



From Language Learning to Agriculture, Auburn University Utilizes Wimba for Countless Teaching Needs

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-Stacey Powell, Director, Foreign Language Multimedia Center, Auburn University

Auburn University epitomizes a traditional university in the United States. With an enrollment of nearly 25,000 students, it has a large residential population as well as thousands of working and adult students who commute to campus. A major research institution blending arts and applied sciences, it offers degrees in 13 schools and colleges at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels. In addition to academics, it even boasts one of the elite athletic programs in the country.

A recent study determined AU had a \$4 billion economic impact on its home state of Alabama, including a \$1.5 billion impact on the economy and a \$2.4 billion impact in "human capital."

Auburn has developed into one of the largest universities in the South, remaining at the educational forefront with its traditional blend of arts and applied science, and changing with the needs of today while living with a respect for the traditions and spirit that are Auburn. And changing it has done – especially when it comes to catering to the unique technological needs of today's students.

After being an early adopter of WebCT Campus Edition (now Blackboard) in the 1990's, Auburn turned to the Wimba Collaboration Suite in 2002 as a means of adding critical speaking and listening components to its foreign language courses. But after seeing how its students excelled by adding just a few collaborative elements to its language courses, Auburn quickly added the rest of the Wimba Collaboration Suite to its distance program. In fact, the Wimba Collaboration Suite offers so many different collaborative elements, a significant number of departments at Auburn quickly filled a need by using Wimba.

A short list of programs utilizing Wimba includes:

- Agricultural Extension Service
- Educational Foundations & Leadership
- Engineering
- English as a Second Language
- Foreign Languages & Literatures
- Foreign Language Education
- Forestry
- History
- Music



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WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

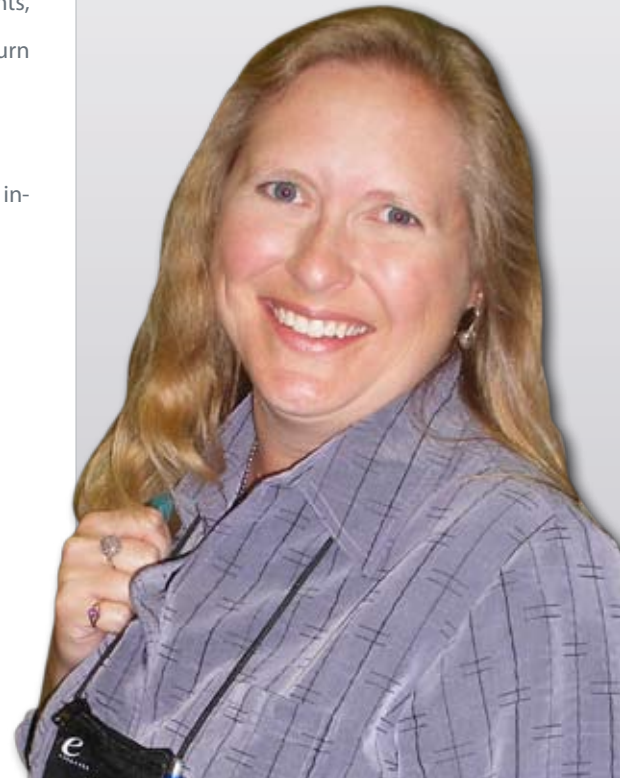
- Wimba Classroom
- Wimba Voice
- Wimba Pronto

KEY BENEFITS

- Easily hold engaging live online classes in nearly all subjects
- Offer thorough speaking & listening exercises in foreign language courses
- Expand enrollment by reaching students at satellite campuses

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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"My absolute favorite use of Wimba Voice was in an Introduction to Hispanic Literature course. [The instructor] had her students choose a Spanish language poem and record themselves reading it aloud. In the written area of the Board, they had to write why they chose that poem and describe how they felt reading it aloud – how it might have changed their perception of the poem. Since poetry is meant to be a spoken art form, this was a great way for her to get her students to think about the oral nature of poetry."

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- Music Education
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Rehabilitation & Special Education

Stacey Powell is the Director of Auburn's Foreign Language Multimedia Center and was instrumental in introducing Wimba to her department's instructors. Her language professors predominantly teach hybrid courses that meet face-to-face but have an online element, with Wimba Voice arguably being one of the most important elements that supplements their face-to-face meetings. Wimba Voice allows faculty to easily add speaking and listening exercises to their online courses.

From Spanish and French to Italian and Russian, Auburn supplements numerous language courses online via Wimba Voice.

"Using Wimba Voice to get our students to practice speaking in the target language is a wonderful thing," says Powell. "We use Wimba for everything from offering pronunciation practice in elementary levels and phonetics courses, to guided speaking activities, to encouraging basic communication in the target languages."

By primarily using Wimba Voice Boards and Wimba Voice Presentation, Auburn's language faculty also creates program assessments to find out if students are meeting language goals, and even creates professional role playing activities too.

For example, Professor Jana Gutierrez teaches a Business Spanish class during which she asks her students to practice making business phone calls. "They had to record themselves giving their phone number, their contact information, and their address, as if it were a real business situation," Powell says.

In Professor George Mitrevski's Elementary Russian course, he creates comprehensive assignments for his class – all via Wimba Voice – in which he asks his students to orally reply about how they'd accomplish the following tasks in Russian:

- Greet a friend on the street
- Ask the name of a man in your Russian class
- Ask the name of a woman in your Russian class
- Learn the name of the person you're talking to
- Introduce yourself to someone

"One of the nicer features of the Wimba Voice Boards is the ability to choose between the public and private settings," Powell adds. "While we do use the public setting for student interaction, many of our activities are for assessment and require that the instructor be able to respond individually to each student. That is where the private setting becomes useful."

It should also be noted that Powell has been on Wimba's product Advisory Board for several years. Her in-depth knowledge of the technology and pedagogy of Wimba makes her a valuable asset when it comes to driving product development at Wimba. "The best thing about Wimba is that they actually listen to their customers," she says with a laugh, though she's not really joking.

Additionally, courses such as Elementary Spanish, Elementary French and English as a Second Language (ESL) all extensively utilize Wimba Voice. In Elementary Spanish, instructors integrate audio content from their texts and other publishing resources such as McGraw Hill's *Quia*.

Faculty import these pre-created audio files into Wimba Voice so students can not only listen to



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ABOUT WIMBA

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, web-pages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.

the audio clips, but can then respond vocally in order to practice their pronunciation.

"In our Elementary French program, one of the instructors posts the text of a French poem with an audio recording of a native speaker reading it. The students listen to the poem, follow along with the text, concentrate on the proper pronunciation, and then they record themselves reading it back in French," Powell explains. She then recalls a German class that uses Wimba Voice for a culminating activity at the end of the semester. "Students interview each other in the target language, write a paragraph based on the conversation, and then orally record their paragraph on a Wimba Voice Board – this incorporates all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing."

In ESL courses, discussion inside the classroom was carried outside of the classroom. An instructor created a Wimba Voice Board where students practiced speaking English once they went home at night. These online exercises allowed them to practice beyond the face-to-face class.

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tion of the poem. Since poetry is meant to be spoken, this was a great way to get her students to think about the oral nature of poetry."

Many language classes even use Wimba Classroom in some fully online and some face-to-face mixed with distance students. This permits distance students to interact with the students in the face-to-face classroom.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, to demonstrate the true inter-disciplinary nature of the entire Wimba Collaboration Suite, Auburn utilizes Wimba Classroom in most subjects throughout the university. Whether a Music Education graduate program utilizes Wimba Classroom for student-to-student collaboration or the agriculture school is delivering a class to students throughout the state about how to cultivate barley or the latest seed treatments for wheat crops, Wimba offers the flexibility for the most highly engaging online collaboration possible.

Use has even expanded to Auburn's satellite campus, as its Montgomery location utilizes Wimba Classroom to offer paralegal courses. And from a Production for Music Education course to Evaluation of Information Resources course during which students learn how to identify print and digital reference resources, Auburn has found the multi-modal nature of the Wimba Collaboration Suite to be extremely useful for each course's unique needs.