Whiteboardfox.com with
Touch Screen Tablets and Phones

This note describes how to use an online whiteboard to interact with a student. The online whiteboard provides a convenient space for the tutor and student to work together to solve a problem. This note uses whiteboardfox.com, but other online whiteboards can work. I like whiteboardfox.com because you don't have to register or login. You simply start the web application and share the URL (web address) with the person you want to share the whiteboard with.

I also use a tablet and stylus to draw with because drawing with a mouse is like drawing with a brick. The stylus I use is quite cheap (<$5). If your laptop has a touch screen, then you probably can use your laptop screen with a stylus directly. Other options are drawing pads with a stylus ($30+) and optical mouse pens (~$20). I have not tried these options.
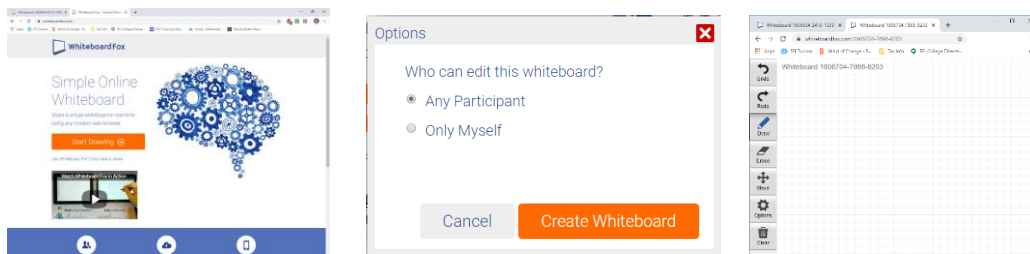
The Stylus I use is a combination writing pen and capacitive stylus. You can purchase one at Walmart and Amazon. The Walmart on east Speedway has some in stock. Walmart wants $3.98 for this set of three. You may find that you already own one. People often use this type of stylus with their smart phones. On Amazon, search "pen touchscreen stylus" to find the various options available.

I use a tablet because it lays flat and I do not have a touch screen. I use a Samsung tablet, but smart phones, Surface Pros, iPhones, and iPads probably will work. The only requirement is a touch screen and internet connectivity. I will simply use the word tablet for the remainder of this note.
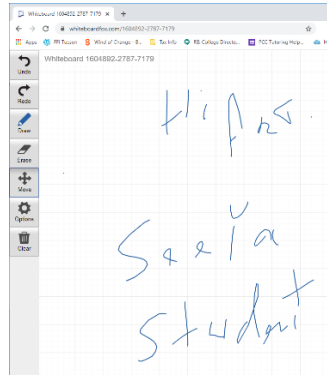
To get started:

1. The following assumes you have already connected with your student via Google Meets.

2. On your tablet launch your browser and enter the following URL: whiteboardfox.com. Press enter and click on Start Drawing. On the next screen, click on Create Whiteboard (leave the default setting "Any Participant" alone).
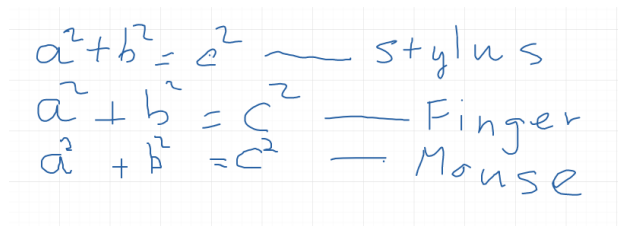

3. If the student will be using the same device for Google Meets and the whiteboard, have them create a new browser window. If they will be using a different device (such as a tablet or phone) have them start a browser on that separate device. Tell the student the URL. It will look something like whiteboardfox.com/1606704-7868-8203. You can enter this URL into your Meets Chat so the student can copy to their browser window. Note: copy and paste will work if they are using one device; otherwise, they will have to enter the URL manually. This part of the process is probably the most error prone. You could email the URL from your tablet to the student. There can be a long lag time waiting for the email to arrive.

4.   Next verify that both of you can draw on the whiteboard and see what each other writes.
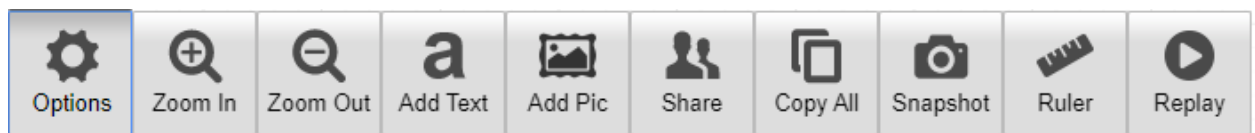

Note: There is no need to share the whiteboard using Google Meets Present now function. The sharing of the whiteboard is built into the whiteboardfox.com application.

5.   You'll want to practice using the whiteboard before using it with a student. It takes some practice. Even with a stylus, your writing will not be as smooth as you would like. The following picture shows the different quality of writing you can get with a stylus, finger, and mouse. I think you'll agree that a stylus make quite a difference.
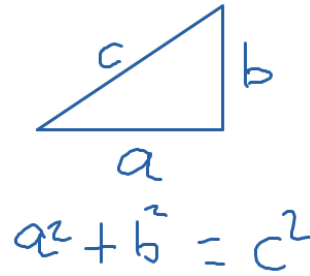

6.   To erase, click on the Erase button and then just touch the items you want to delete with your stylus. What was drawn with one stroke is erased with each touch.

7.   The Options icon is really a collection of tools:

Some of the more interesting are:

- Add text – Brings up a text box that you enter text in. When the box is closed the text is displayed on the whiteboard. Move the text around using the Move icon.
- Add Pic – Lets you paste a picture from a file. So far, I haven't figured out how to paste from your clipboard to the whiteboard.
- Share – This lets you easily copy and paste the whiteboard URL and send it to the student (via a chat or email).
- Snapshot – Creates a png image of your whiteboard in a new browser window. Right click within the new browser window and you can copy the image and paste it into another application such as MS Word. Or, you can save the image to a file.

- Ruler – This tool does not measure distances. Rather it lets you create straight lines. It toggles between freeform lines and straight lines. It is good for drawing triangles. For instance:

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

8. The Clear icon erases the whole whiteboard. Note, the other users of the same whiteboard may have to refresh their browser window to see the "clean" whiteboard.

There a lot of features that I wish whiteboardfox.com had. But it is a start. I hope you will find this note helpful.

Art Lurvey
4/7/2020
RALurvey@pima.edu