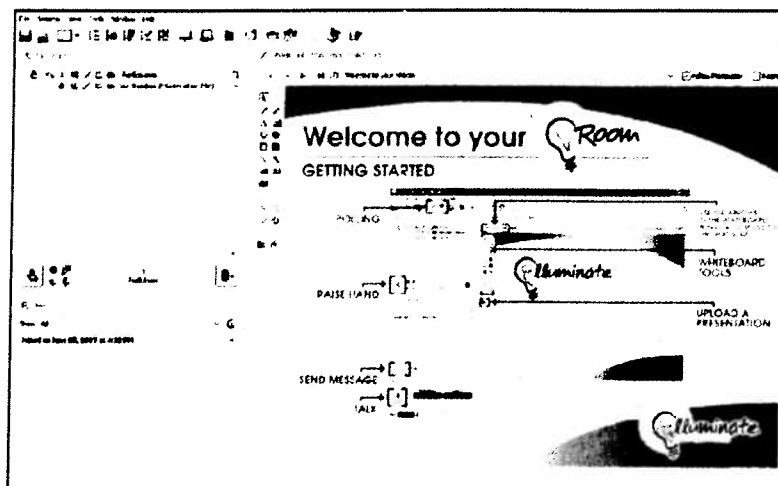


Classroom INDEPENDENCE

By Joe Donlon



As a technician for the Continuing Education department at Confederation College, I was approached by an Academic Support Strategist from our Learning Centre who was looking for a solution for one of her students. She was working with a student who is hard of hearing, and at the time, they were sitting together in the classrooms, sharing a laptop on which the strategist was typing notes about the course content. The strategist wanted the student to be able to be as independent as possible in the classroom yet still benefit from the “real time” notes she was taking for her.

As a solution, I recommended Elluminate's vroom, a free software application, for the student and note taker. They were able to share notes using their laptops (Windows and Mac OS) in real time.

Before using vRoom, the student who has hearing impairments, would have to sit in the classroom directly beside the support strategist and share the same laptop – basically reading over her shoulder. Using vRoom, the student was able to sit anywhere in the room, away from the strategist, with her own laptop and actively participate in the application. This provided the student with more independence than ever before. They used the Application Sharing and Direct Messaging features for their purpose. Elluminate's motto is “No user left behind,” and it

holds true. They are completely cross platform, optimized for low bandwidth, and it is designed to enable users with disabilities to fully participate.

The support strategist reported: “I just wanted to let you know that we have Elluminate vRoom working so that I can share my version of Word with the student, and she can contribute to the notes. I had to invite her to join my VRoom and also changed the view options on her Mac. This morning was the first class that we were able to successfully share notes in real time and it went really well. Thank you so much for all of your help and for recommending this program.”

It is refreshing to find a free software program that is built with a variety of features that promote accessibility, including keyboard access to menus and dialogs, closed captioning, and more. I use the vRoom frequently for collaboration in Distance Education, and since introducing this program to others, I have been amazed at how people are finding ways to use it. •

For more information, visit:
<http://www.elluminate.com/vroom/>.

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