

# Inside Independent Learning

## D2L Basics

### Independent Learning, Innovation, & The Wisconsin Idea

#### Special points of interest:

##### •D2L Basics

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- Next Month: Fall Topic Series: Effective use of Discussion Boards

UW-Madison, the oldest and largest public university in WI, was founded in 1848 and became a land grant institution in 1866. Independent Learning was established in 1892, 12 years before “the Wisconsin Idea” was first articulated by University President Charles Van Hise. “The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that the University should improve people’s lives beyond the classroom.” (www.wisconsinidea.wisc.edu) Van Hise said, “I shall never be content until the beneficial influence of the university reaches every home in the state.”

Independent Learning, a print-based, asynchronous correspondence course program, had the unique ability to bring university courses to every corner of the state of WI and offer opportunities for further education for WI citizens, no matter how far from Madison they resided. Through the years, Independent Learning has grown and changed with technological advances, but our role has remained the same: providing opportunities for high quality education to students, no matter how far away from Madison they live.

Today’s technological advances make it possible to work with students throughout the state of WI as easily as students living in other states and countries. As Independent Learning has done in the past, we will continue to embrace innovations that allow us to provide education opportunities to more students. As members of the IL team, we make Van Hise’s goal possible; the beneficial influence of our IL courses can reach every student in the state, and beyond.

## Asking for Help

Since students can access their courses in D2L as soon as they register, many courses are now electing to use ebooks rather than print textbooks so students also have instant access to course materials. Some publishers are even moving away from print materials altogether!

As Independent Learning moves away from print courses and toward D2L learning spaces, there are bound to be some hiccups along the way. As we continue to innovate to keep up with student expectations and remain competi-

tive, it is our goal to provide the support that IL instructors need in order to use the new technologies effectively. If you have any questions about D2L or are struggling with any specific technology issue, you can contact Tech Support at Extension (877-724-7883 or techsupport@uwex.edu). You are also always welcome to contact Sarah (608-890-3364 or skorpi@dcs.wisc.edu). She is always happy to create a



how-to doc or meet with you to answer your questions. Together, we will continue to ensure that Independent Learning allows the beneficial influence of the university to reach all interested learners.

### Announcing the First Quarterly DCS IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting:

**November 20th from 2-4 pm  
Room 7045, 21 N. Park Street  
Madison, WI 53715**

**Please check your email for the invitation.**



**Continuing Studies**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

**“Home, Home  
in D2L!”**

My Home | Independent Learning Catalog



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**INDEPENDENT LEARNING**

## My Home

When you first log in to D2L, you are looking at a page called “My Home.” Here, you can see a list of all of your courses. Any time a student submits an item to the Discussion Board or the Dropbox, this will be noted under the title of the course. You can click on this sublink, and you will be taken directly to that course’s discussion board or dropbox. Clicking this link saves you valuable time and allows you to respond to the student’s submission more quickly.

## Course Home

From “My Home” you can click on the course you would like to view. This takes you to the “Course Home” page. This page is the first page that students see when they log in to the course. Thinking about the course home page as the cover of a book is a great way to make sure to capture students’ attention when they log in to your course. The “Course Home” page contains a “News” section. This is the area where a course welcome note can be posted. This is also where IL instructors should post any notifications for students in the course, including vacation notifications.

Course Home | Content | Grades | Discussions | Dropbox

## Content

The Course Content area replaces the printed course guides. Here, students can view the syllabus and find their reading assignments, study notes, and written assignments. Some courses also include exam study guides in the content area so students can better prepare for the exams.

Posting a study guide is a great way to reduce student emails asking about what they should expect on the exams.

The Dropbox replaces Istudy for assignment submission. (Istudy is the email submission tool that replaced print assignment submission. Istudy is still used for print courses. However, envelopes for print assignment submission are no longer being provided.)

When you click on “Dropbox,” you will see a link for each assignment in the course. You will also see if you have any unread files. Unread files are student assignments that need to be graded. To grade an assignment in D2L, click



on the assignment link, then scroll down until you see a closed envelope icon. Click the file name next to the envelope. (You can also click on “Evaluate” instead.) You can either view the file

in D2L, or download the file to your computer. (See the Tech Gem for tips on leaving feedback in downloaded files.)

To leave feedback, enter a score in the textbox provided, then leave some encouraging feedback in the “Feedback” text box. If you downloaded the student’s work and left comments in a file, you can upload the file to the dropbox by clicking on “Add a File.” If you prefer to leave audio feedback for your students, make sure your computer’s microphone is functioning and then click “Record Audio.” You can click “Save Draft” if you want to save your work but you do not want the student to view the feedback yet.

Be sure to click “Publish” when you are finished. This makes the feedback visible to the student in the dropbox AND in the Grades Tab.

## Grades Tab

When you upload a score and feedback in the Dropbox, D2L automatically transfers this information to the assignment entry located in the Grades Tab. You do not need to open the Grades Tab to enter grade information for any of the unit assignments.

IL instructors should enter exam grades and detailed exam feedback for students in the Grades tab. To enter this information, open the Grades Tab and click on a specific student’s name. Scroll down to the exam for which you would like to enter feedback. Click “Show Comments” to leave detailed exam feedback for students. Instructors may also use the “Show Comments” area under the “Final Grade” heading to leave students feedback on overall course performance.

Students will be able to track their grade progress in the Grades tab as they complete the course. If a student contacts you about a grade in progress, that student can be directed to D2L’s Grades tab.



## Ideas & Suggestions

Remember, if you have any questions or concerns that you think would be of interest to your IL colleagues, please submit them for future IL Newsletters.



### Save the Date:

#### Next DCS IL Instructor

##### Meeting:

**November 20th, 2-4 pm**  
**Rm 7045, 21 N. Park St.**  
**Madison, WI**

#### 31st Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning

**August 11-13, 2015**  
**Madison, WI**

## Coming Next Month: The Fall Topic Series

Because all IL courses will soon be offered in D2L, the Fall Topic Series is dedicated to Getting the Most out of D2L.

November: Effective Use of Discussion Boards

December: "chats"

January: Assessments and Quiz Tools

If you have any helpful tips or hints that you would like to share with your IL colleagues, please be sure to let Sarah know by November 15. If you have any questions about D2L that you would like to see addressed in the Fall Topic Series, just let Sarah know.

## Introducing: Janet Wood



Photo: Janet Wood at beautiful Lake Bohinj in Slovenia

I am a life-long Madisonian and have loved languages from early on. I was eager to study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since it is well known for its excellent language programs. I completed an undergraduate major in

both Spanish and Italian and studied French as well. I spent my senior year at the Università degli Studi in Bologna, Italy, then returned home for graduate study in Italian. I was awarded a teaching assistantship while in graduate school and fell in love with teaching. Since earning my

M.A. in Italian, I have returned to Italy many times for both travel and further study.

I have been with DCS for over twenty years and have seen distance education evolve from printed course materials with mailed in lessons to today's interactive digital textbooks that speak and self-correct student work. I also teach non-credit conversational Italian courses several times a year and especially enjoy the face-to-face interaction with adult students.

When not logged onto D2L, you can often find me on a bike. My husband and I met through a local bike club and have enjoyed riding together ever since. Our goal is to eventually ride in all fifty states—only thirty to go! We also enjoy hiking, canoeing and bird watching. And, of course, I continue to be fascinated by new languages. Recent bike trips to Switzerland and Slovenia served as excuses to learn some German and Slovene.