D2L FACULTY TRAINING

CUSTOMIZING YOUR COURSE HOME
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GETTING STARTED

LOGGING IN

1. Go to the portal and log in.

2. Click on the “My Courses” link located in the upper right hand corner of the portal page.

3. Under “Courses I’m Teaching,” click on the link to enter the Desire2Learn system and access your course.

4. You can also access the D2L system by clicking on the “D2L Homepage” link located on the My Courses page. The link is also located in the Faculty tab under Faculty Self Service.

LOCATING YOUR COURSES

Once you have logged in to the Desire2Learn system you will be taken to the My Home page. From this page you can access all of your D2L courses. Your courses will be located under the My Courses section within the Instructor tab. Each course will be listed by term, year, and department.

To enter a course, click on the link located in the My Courses section under the Instructor tab.

💡 If you do not see your courses listed, please make sure that the courses have not been collapsed. If you see a double arrow icon pointing down, you will need to click on the icon to expand the list and then your courses will appear.
The Course Home is the entry page for your specific course. It is the first page that you and your students will see when entering a course.

This page contains sections of information called Widgets that provide your students with a place to view News announcements, course Updates, calendar Events, and quick access to content in your course.

To enter a course home from the My Home screen, go to the My Courses area in the middle of the page and click the title of your course. You will then be directed to your course home page.

Your course home page displays all of the tools for your course. You will notice that the navigation bar now contains many different tools that were not visible on the My Home page. To navigate to your course home click on the Course Home link located in the navigation bar at the top of the page.
BEST PRACTICE

One of the best practices based on current research into what constitutes effective online course design is providing a well-designed course home page that sets tone and expectations and is not cluttered with content. Customizing your course home will help students feel welcomed and may very well ease anxiety when taking an online course for the first time. The course home page can be used for the following and more:

- You could give a short bio with an image or short video of you with your contact information.
- It is a way to set the tone of a course.
- It helps create a sense of community for the students.
- It’s where you can give your students instructions on how to get started in your course
- It can provide students with important announcements and feedback.

It is recommended that the home page of your course be uncluttered to promote content organization which will help to eliminate confusion. It is more aesthetic and adds a sense of identity and community. Below is an example of a course home:

💡 Tip: Keep the most important information at the top of your Course Home page. When possible, you want to prevent students from having to scroll too far down to see important course information.
CREATING YOUR OWN COURSE HOME

The **Course Default** homepage is the active homepage for any new course. Unfortunately, the default course home cannot be edited.

To create your own course home:

1. Click on the **Edit Course** link located in the top right-hand corner of the page.
2. Click on the **Homepages** link.
3. Then click the **Copy** icon next to the Course Default homepage.
4. When the Confirmation window appears click the **Copy** button.

EDITING THE COURSE HOME

To edit the Copy of the Course Home:

1. Click on the **Name**. You can assign a new Name to the homepage if you wish.
2. Click the **Content/Layout** tab. To add, remove, or reorder the Widgets that appear on your course home, click the triangle dropdown menu. To adjust the size of the panels click on the **Panel Sizes** link located above the Properties tab.
**ADDING AND CREATING WIDGETS**

To add a system widget to your course home page:

1. Click the Add Widget button in the panel you would like to add the widget.
2. Place a checkmark next to the widget(s) you would like to add and click Save.
3. Then if you need to move the widget, click the dropdown menu to Move Up, Down, or to another panel.

If the available system widgets do not have all the specific information you want to include, you can create a custom widget. For example, you may want to add a custom widget with specific information or embed a video to display on the course home.

**To create and add a custom widget:**

1. Click on the Edit Course link located in the top right-hand corner of the page.
2. Click on the Widgets link.  
3. Click New Widget. On the properties tab, type in a Name for your custom widget.
4. Then click on the Content tab.
5. You can then use the Html editor to add content to your widget. Remember to select the Advanced tab to display more options for adding content to your widget.  
   *Note: You can preview your widget by clicking on the Preview Widget link located above the Properties tab.*
6. When you have finished creating your custom widget, click the Save button.
7. To add your custom widget to your course home, use the steps above on adding a system widget.
8. Then if you need to move the widget, click the dropdown menu to Move Up, Down, or to another panel.

**ACTIVATING YOUR COURSE HOME PAGE**

Once you have finished customizing your course home page and you would like the new course home to be displayed you must activate it. To do this:

1. Click on the Edit Course link located in the top right-hand corner of the page.
2. Click on the Homepages link.  
3. Click the Set button to make your custom homepage active. When prompted on the Confirmation window, select the Set Active button.
4. Then click on the Course Home link in the navigation bar to review your new course home page.
**USING THE NEWS WIDGET**

Now that you have created a custom homepage, it is strongly recommended that a News widget is included to provide students with a welcome announcement and instructions on how to get started in the course. The News widget also provides an excellent way to easily communicate and provide feedback to all your students by posting a **News item** to the Course Home page.

**CREATE A NEWS ITEM**

1. Click the **Course Home** link located in the course navbar.

2. Click the New News button.

3. On the New Item page, type a **Headline** (such as “Week One Announcement”).

4. Type your announcement in the **Content** box (Note you can adjust font and include images, videos, website links, and attach files by clicking on the **Advanced** tab).

5. Click **Save as Draft** to save and continue editing at another time. Click **Publish** when you are ready to post the News item to the Course Homepage. (Note that if you wish to set announcements to display and/or end at a specific time you can do so under the Availability section. You can also add attachments.)

6. Now, click the Course Home to view your announcement.

To edit the item, click on the edit icon.

To delete an item, click on the delete icon.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the most important information at the top of your Course Home page. When possible, you want to prevent students from having to scroll too far down to see important course information.
The first thing you will notice when you enter your online course is a list of links located along the top left navigation bar of your screen under the Desire2Learn logo.

Each link will take you to a specific tool both you and your students can use in your online course. The links can be customized to suit the needs of your course(s).

CUSTOMIZING THE NAVIGATION BAR

The Course Default Navigation Bar is the active navigation bar for any new course. Unfortunately, like the default course home, it cannot be edited.

To create your own course navigation bar:

1. Click on the Edit Course link located in the top right-hand corner of the page.
2. Click on the Navigation link.
3. Then click the Copy icon next to the Course Default.
4. When the Confirmation window appears click the Yes button.

Once you have copied the navbar, you must activate it. To do this, simply click on the Change button and select your new navbar and click Apply.
EDITING THE NAVIGATION BAR

To edit the Copy of the Course Home:

1. Click on the Name (Copy of Course Default). You can assign a new Name to the homepage if you wish.
2. Then click on the Links tab.
3. To add or remove links from your course navbar, navigate to the Course Home Links (Course Specific Tools) section.

- To add links, click the Add links button. Place a checkmark next to the link and click the Add button.
- To remove links from your course navbar, click the dropdown menu of a link and select Remove from navbar.

When you have made all of the desired changes, the changes will be automatically updated.

💡 Tip: Some tools appear in the Navigation Bar by default. If there are tools that you are not planning on using in your course, remove them from the Navigation Bar so your students do not expect to find course material there.
HELP AND SUPPORT

NEED HELP LOGGING IN?

Contact the IT Helpdesk at extension 5898 or (805)986-5898 or at ochelpdesk@vcccd.edu

HAVE A SPECIFIC D2L QUESTION?

Contact OC Instructional Support Services at either (805) 986-5838 or (805) 986-5993 or ociss@vcccd.edu. This address is connected to all members of Instructional Support Services. Contact information for individual staff members below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bola King-Rushing</td>
<td>Instructional Technologist</td>
<td>805-986-5993</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bking@vcccd.edu">bking@vcccd.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Prado</td>
<td>Instructional Design Specialist</td>
<td>805-986-5838</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mprado@vcccd.edu">mprado@vcccd.edu</a></td>
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Office Hours are Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY?

Please view the Instructional Support Services website for more resources, training opportunities and campus IT Services: [http://www.oxnardcollege.edu/faculty_staff/instructional_technology/index.shtml](http://www.oxnardcollege.edu/faculty_staff/instructional_technology/index.shtml)