Brightspace Quick Start Guide for Instructors

How can I connect with my students?

WRITE AN ACTIVITY FEED POST

The Activity Feed allows for multiple types of communication: instructor-to-student, student-to-instructor, and even peer-to-peer. You can permit students to comment on posts (which you can always edit or delete, if needed), and even to create their own posts. **Develop an engaged online community and promote collaboration** by posting messages and sharing resources with each other at any time!

Speak to your administrator if you do not see the Activity Feed on your course homepage.

1. From the Activity Feed on your course homepage, click **Create a post**.

2. Under the **Create a Message** prompt, enter the written message that you would like your students to read.

3. Check or uncheck **Allow Comments**, depending on your preference for student comments on this message.

4. Optionally, add an attachment or a link by clicking on the **Attach** icon (the paper clip) to quickly share relevant documents.

5. To share your message with your students right away, click **Post**.

6. To allow your students to post their own messages, from the **Activity Feed** drop-down menu, click **Manage commenting and posting.** Ensure that **Allow all learners to create posts** is selected. Now your students will be able to collaborate and engage in conversations without you having to lift another finger!
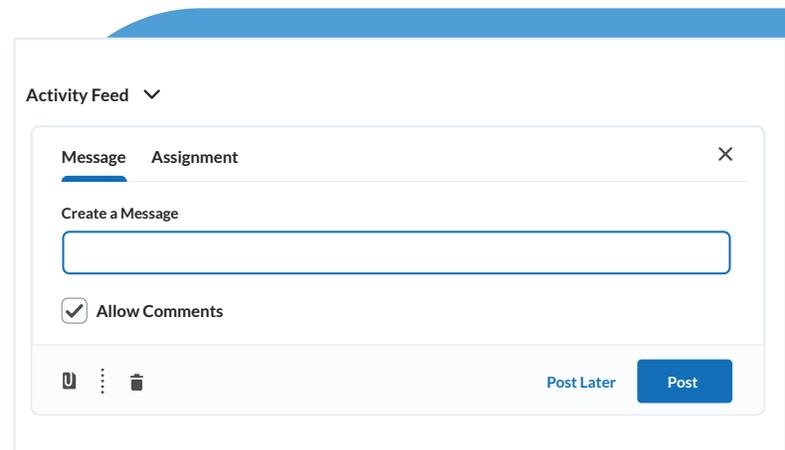

FIGURE 1: Creating a message in the Activity Feed

WRITE AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Use Announcements to share important information, updates, or positive messages with your students. **Reduce learner anxiety** by keeping your class in the know at all times, **maintain instructor presence** no matter the distance, and **save yourself time** by streamlining course news. Speak to your administrator if you do not see Announcements on your course homepage.

1. From the **Announcements** menu on your course homepage, click **New Announcement**.

2. Enter an engaging **Headline**, and the written **Content** that you would like your students to read.

3. Optionally, add an attachment by clicking **Add a File** in order to quickly share relevant documents.

4. To post your Announcement to your students right away, click **Publish.**

5. Made a typo? From the **Announcements** menu, this time click **Go to Announcements Tool.** Click on the drop-down menu beside your Announcement, and choose **Edit**. Make the necessary changes, then click **Update!**
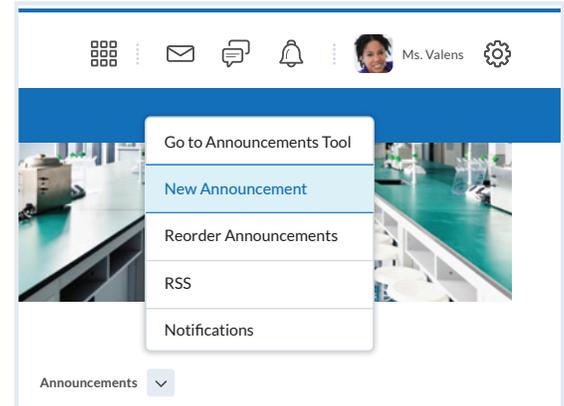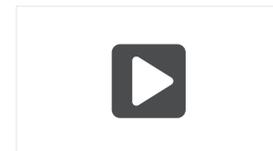

FIGURE 2: Announcements context menu

RECORD A VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT

Recording a Video Announcement, in lieu of written content only, is a fantastic way to **engage your students**, and **heighten the authenticity of your instructor presence** within the online space. Your students will appreciate the extra effort! Speak to your administrator if you do not see Announcements on your course homepage.

1. From the **Announcements** menu on your course homepage, click **New Announcement.**

2. Enter an engaging **Headline**.

3. In the **Content** text box, click on the **Insert Stuff** icon (the triangle).

4. Click **Add Video Note.** (We recommend using Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox for best results!)

FIGURE 3: Insert Stuff icon

5. Say cheese! Click **New Recording** to record your Video Announcement, then **Stop Recording** once you are done.

6. If you are happy with your Video Announcement, click **Next,** add a brief **Title**, then click **Insert**. Otherwise, you are free to re-record, but don't worry too much about making things perfect!

7. To post your Video Announcement to your students right away, click **Publish**.

SEND AN EMAIL

Brightspace includes an internal email tool to **facilitate efficient and centralized communication**. When a student emails you, an orange dot will appear next to the envelope icon at the top of your screen.

To send an email, click on the **Classlist** tool, either from your course's navigation bar along the top, or by first navigating to the link called **Course Admin.** Made it to the Classlist?

1. To email your entire class: click on **Email Classlist**

2. To email a select group of students: check off each student's name, then click **Email** at the top of the list

3. To send a private email: click directly on one student's name
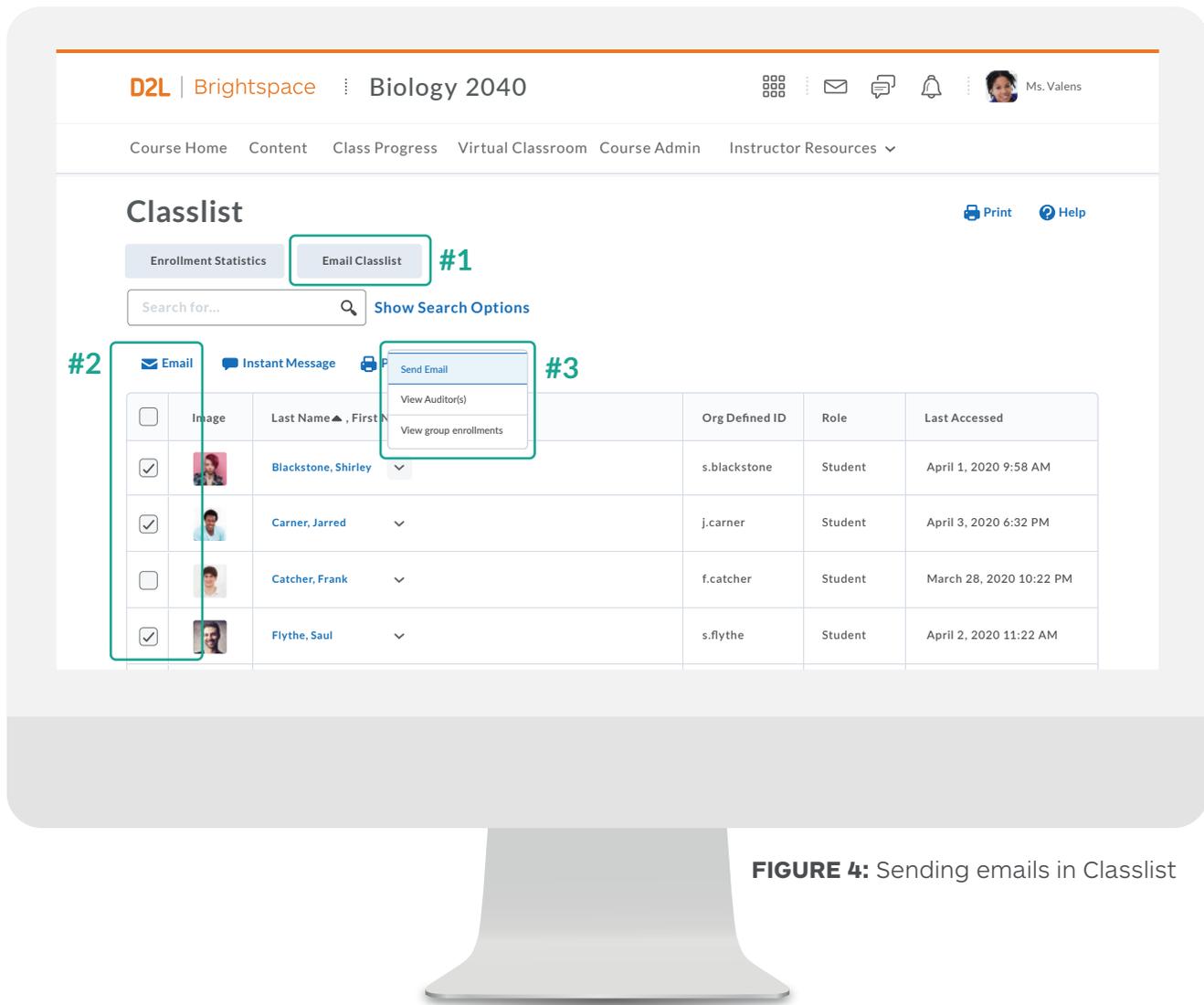
FIGURE 4: Sending emails in Classlist

How do I share course materials with my students?

SHARE COURSE READING MATERIAL

Do you already have some concrete learning materials in mind? You can upload or drag and drop files directly from your device, or add external links to other websites that house relevant resources.

1. On your course's navigation bar, click **Content**.

2. Under the **Table of Contents** panel along the left, click the **Add a module** field, enter a name for your new Module (this will act as a folder), then hit your Enter key.

3. Now that we have a Module to use as a folder, click the blue **Upload/Create** button, choose **Upload Files**, then **My Computer.** Next, either drag and drop a file in from your device, or upload one, then click **Add**.

4. If you don't have the material on your device, you could also add an external link from the same **Upload/Create** area: select **Create a Link**, add a title and the URL, then click **Create**.

RECORD A VIRTUAL LECTURE

1. On your course's navigation bar, click **Content**.

2. Under the Table of Contents panel along the left, click the **Add a module** field, enter a name for your new Module (this will act as a folder), then hit your Enter key.

<div align="center">OR</div>

   Under the **Table of Contents** panel along the left, click on an existing Module to record your Virtual Lecture.

3. Now that we have selected a Module to use as a folder, click the blue **Upload/Create** button, then choose **Create a File**.

4. Enter an informative **Title**, and optional text that will describe or qualify your Virtual Lecture.

5. In the text box, click the **Insert Stuff** icon (the triangle).

6. Click **Add Video Note**. (We recommend using Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox for best results!)

FIGURE 5: Insert Stuff icon

7. Say cheese! Click **New Recording** to record your Virtual Lecture (up to 30 minutes), then **Stop Recording** once you are done.

8. If you are happy with your Virtual Lecture, click **Next**, add a brief **Title,** then click **Insert**. Otherwise, you are free to re-record, but don't worry too much about making things perfect!

9. To post your Virtual Lecture to your students right away, click **Save and Close**.

How can my students stay on track?

ENABLE INSTANT NOTIFICATIONS

Let your students know that they can sign up for a daily or weekly email summary of what's been happening in their courses by clicking **Notifications** under their name at the top right of any Brightspace page. They can also select specific aspects of those courses to receive instant text messages (North America) or emails about, so that they never miss an important update!

DOWNLOAD THE PULSE APP

Brightspace Pulse is a mobile app for students that will sync up with your online course! It is the perfect way for today's tech-savvy student to stay connected to your learning community. Simply tell your class to look for **Brightspace Pulse** in the App Store or Google Play, or visit **D2L.com/products/pulse/** for further details.

Check your success!

When you feel ready, confirm successful completion of this guide by trying out the following 3 tasks:

☐ Calm learner anxiety — reach out to your students with a friendly written message in either the **Activity Feed** or **Announcements**

☐ Share some learning — upload a file into your **Content** area (common examples include: course syllabi, reading material, lecture slides, etc.)

☐ Show your face — record and post a **Video Announcement** or **Virtual Lecture** (don't worry, you can re-record as many times as you like before your students will see it!)

Congratulations on completing the Brightspace Quick Start Guide for Instructors—it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!