
D2L PRE-Semester checklist

You can manipulate start and end dates	Under EDIT COURSE, and Course Offering Info you can alter when your students can see your course. Some instructors like to provide an early sneak-peek for those students who like to be prepared. Consider opening your course a few days early. Also - if you use the D2L gradebook - keep in mind your students might want to have access to your course AFTER it's over so they can see their grades. D2L will close the site automatically on the last day of your class. Think about changing your end date right upfront – so you don't have to remember to reset it at the end of the semester.
Welcome Message	The news area is a great place to post a welcome notice with a brief overview of class instructions for getting started, e.g. – “Click on content to get started.” Students LOVE getting a personal email from instructors prior to class. D2L has the capacity to email all your students at once via classlist.
Encourage D2L Tutorial	Consider making the D2L tutorial part of your initial week's curriculum. All students have access to this course via the SELF REGISTRATION link found at login. This would ensure students have basic D2L skills if you regularly use tools such as the dropbox, discussion board, etc.
Use Images	Adding images does so much for communication. Consider including an appropriate image any time you communicate with text. Everything from an image of your textbook to a day brightening cartoon. It helps add personality to your online presence.
Use Profile Tool	Visit the profile link on your MYHOME page. Here you can upload a picture of yourself. Ask your students to do the same and you'll have a great reference in your classlist for learning names. Click on any student's picture to view their profile.
Getting Started with Content	Create a “getting started” module at the top of your content area with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your syllabus• Link to the calendar tool (or include a semester schedule separate from the syllabus with dates and information on class activities and due dates for course requirements)• Initial assignment and other “getting started” information. E.g. getting acquainted assignment such as posting an autobiographical sketch in the discussion area, completing the profile area and uploading picture, netiquette info, tips for the course, etc.
Organize Your Content	Create modules (headings) related to how you organize your course. (week 1,2,3....or chapter 1.2.3....or unit about _____.....) Then create or upload related topics for each module. Note: Modules are headings, topics link to actual content.
Formatting Recommendation	Tip: Instead of uploading word or PDF documents, consider copying and pasting into a “new document” which creates an html document which remains editable from year to year saving you from having to save, alter original documents and re-upload.

Using Powerpoints?	Save Powerpoint presentations as PDF files with the handouts version (e.g. 6 slides per page) so your students can print them without wasting paper. (CutePDF works great for this)
Check Links	Check all your external links to make sure they work! Include resource links to free programs your students might need – e.g. Acrobat Reader (http://get.adobe.com/reader/)
Discussion Boards	Consider including an introduction forum for students to post information about themselves to get to know each other. Include your own sketch as the first message to serve as an example
Other Discussion areas to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “class café” for students to interact in non-class related subjects • A “peer support” forum for students to post questions and provide answers to each others questions • A “questions for the Instructor” where students can ask you anything
Voicethread	Check out this great – free online tool and consider embedding one in your discussion area. It adds an audible dimension to your discussions
Dropbox Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a practice folder as the first folder to give students an opportunity to try out the Dropbox feature before an assignment is due. • Create appropriate dropbox folders for your assignments. • Check the box so the due date is included on student’s D2L calendar. • Link dropbox items to the gradebook for easy grading. • Consider attaching a RUBRIC for easy grading and instant feedback • Create a “late work” folder and CLOSE your assignment folders on due dates
Quiz Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating a “practice quiz” based on your syllabus for students to practice using the quiz tool. • Use LockDown Browser right away in your practice quiz if you plan on using it throughout the semester to work out potential bugs • Link quizzes to your gradebook for automatic grade entry • Already have your quiz in a word document? Consider learning to use Respondus Quiz creation tool for easy transfer
Gradebook Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up your gradebook BEFORE setting up dropboxes and quizzes to facilitate easy linking. • Make your Final Calculated Grade visible to students from the beginning so they can see a running total of their up-to-date grade all semester long
Intelligent Agents	Consider using Version 9’s new Intelligent Agents to help with retention. You can have the system “auto-send” emails based on conditions you create. These are found under EDIT COURSE in the TOOL area. Great for reminders to improve, as well as positive reinforcement.

If you need assistance – please contact Educational Technology at 285-7173 or email etech.help@rctc.edu
