Instructor Tools and System Widgets in D2L Brightspace @ EIU

D2L Brightspace is a learning management system (LMS) that provides tools for students, faculty, and staff at EIU to succeed in creating educational experiences. D2L Brightspace is available for all courses at EIU including online, hybrid, and face-to-face. Most of the tools and widgets available in D2L Brightspace are listed below. Tutorials with step-by-step directions for common tasks in our EIU instance of D2L can be found on the D2L Solutions website at https://www.eiu.edu/d2lsolutions/.

Instructor Tools

Most tools can be accessed by the instructor by selecting "Edit Course" in the course navbar.

Tool	Description
Accommodations	Instructors can grant learners quiz accommodations from the Classlist tool. Once granted, these accommodations apply to all quiz activities in a course for that learner.
Attendance	The Attendance tool allows you to create registers that track the attendance for activities within your course.
Awards	The Awards tool enables instructors to provide merit-based awards to students. Badges are awarded based on criteria determined by the instructor.
Blog	The Blog tool allows you and your students to share information on topics and interests. Blogs can be both public and private. Note: If a blog is made public, it is visible to anyone in the EIU D2L system. If it is private, no one other than the user can access the blog including the instructor.
Brightspace Editor	The Brightspace Editor allows you to format information in a webpage or text area in D2L similar to a word processing program.
Calendar	Calendar is an important tool for displaying upcoming events in the course.
Checklist	The Checklist tool allows you to list the steps of a specific process or a list of required activities. Students can then check off each item as it is completed.
Class Progress	The Class Progress tool tracks your learners' overall progress as a course and individually including but not limited to course access and accessing content.
Classlist	The Classlist provides you and your students with a list of students currently enrolled in your course. You can also grant quiz accommodations or email students from the classlist.
Competencies	The Competencies tool can be used to create competency structures to help you assess learning outcomes. Competencies help track information about the knowledge, skills and abilities students acquire as they participate in courses.
Content	The Content tool allows you to post and organize relevant learning materials for your students. Content material can range from basic text to multimedia files. Note: There are two content experiences in D2L. The original content experience and the new content experience (with color-coded folders).

Tool	Description
Course Builder	The Course Builder tool is an efficient way to visualize and review your content materials from one interface. You can set up your course content with simple one-step actions. The Course Builder can be accessed from Edit Course.
Course Design Accelerator	The Course Design Accelerator provides task-based direction for instructors with course design. The page provides an outline of relevant tasks to aid instructors through the entire course creation process. This can be helpful for first-time instructors and course designers when creating a new course. Note: The Course Design Accelerator can be accessed in Edit Course.
Discussions	The Discussions tool can be used for online discussions between you and your students or between groups of students. After setting up a discussion forum, you can create individual topics within the forum for discussion. Students can post messages in a threaded discussion. Students can also attach files to their messages or create a video entry using Video Note.
Dropbox	The Dropbox tool is used by students to upload and submit assignments to submission folders in D2L Brightspace. Submissions are date and time stamped. Note: D2L has renamed this tool "Assignments" but it remains "Dropbox" in our system.
Edit Course	The Edit Course tool allows you to change certain basic parameters of your course and to modify course files. All tools can be accessed from Edit Course. Note: To access Edit Course, select the Edit Course link in the course navbar.
Email	Email sent from D2L will be sent to the recipient's EIU Panthermail account. Users will not receive email in D2L. The only folder in D2L email is the Sent folder which contains copies of all email sent from D2L to Panthermail.
ePortfolio	Brightspace ePortfolio combines social sharing and experiential learning concepts to allow learners to store, share, and reflect on achievements that have shaped their own personal journeys. Note: Portfolio and ePortfolio are two completely different tools.
FAQ	The FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) tool allows you to post and answer common questions that students may have about the course or another topic.
Glossary	The Glossary tool allows you to provide students with terms or acronyms and their definitions.
Grades	The Grades tool allows you to establish an online grade book. Items in the grade book can be tied to other Brightspace tools such as the Dropbox, Quizzes, and Discussions so that a grade entered in one of these tools is automatically updated in the grade book. Students can use the Grades tool to check their grade at any time during the course.
Groups	Students can be arranged into Groups and given access to a variety of tools for group work.
Homepages	All courses in D2L are created with the Default Course Homepage as the active homepage. Instructors have the ability to change the course homepage to another existing course homepage, or the instructor can copy and modify the default course homepage for a course.
Instructional Design Wizard	The Instructional Design Wizard provides a step-by-step process for defining course learning objectives and incorporating assessment activities. Note: The Instructional Design Wizard can be accessed in Edit Course.

Tool	Description
Intelligent Agent	The Intelligent Agent monitors a course to find activities that match criteria that you set. This can range from login activity to release conditions and if the criteria are not met an email can be sent to the student.
Links	Use the Links tool to provide URL links to external web sites, quicklinks, and internal course offering areas that are useful to users in your course.
Locker	The Locker is an electronic storage area. Only the owner of the locker can view its contents.
Navbar	The NavBar is the toolbar at the top of the course providing links to tools within the course. The instructor is able to modify the NavBar if needed.
News	The News tool allows you to post messages or announcements to your students that they will see on the course homepage when they enter the course. These messages can be released or removed based on a specific date and time. Note: D2L has renamed this tool "Announcements" but it remains "News" in our system.
Pager	Pager allows you and your students to communicate via text while online at the same time or students can chat with other students. Note: D2L has renamed this tool "Chat" but it remains "Pager" in our system.
Portfolio	Brightspace Portfolio is a tool that empowers learners of all ages to independently capture evidence of learning. Note: Portfolio and ePortfolio are two completely different tools.
Quick Eval	Quick Eval offers evaluators a single location to view all learner submissions awaiting evaluation.
Quizzes	The Quizzes tool allows you to create a variety of assessments with a variety of question types. Many of these questions can be graded automatically and then automatically entered in the Grades tool.
Release Conditions	Release conditions allow you to create a custom learning path through the materials in your course. When you attach a release condition to an item, users cannot see that item until they meet the associated condition.
Rubrics	Rubrics are used to evaluate an activity or item based on a predefined set of criteria. Rubrics help ensure that activities and items are evaluated fairly and consistently. You can create holistic or analytic rubrics.
Self Assessments	Self Assessments is a formative assessment tool that enables you to provide students with a series of questions and immediate feedback for responses.
Special Access	Special access permissions allow you to set different availability dates and times on an assignment or quiz for specific users. For quizzes, you can also override attempts allowed. Special Access has to be set for each individual assignment or quiz. Note: If you want to set accommodations that apply to all quiz activities in a course for a specific user, use the Accommodations tool in Classlist. Accommodations is only available for quizzes.
Survey	The Survey tool allows you to create questions to solicit feedback from students. You can track the student's response, or the survey can be anonymous. Surveys cannot be linked to the Grades tool, and it has less question response tracking capabilities than Quizzes.
Video Note	A video note is a brief video clip that you can record within a course in D2L without the need for special software or downloading/uploading files. You can record a video note anywhere that you have access to the HTML editor within a course including but not limited to News, Content, Discussions, Grades/Feedback, and Assignment Dropbox.

D2L System Widgets

System Widgets appear on the course homepage. Instructors can edit the course homepage to remove or add system widgets.

Widget	Description
Activity Feed	Activity Feed is a widget that provides a central location for instructors to post messages and assignments. You can also provide links to course materials and external resources. This gives learners the ability to quickly access links to important materials, comment on messages made by instructors and classmates, and upload files to posts. Note: If used, the Activity Feed widget should replace the News widget.
Admin Tools	The Admin Tools widget displays all of your available course administrative links and provides easy access to the tools that you need to manage. The number of administrative links you are able to see in the Admin Tools widget is determined by your role's permission settings. Note: This is an instructor widget. Students do not see it.
Bookmarks	This widget is used to bookmark pages in course content. The bookmark option is only available in the original content experience. Only pages bookmarked by the user are visible in the widget. (i.e. the students will not see pages bookmarked by the instructor)
Calendar (on default homepage)	The Calendar widget consists of a mini-calendar and a list of upcoming events. It displays all events created by instructors for the applicable month. Clicking on a day in the widget's mini-Calendar filters the event list to only display events for that day. Clicking on an event in the widget takes you to the event in the Calendar tool.
Content Browser (on default homepage)	The Content Browser widget enables you to browse course content, view recently visited topics, and view bookmarked topics from your course homepage. The Content Browser widget retains the place you left off when you return to your course homepage. Note: The content browser is based on recently visited topics, etc., therefore you may not see the same content listed as your students.
Course Administration	The Course Administration widget displays links to your course administration tools. This widget will display links to the tools listed in "Edit Course". Note: This is an instructor widget. Students do not see it.
Google Search	The Google Search widget enables you to search the web from your homepage. Your search results open in a new window using your default internet browser.
My Settings	The My Settings widget only displays links to the settings the user has permission to view.
News (on default homepage)	The News widget communicates important updates and information to users. You can create announcements with formatted text, graphics, audio, and quicklinks. You can also choose the date range and conditions for an item's availability. Note: D2L has renamed this tool "Announcements" but it remains "News" in our system.
Quick Eval	The Quick Eval widget allows instructors to view and access any submissions awaiting evaluation. The Quick Eval widget displays a list of up to six activities with submissions to evaluate. The activities are sorted by due date, with the earliest date first. Note: This is an instructor widget. Students do not see it.
Role Switch (on default homepage)	The Role Switch widget enables you to temporarily switch your active role to another role in your organization by selecting it from a drop-down list. You can then navigate the org unit based on the permissions of another role without having to log out and log in as another user. Although, this is a quick and easy way to view your course as a student, it is recommended that you log in to your course using your student demo (s-) account for an accurate and completely interactive view of your course as a student. Note: This is an instructor widget. Students do not see it.
Students at Risk	To enhance monitoring of learner success, instructors can add a new Students at Risk widget to a course homepage in Brightspace Learning Environment. Once a week, Brightspace Student Success System updates the widget to display up to 5 students that the system determines are "at risk." The sub-title of the widget reflects the predicted grades for the week. Additional setup is needed by the D2L Admins to access this information. Note: This is an instructor widget. Students do not see it.

Widget	Description
Tasks	The Tasks widget enables you to view and manage tasks from the Calendar tool. You can add a due date and additional notes to each task, and the system sorts them into the categories of Today, Upcoming, or Someday (no due date). Note: This is a personalized task list for each user and only lists the tasks added by that user.
Updates (on default homepage)	The Updates widget will display the number of unread discussion messages, ungraded quiz attempts, quizzes not attempted, new assignment submissions, dropbox submissions with unread feedback, new enrollments, and broken links.
User Links	The User Links widget allows users to create a personal list of links to external websites. Only links created by the user are visible in the widget. (i.e. the students will not see links created by the instructor)
Work to Do	The Work To Do widget provides learners with a summary of their assigned learning activities that are overdue or have an upcoming due date or end date for the course. Note: This is a student widget. Instructors do not see it. You should log in to the course with your student demo (s-) account to view this widget and check to see if the activities are appearing as expected. Activities appear on the list according to due dates or end dates. By default, the widget displays activities due in the upcoming 2 weeks, and overdue work from the previous 12 weeks. (i.e. the widget might display overdue activities from a previous semester if the course was copied.)

Faculty Development and Innovation Center

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The FDIC staff can recommend integration solutions using D2L and other instructional technologies for your online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses.

For Help with D2L Brightspace

Send your request for assistance to fdic_help@eiu.edu and an FDIC staff member will assist you.