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## Grades

The Grades tool in D2L allows you to set up a gradebook based on your course's classlist. You may set up a variety of grade items for projects, assignments and tests. Additionally, D2L allows you to coordinate grades with specific features in D2L, such as the Dropbox, Quiz, Discussion and Competency features. The gradebook can be set up on a points, weighted or formula system. Additionally it can be set to release either a final calculated grade or an adjusted final grade.

To access the grading tool, click on the Grades link on the lower left part of your course navigation bar.

### Gradebook

The first step for utilizing the Grades tool is setting up a gradebook. A gradebook evaluates student's performance by assigning points or weight to assignments, tests, essays, discussion questions or participation and then comparing the points the student earned to the total number of points possible.

Before setting up a gradebook for your course in D2L, it is recommended that you have a clear idea of what students will be graded on, and how much each grade item will contribute to a student's overall grade. If you have already made your course syllabus, it could be used as a great reference to make sure your syllabus reflects your gradebook and vice versa. Although you may continually adjust your grade book as the semester progresses, changing the gradebook structure or the calculation of students' grades after grades have been entered can significantly alter the data.

### Grading systems

Selecting a grading system is the first step in setting up your grade book. The grading system determines how the grade items in your gradebook contribute to the final grade. There are two main options:

1. Grade items can count as a percentage of a final grade worth 100%.
2. Grade items can count as a finite number of points to be totaled for a final grade.

You should choose the option that best matches how you plan to evaluate students in your course.

### Weighted System

Use the weighted system to calculate grade items as a percentage of a final grade worth 100%. Notice in the figure below that the three grade categories, Quizzes, Tests and Essays, add up to 100%. Under the weighted system, items in each category also add up to 100%, but individual assignments can have a different maximum number of points. The weight assigned to an item within a category counts towards a percentage of that category, not the final grade. For example, in the gradebook shown below, the "Outline Research Topic" counts as 10% of the Essay category. Since the Essay category is worth 45% of the Final grade, the "Outline Research Topic" is worth 4.5% of the Final grade.

Grades List  
**Grades List**

Grades List
 New Item
 New Category
 Reorder
 Delete

Weight Column

Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight	Actions
<b>Quizzes</b> — Category				10	
Quiz 1   Grade Item	Numeric	Quizzes	10	100	
<b>Tests</b> — Category				45	
Test 1	Numeric	-	100	25	
Test 2   Grade Items	Numeric	-	100	25	
Final Exam	Numeric	-	200	50	
<b>Essay</b> — Category				45	
Comparative Literary Analysis	Selectbox	-	-	30	
Outline Research Topic	Selectbox	-	-	10	
Research Rough Draft   Grade Items	Selectbox	-	-	20	
Research Paper	Selectbox	-	-	40	
Final Calculated Grade					
Final Adjusted Grade					

*Note 1: Since it is a category's weight and not an individual grade item's weight that counts toward the final grade, the final grade is inaccurate until all items in a category are graded. Therefore, releasing calculated final grades to students before the end of the course may be misleading.*

*Note 2: You will receive a warning message at the top of your grade book if your grade items and categories do not add up to 100%. You can choose to ignore this warning; a balanced grade book is not required.*

### Points System

Use the points system when you want the maximum points assigned to a grade item to be equal to its contribution to the final grade. Final grades are calculated by adding a student's score on all grade items together and dividing by the sum of the maximum number of points available. The sum of the maximum points for grade items does not need to equal 100. In this grading system, categories are not assigned a weight or total point number because each individual grade item counts towards the final grade.

*Tip : Make sure that point values for assignments and tests make sense within the setup of your course. Projects, Tests and Exams should have a higher point value that reflects their overall contribution to the final grade than smaller grade items like quizzes and homework.*

## Final Grade Calculation

Selecting the type of final grade to release lets you decide if you want to modify students' grades before releasing them.

### Calculated Final Grade

A student's calculated final grade is calculated based on the grading system set up in the grade book. It cannot be adjusted to accommodate special circumstances without editing individual grade items or categories and recalculating the total.

A calculated final grade might be used when:

- An instructor with a large class releases the calculated final grade because it is the fastest and easiest way to release grades to students.
- An online training course is offered without an active instructor. The course consists of a number of reading topics and multiple choice quizzes. The quizzes are graded automatically and all grades, including the calculated final grade, are kept up-to-date and released to students.
- A school board requires that instructors set their grade book up in a particular way and release the calculated final grade to help ensure consistent grading.

### Adjusted Final Grade


The adjusted final grade lets you modify or adjust a student's grade before releasing it. You can use the calculated grade for final grades that don't need adjustment.

An adjusted final grade might be used when:

- A beginner graphic design course teaches students to use publishing software. The instructor uses the same criteria to grade each student on individual assignments, but adjusts students' final grades to account for previous knowledge with the programs and improvement.
- An instructor reviews students' grades before releasing them and rounds up students that are close to achieving a benchmark, such as rounding 79% to 80% so a student receives honors or rounding 47% to 50% so a student passes the course.
- An instructor applies a bell curve to students' final grades to raise the class average. Individual grade items are left unadjusted so the instructor can compare results to previous years.

## Grades Setup Wizard

If a grade book has not already been set up or imported for your course, you should see the Grades Setup Wizard when you enter the Grades tool. If a different area of the Grades tool

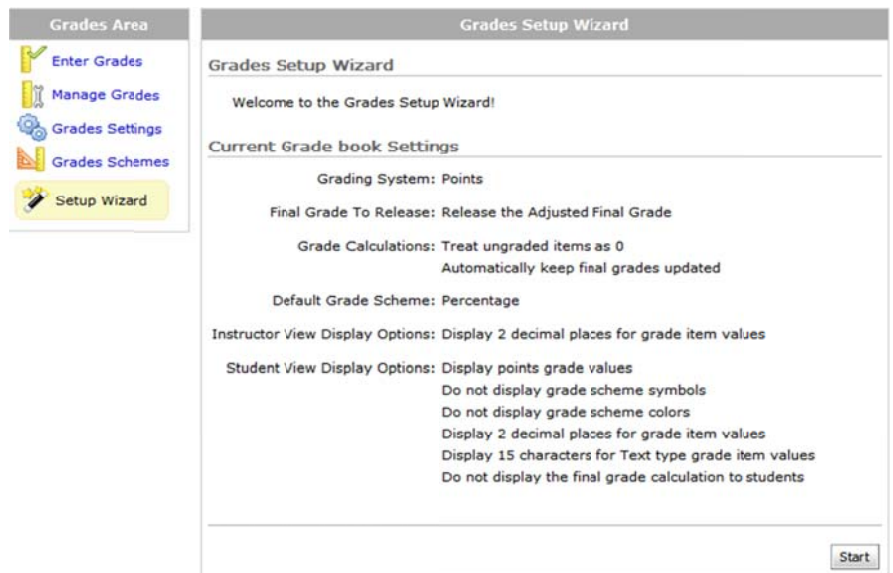
displays by default, click  Setup Wizard in the left tool menu to open it. The Grades Setup Wizard takes you through a list of setup options that you should set before you create grade items and categories. For example, it helps you make decisions about how grades should be calculated and displayed in the grade book.

*Tip: Most of the options in the Grades Setup Wizard have  Help descriptions that explain what they are.*

### Opening page

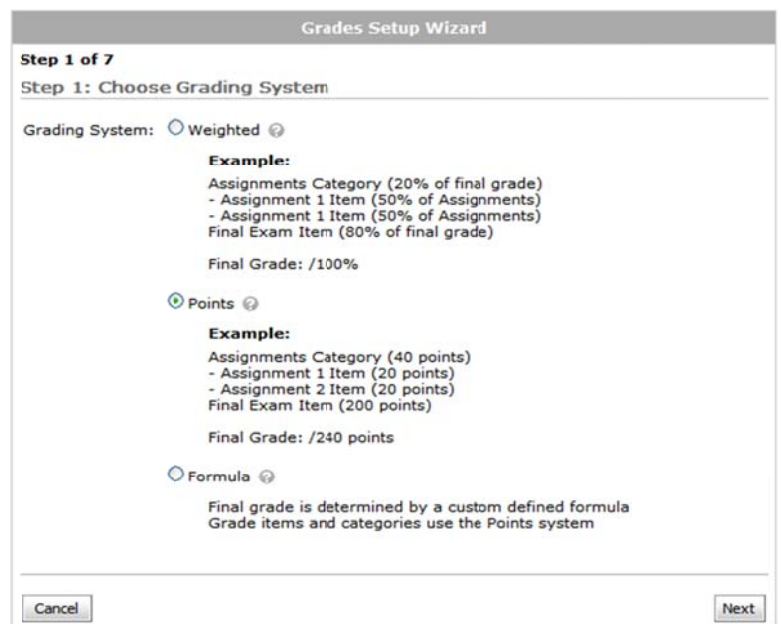
The opening page of the Grades Setup Wizard summarizes the setup options for your grade book. If you have not selected any options yet, the default settings for USD are displayed.

Click Start and follow the 7 step process to set up your grade book.



### Step 1: Choose a Grading System

The grading system determines how the grade items in your gradebook contribute to students' final grades. You may choose to have a Weighted, Points or Formula based grading system.



## Step 2: Final Grade Released

The type of final grade to release determines whether an adjusted final grade is released to students.

The screenshot shows the 'Grades Setup Wizard' at Step 2 of 7, titled 'Step 2: Final Grade Released'. It has two radio button options: 'Calculated Final Grade' (unselected) and 'Adjusted Final Grade' (selected). The 'Adjusted Final Grade' option has a description: 'Allows you to modify or adjust students' grades before releasing them.' There are 'Cancel', 'Back', and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

## Step 3: Grade Calculations

The grade calculations step provides additional choices for calculating students' grades. Specifically, it lets you decide how you want to calculate ungraded items and whether you want to keep students' final grades up to date automatically.

The screenshot shows the 'Grades Setup Wizard' at Step 3 of 7, titled 'Step 3: Grade Calculations'. It has two radio button options for 'Ungraded Items': 'Drop ungraded items' (unselected) and 'Treat ungraded items as 0' (selected). There is also a checked checkbox for 'Auto Update: Automatically keep final grade updated'. There are 'Cancel', 'Back', and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

## Step 4: Choose Default Grade Scheme

Grade schemes define how grades are organized or labeled within a course or for a particular grade item. Grade schemes can be created at the organizational level and made available to courses or at the course level and used within that particular course. The Grades Setup Wizard lets you set the default scheme for your course.

The screenshot shows the 'Grades Setup Wizard' at Step 4 of 7, titled 'Step 4: Choose Default Grade Scheme'. It features a table with columns 'Scheme Name', 'Default Scheme', and 'Preview'. Under 'Organization Schemes', the 'Percentage' scheme is selected as the default. There are 'Cancel', 'Back', and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

Scheme Name	Default Scheme	Preview
Organization Schemes		
Percentage	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	

## Step 5: Instructor View Display Options

This step controls how grade calculation data displays to instructors.

The screenshot shows the 'Grades Setup Wizard' at Step 5 of 7, titled 'Step 5: Instructor View Display Options'. It has a field for 'Decimals Displayed: Number of decimal places to display' with the value '2' entered. There are 'Cancel', 'Back', and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

## Step 6: Student View Display Options

This step controls how grades appear to students. You can set whether they see their grades as straight values, percentages, or scheme levels and whether they can see the calculation method or logic behind their final grade.

The screenshot shows the 'Grades Setup Wizard' at Step 6 of 7, titled 'Step 6: Student View Display Options'. It has several options: 'Grade Details' with checkboxes for 'Points grade' (checked), 'Grade scheme symbol', and 'Grade scheme color'; 'Decimals Displayed: Number of decimal places to display' with the value '2'; 'Characters Displayed: Number of characters to display for Text items' with the value '15'; and 'Final Grade Calculation: Display final grade calculation to students' (unchecked). There are 'Cancel', 'Back', and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

## Step 7: Grade Setup Summary


The final step summarizes the choices you made while setting up your grade book. If you change your mind on any of the choices, click the Back button to return to the step and adjust it.

Clicking Finish on this page completes the setup and takes you to a list of options for continuing work in the Grades tool:


## Grades Settings

Like the Grades Setup Wizard, the Grades Settings pages let you adjust how your grade book is displayed and calculated.


To access the Grades Setting page:

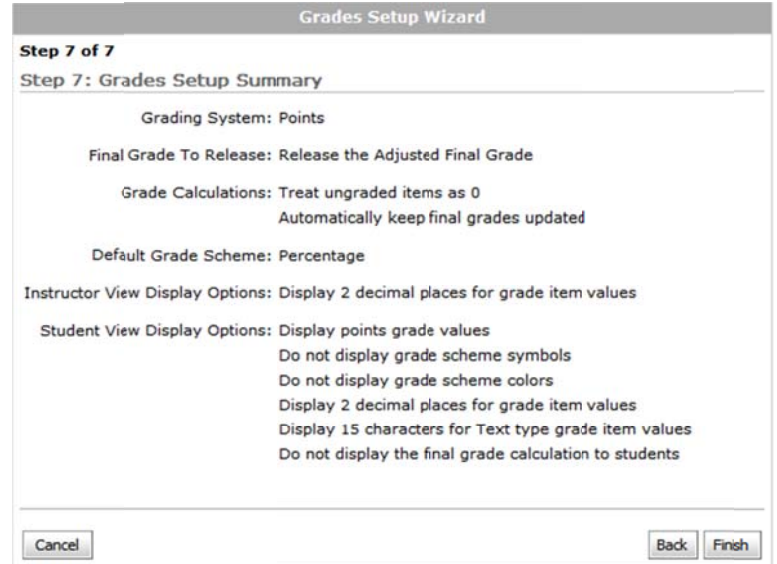
Click the Grades Settings icon  in the left navigation menu on the grades homepage.

## Personal Display Options

The  Personal Display Options page, shown on the right, lets you set what information you want to display in your grade book. Setting these options help you set up a grade book that has the information you need and is easy to navigate and read.

## Organizational Unit Display Options

The  Org Unit Display Options page, shown at right, lets you set what information to display to all instructors and students in a course.



**Grades Setup Wizard**

**Step 7 of 7**

**Step 7: Grades Setup Summary**

Grading System: Points

Final Grade To Release: Release the Adjusted Final Grade

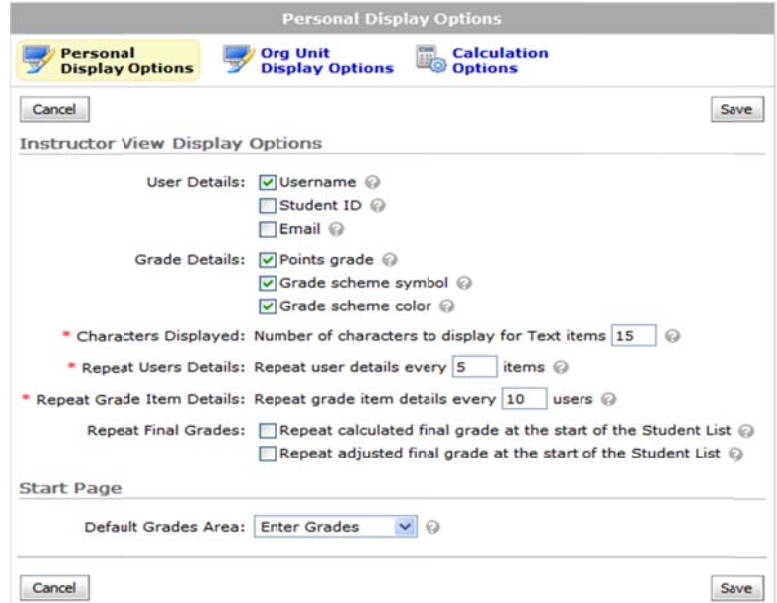
Grade Calculations: Treat ungraded items as 0  
Automatically keep final grades updated

Default Grade Scheme: Percentage

Instructor View Display Options: Display 2 decimal places for grade item values

Student View Display Options: Display points grade values  
Do not display grade scheme symbols  
Do not display grade scheme colors  
Display 2 decimal places for grade item values  
Display 15 characters for Text type grade item values  
Do not display the final grade calculation to students

Cancel Back Finish



**Personal Display Options**

Personal Display Options Org Unit Display Options Calculation Options

Cancel Save

**Instructor View Display Options**

User Details:  Username  Student ID  Email

Grade Details:  Points grade  Grade scheme symbol  Grade scheme color

\* Characters Displayed: Number of characters to display for Text items

\* Repeat Users Details: Repeat user details every  items

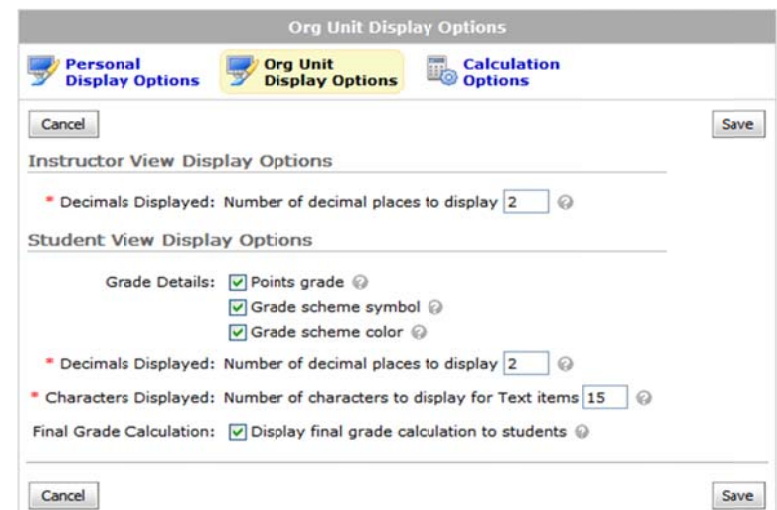
\* Repeat Grade Item Details: Repeat grade item details every  users

Repeat Final Grades:  Repeat calculated final grade at the start of the Student List  Repeat adjusted final grade at the start of the Student List

**Start Page**

Default Grades Area:

Cancel Save



**Org Unit Display Options**

Personal Display Options Org Unit Display Options Calculation Options

Cancel Save

**Instructor View Display Options**

\* Decimals Displayed: Number of decimal places to display

**Student View Display Options**

Grade Details:  Points grade  Grade scheme symbol  Grade scheme color


\* Decimals Displayed: Number of decimal places to display

\* Characters Displayed: Number of characters to display for Text items

Final Grade Calculation:  Display final grade calculation to students

Cancel Save

## Calculation Options

The  Calculations Options page lets you set or change the type of grading system you use to calculate student's grades, whether you want to release the calculated final grade or an adjusted final grade, and how you want to calculate ungraded items.

## Grade Schemes

A grade scheme is a way of organizing student's performances on grade items into levels of achievement.




Examples grade schemes:

Letter: I, F, D, C, B, A, A+

Numeric: 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0

Text: Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, Exceeds Expectations





To access the Grade Schemes area:


1. Click  Grades Schemes on the left  [Add Ranges](#)  tool menu and click  New for a new grade scheme.
2. Define your grade Ranges and click Save.








\* Name:

Short Name:

Ranges

#	* Symbol	* Start %	Color	Assigned Value %	Remove
1	<input type="text" value="F"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<input type="text" value="Red"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	
2	<input type="text" value="D"/>	<input type="text" value="60"/>	<input type="text" value="Yellow"/>	<input type="text" value="60"/>	
3	<input type="text" value="C"/>	<input type="text" value="70"/>	<input type="text" value="Orange"/>	<input type="text" value="70"/>	
4	<input type="text" value="B"/>	<input type="text" value="80"/>	<input type="text" value="Green"/>	<input type="text" value="80"/>	
5	<input type="text" value="A"/>	<input type="text" value="90"/>	<input type="text" value="Blue"/>	<input type="text" value="90"/>	



Click the  Set as default grade scheme icon beside the grade scheme you want to make

Schemes List		
 Schemes List	 New	 Copy
	 Delete	
Scheme Name	Default Scheme	Set As Default
Organization Schemes		
Percentage 		
Course Schemes		
<a href="#">Grade Scheme 1</a>		

## Grade Book Categories and Items

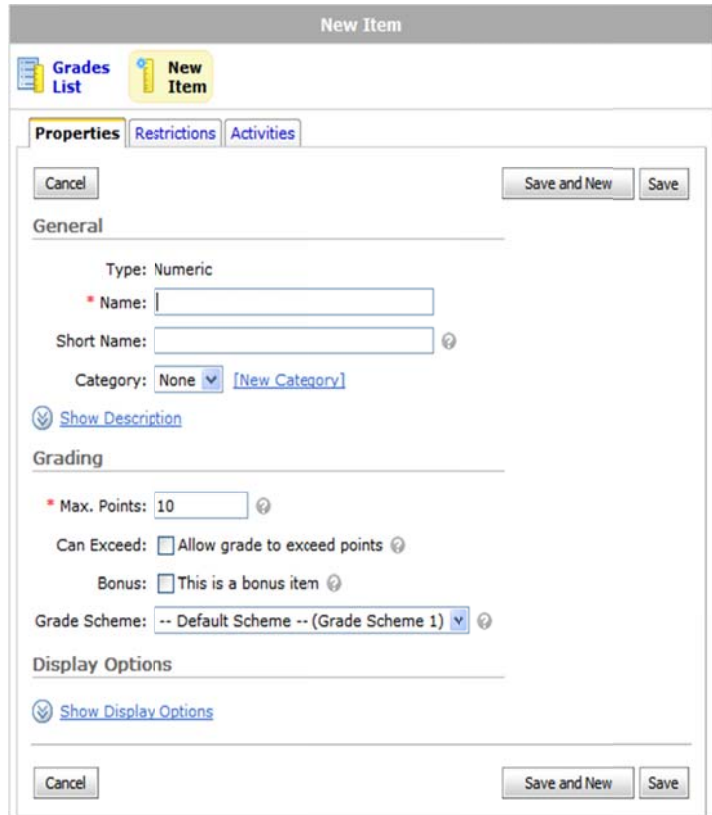
Grade book categories let you organize and group related grade items into sections. For example, you could have separate categories for Assignments, Quizzes, Case Studies, Participation, Discussions, etc. When grade items are grouped together in a category, you can distribute points equally across all grade items and drop the highest or lowest item in a group.

To access the Manage Grades area:


1. Click  Manage Grades on the left tool menu.
2. From the Manage Grades area, click  New Category.

## Grade Items

Grade items represent the individual assignments, quizzes, performance measurements, etc. that you want to grade student on. Each grade item has its own entry in the grade book, which you assign a grade to for each student. Grade items can be tied to other course objects, such as quizzes or discussion forums, or they can exist independently. Grade items can be graded numerically, based on a grade scheme, or with a simple text message, depending on the grade item type chosen.



## Numeric Grade Item

1. From the Manage Grades area, click  New Item.
2. Select Numeric.
3. Enter a Name for the grade item.
4. Enter a Short Name to display in the grade book.
5. If you want the grade item to be associated with a category, select a category from the Category drop-down or click New Category.
6. Enter a Description of the grade item. If you want to make the description available to students, select Allow students to view grade item description.
7. Enter the value you want the item graded out of in the Max. Points field.
8. If you are using the weighted system, enter the Weight you want the grade item to contribute to its category. If the item does not belong to a category, enter the Weight you want it to contribute to the final grade.
9. If you want students' grades to be able to exceed the total value of the item, select either:
  - Allow grade to exceed weight
  - Allow grade to exceed points
10. Select "This is a bonus item" if you want the item to be counted as extra credit.
11. Select a Grade Scheme to associate with the item, if applicable.

12. Click Save or Save and New.

## Quizzes, Discussions and Dropbox Grade Items

You can associate quizzes, dropbox folders, and discussion forums and topics with grade items.

When creating a new quiz, new discussion topic or new dropbox folder there is an option to create a New Grade Item or associate the new quiz, discussion topic or dropbox folder with a previously created Grade Item.

Quizzes – On the Properties tab

Training Quiz - Edit Quiz

Manage Quizzes Question Library Course Statistics

Quiz List Edit Quiz Grade Quiz Reports Quiz Stats Preview

Properties Restrictions Attempts Activities Submission Views Reports Setup Layout/Questions

Save Quiz

General

Name: Training Quiz

Category: no category [add category]

Grade Item: None [add grade item]

Auto Export to Grades:  allow automatic export to grades

Automatic Grade:  allow attempt to be set as graded immediately upon completion

Discussion Topic – On the Assessment tab

Edit Topic - What about the author?

Forums & Topics List Edit Topic Assess Topic Topic Statistics

Properties saved successfully (Jan 4, 2008 2:00 PM)

Properties Restrictions Assessment Activities

Cancel Save

Assessment

Grade Item: -- Choose a grade item -- [New Grade Item]

Score Out of: [ ]

Messages:  Assess each message and automatically calculate the topic score

Calculation: -- Select a calculation method --

Include unassessed messages in the calculated score as zero

Cancel Save

Dropbox- On the Properties Tab.

Edit Folder - Article Review 1

Folder List Edit Folder Folder Submissions

Properties Restrictions Activities

Folder Properties

Name: Article Review 1

Folder Type: Individual submission folder

Category: No Category [New Category]

Grade Item: Article Review 1 [New Grade Item]

Out Of: 20

## Enter Grades

The Enter Grades area is where you enter, import, and export grades from your students. In this area you see your grade book organized by student.

## Student List View

From the Student List you can grade students by user, item, category, or final grade. You can also switch between the standard view of the grade book and a spreadsheet view that allows you to enter grades directly into the Student List.

First Name ▲, Last Name	Tests				Participation	Case Study	Consent Form	Final Grades
	T1	T2	T3	Subtotal				
<input type="checkbox"/> Carl, Parker	40 / 50	68 / 100	38 / 50	29.2 / 40, 73%	Pass	Pass	attending	71.44 / 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Daniella, Fleur	46 / 50	83 / 100	42 / 50	34.2 / 40, 85.5%	Pass	Pass	not attending	/
<input type="checkbox"/> Erin, Roth	33 / 50	70 / 100	34 / 50	27.4 / 40, 68.5%	Pass	Pass	not attending	76 / 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Frank, Catcher	39 / 50	86 / 100	37 / 50	32.4 / 40, 81%	Merit	Fail	attending	84.99 / 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Harold, McLellan	34 / 50	64 / 100	31 / 50	25.8 / 40, 64.5%	Pass	Pass	not attending	62 / 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Hillary, Terrell	30 / 50	65 / 100	32 / 50	25.4 / 40, 63.5%	Merit	Fail	attending	75 / 100

## Spreadsheet View

From the Student List page, click the  Switch to Spreadsheet View action menu option.

1. Enter grades in the input fields in the Student List.
2. Click Save.

To enter grades by student – click on the name of the student from the list.


To enter grades by grade item – click the  Enter Grades icon next to the grade item.

To enter grades for items associated with the Quizzes, Dropbox or Discussions tool – You can enter or update a grade from either the Grades tool or the tool the item is associated with. However, changes made in the Grades tool are not updated in the associated tool.

## Export Grades

You can export grade items, including final grades, to a CSV (comma delimited) file for use in other applications or offline grading. If you plan to import grades back into the learning environment make sure you do not change the structure of the file, although you can add new grade items.

To export grade items

1. From the Student List page, click  Export Grades.
2. Select the Key Field you want to use to identify students.
3. Select the Grade Values and Student Details you want to export.
4. Select the Grade Items you want to export.
5. Click Export to CSV.


- Use your browser's save dialog to save the file to the appropriate location.

## Calculate Final Grades

The Final Grades page lists the calculated final grade for each student in your grade book. It is up to you to ensure that these grades are accurate. Final grades may be inaccurate if:

- You did not select the "Automatically Keep Final Grades Updated" option when setting up your grade book.
- "Treat Ungraded Items as Zero" is checked and items exist in the Gradebook that have not yet occurred.
- "Treat Ungraded Items as Zero" is not checked and users missing assignments do not have zeros entered in them.

To access the Final Grades page:

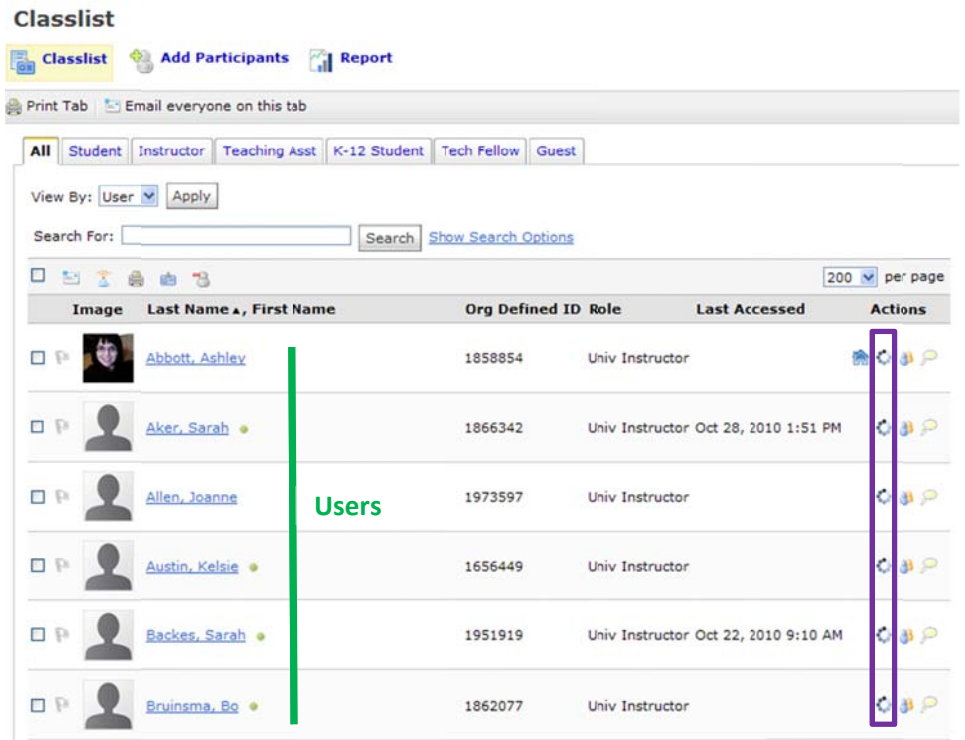
- Click the  Enter Grades icon for Final Grades on the Student list or Grades List.

## Classlist

Use the Classlist tool to view and manage information about your class participants. In the Classlist you can view a list of students and other participants like teaching assistants or technology fellows, student profiles and student progress.

The Classlist allows you to view:

- Enrolled Users
- User Profiles
- User Homepage
- User Progress
- Email addresses



**Classlist**

Classlist Add Participants Report

Print Tab Email everyone on this tab

All Student Instructor Teaching Asst K-12 Student Tech Fellow Guest

View By: User Apply

Search For: Search Show Search Options

200 per page

Image	Last Name, First Name	Org Defined ID	Role	Last Accessed	Actions
	Abbott, Ashley	1858854	Univ Instructor		
	Aker, Sarah	1866342	Univ Instructor	Oct 28, 2010 1:51 PM	
	Allen, Joanne	1973597	Univ Instructor		
	Austin, Kelsie	1656449	Univ Instructor		
	Backes, Sarah	1951919	Univ Instructor	Oct 22, 2010 9:10 AM	
	Bruinsma, Bo	1862077	Univ Instructor		

Users

User Progress

To access the Classlist, tool click on the Classlist link on the navigation bar.

Users who are currently online appear with a green dot to the left of their user name in the Classlist.

## Email a participant from the Classlist

To send an email to someone in the Classlist tool:

1. Select an individual user by clicking on their name
2. To send an email to multiple participants:
  - Select individual users by checking the box next to the name, and then use the e-mail button.
  - Select a tab, then select e-mail all users in tab.
3. To email all members of a group, select the Groups tab and click the name of the group.

The main email page will open with the user's email address in the "To" field.

## View User Progress

This tool allows you to view the progress of a single user. This page can be useful in a variety of different ways. You may use this page to show a student their grade progress in an individual conference. You may view all of their discussion posts together, or all of their dropbox submissions together, or access information regarding the amount of time that students have spent viewing content.

1. Click on the View Progress icon beside a user's name to display their progress page, as shown on right.
2. Under progress selection, use the "Change" button to view different progress areas. You may also change the student and course in this area.

**User Progress**

User View

Email User Print

**Progress Selection**

Course: CTL Demo Course [Select different course]

User: Test Student (USD) [Select different user]

Tool: Dropbox

**User Details**

Hide User Details

Name: Test Student (USD)  
Role: Univ Student  
Org Defined ID: 9999900  
Email: oadmin@usd.edu  
Link to Course: [Go to Course](#)

**Dropbox Summary**

Summary Items	Test Student (USD)
# Folders With Submissions	-
# Folders Without Submissions	-
Total # of Folders	0

**Dropbox Details**

No dropbox items available

## Classlist report

This feature allows you to see a summary of enrolled and withdrawn users from your course.

1. Click on the Classlist Report link on the top of your Classlist. Summary information will be displayed about currently enrolled users.
2. Withdrawn users are displayed underneath the summary of current users. By clicking on the Grades icon you will see the user's grades at the time of withdrawal.

## Sorting and Searching

### Sorting

The Classlist has tabbed viewing that allows you to view groups of similar individuals. The first tab displays everyone associated with the course by default. Students are displayed in another tab and instructors, graduate teaching assistants, tech fellows, K-12 students and guest each have an individual tab.

Once groups are created in the Classlist, a Groups tab appears that contains the enrollments within the groups. On this tab, you will be able to show all group types or show a specific type. You will learn how to create groups in the third tutorial.

### Searching

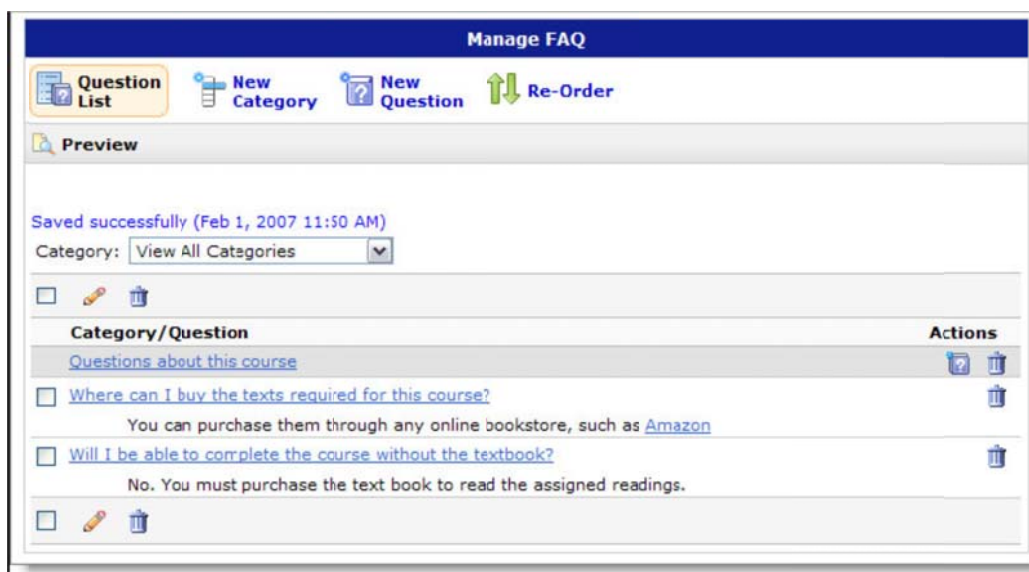
Type a search string into the Search for field. Click the Search button and it will return the search results.

*Note: Once you have run a search, the Classlist page will display only the search results until you clear the Search field. For example, if you enter a user's name in the Search field, only that user will display in your Classlist page until you clear the Search field. Refreshing the page or logging out of the browser will not clear the search field.*


## Frequently Asked Questions

The FAQ, Frequently Asked Questions, tool enables you to provide answers to common questions that users might have when using the Learning Environment platform or accessing a course. These questions must be organized into categories. Some general categories might include Login Information, General Information, Assignment FAQs, etc.


To access the FAQ tool Click FAQ in the lower right navigation bar.




## Creating an FAQ category

1. On the Manage FAQ page, click  New Category in the top tool menu.
2. On the New FAQ Category page, type the name of the new category in the Name field. For example, the category. Research Methods. would logically contain FAQs about methods of research. Tip A good category name allows visitors to understand the general topic of that category.
3. Type an optional Description for the category, to help with identifying what the category should contain.
4. Click Save to save the category or Save and New to save it and create another one.

## Creating a question

1. On the Manage FAQ page, click  New Question on the top tool menu.
2. On the New Question page, select a category for the question in the Category drop-down list. Each question must belong to a category. Tip To add a new category, click the New Category link. In the New FAQ Category pop-up, type a Name and Description for the new category and click Save.
3. Type the Question text.
4. Type the Answer to the question.
5. Click Save to save the new question or Save and New to save it and create another one.

## Previewing FAQs as students would see them

On the Manage FAQ page click the  Preview icon. To view the questions in a specific category, select the required category from the Category drop-down list.

## Editing an FAQ category

1. On the Manage FAQ page, click the name of the FAQ category.
2. On the Edit FAQ Category page, make the required changes and click Save.


## Editing a question

1. On the Manage FAQ page, click the name of the question.
2. On the Edit Question page, make the required changes and click Save.

*Tip: To change the question's category, select the desired category from the Category drop-down list.*

To edit multiple questions:

1. On the Manage FAQ page, select the checkboxes next to all the questions.


2. Click the  Edit Multiple Questions icon at the top or bottom of the Category/Question list.
3. On the Edit Multiple Questions page, make the required changes to each of the questions and click Save.

## Deleting an FAQ category


1. On the Manage FAQ page, click the Delete icon beside the name of the FAQ category that you want to delete.
2. Click OK in the confirmation message.

*Note: Deleting an FAQ category also deletes all the questions in that category.*


## Deleting a question

On the Manage FAQ page, click the  Delete icon beside the name of the question that you want to delete.


To delete multiple questions:

1. On the Manage FAQ page, select the checkboxes next to the questions that you want to delete.
2. Click the  Delete Multiple Questions icon at the top or bottom of the Category/Question list.

## Re-ordering questions or categories

1. On the Manage FAQ page, click  Re-Order on the top tool menu.
2. On the Re-Order page, change the values in the Sort Order field for the required questions or FAQ categories and click Save.

## Course statistics and feedback

Students can submit feedback through the  Feedback icon located on the action bar in the content viewer. They can rate the topics on a five-star rating scale and leave comments. Comments may or




may not be anonymous.

## View Course Statistics

Course statistics display the topics with the number of unique visitors and the average time spent by each visitor. A student who visits multiple times is only counted once.

To view course statistics:

1. Click Content in the lower right Navigation bar.
2. Click  Reports in the left tool menu.

## View Detailed Statistics


On the Statistics page, click the number in the Users Visited column for a topic to see the students who have visited the topic.

*Note: If the user times out or is visiting the topic when you click through to the details the time spent is not calculated.*

## Export Course Statistics

You can export statistics to a CSV file for use in a spreadsheet like Excel or database. The process for exporting any statistical information from D2L to a CSV file is the same.

To export course statistics:

1. On the Statistics page, click  Export Statistics on the action bar.
2. Click Save and select a location to save the CSV file, or click Open the to work with the file immediately.

## Reset Course Statistics

You can delete course statistics for the whole course.

To reset course statistics, click  Reset Statistics on the action bar, on the Statistics page.



## View Course Feedback

Feedback shows the rating and comments given by students for the course content.

Comments can show the student's name or be anonymous if the student chooses. If students leave their name with the feedback, you can contact them by email. After you review the feedback you can export or reset it.

To view course feedback:

1. Click Content on the navbar.

2. Click  Reports in the left tool menu.
3. Click  Feedback in the top tool menu.

## View Detailed Course Feedback

You can see ratings and comments from individual users.

To view detailed course feedback, click the number in the Ratings column for a topic, on the Feedback page.

## Appendix: Online Feedback Management Strategies

### Introduction

What follows are various communication and feedback strategies for online courses that are commonly used at USD or have been recommended by various distance education experts during the faculty development series offered via the Center for Teaching & Learning. Some will work better in certain scenarios than others, so the following should be taken into consideration when selecting the best strategy or strategies for your course:

#### **The number of students enrolled into your course.**

Will you be teaching just a few students or a large-enrollment course (20, 30, 40 or more students)? This factor alone will have the most impact on what strategies you can/should use.

#### **The type of course (i.e. qualitative vs. quantitative).**

Qualitative courses often rely far more heavily on communications tools for assessment than quantitative courses, which, in turn, will determine the type of feedback mechanisms used to communicate with students.

#### **The type of students.**

Will your audience be largely professionals, parents and/or part-time students? Will you be teaching first-year or graduate students? Depending on your audience you may need to tailor your communication strategies to better accommodate your students' schedules.

**An important note:** whatever strategies are used, it is important to clearly articulate to students which methods will be used. As opposed to face-to-face (i.e. synchronous course) courses, you will find that online students will want more feedback. Some may expect to receive daily feedback, which, if you are teaching a large-enrollment course, may not be possible. That being the case, it is essential to be as explicit as possible with your students—either in your welcome letter or syllabus—regarding the type and frequency of feedback they should expect.

### Online Communication/Feedback Tools

Before we discuss strategies and best practices, it is good to know what tools are available for communication and feedback. These tools are divided into two specific categories: asynchronous (communication between two or more people not happening at the same time, such as email) and

synchronous (communication between two or more people happening at the same time, such as a conference call).

### ASYNCHRONOUS TOOLS:

Tool	Description
<b>Discussions</b>	Discussions are the most commonly-used communication tool in online courses. With the Discussions tool you can encourage peer interaction and conversations in your course. Participants in discussions interact with one another by posting messages to discussion topics and reading and replying to messages posted by others. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Course Mail &amp; External Email</b>	Course mail and external email are the most widely-used mechanisms for communication in an online course; however, each has their advantages and disadvantages. In essence, course mail functions just like email, but all messages are specific to the course.  (see also “FAQs” in General Strategies and Course Mail vs. Email)
<b>Dropbox</b>	The Assignment Dropbox, or just Dropbox, is primarily an assessment tool in D2L; however, it also provides feedback mechanism to students such as a comments field, rubrics, etc.
<b>News</b>	The News tool is an extremely powerful way to communicate updates, changes and new information to your course participants quickly and effectively. The News tool is typically located in the middle of the course home page. Since this is the first page that the user will see when they enter the course, the News tool is a great way to display pertinent information for your course. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Schedule</b>	The Schedule is an important tool for displaying course-related events to your participants. Users will be able to view course events that you post through the Schedule tool on the course home page. The Schedule is an excellent location to post important course-related events such as project due dates, virtual office hours, exam and test information, etc. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Surveys</b>	Surveys can be administered online, are relatively easy to create and can be administered anonymously. This makes them a good candidate for specific feedback on course content, student performance, etc.

<sup>1</sup> From: *Teaching with Desire2Learn v8.2*. Page 229.

<sup>2</sup> From: *Teaching with Desire2Learn v8.2*. Page 224.

<sup>3</sup> From: *Teaching with Desire2Learn v8.2*. Page 221.

## SYNCHRONOUS TOOLS:

Tool	Description
<b>Chat</b>	<p>The Chat tool allows for synchronous communication via D2L; however, it is very simple and can be difficult to manage with a large number of participants. Additionally, if some students are not very fast typists—or if they have a disability that makes typing difficult—they will be disadvantaged compared to faster typists when it comes to responding to questions.</p> <p>That said, the Chat tool is good for quick, synchronous communications, but for a large group of participants, hosting office hours, or collaborative work, Elluminate may be a better option.</p>
<b>Elluminate</b>	<p>USD's newest online tool, Elluminate, is a powerful synchronous communication tool. Using Elluminate, an instructor can create annotated lectures for students, receive instant student feedback, communicate via chat, streaming audio and/or streaming video, and can share applications with students.</p> <p>One major benefit of Elluminate is that sessions can be recorded and played back later. This is ideal for online courses, which are asynchronous in nature, as students who cannot participate in live sessions can watch when they have time.</p> <p>For more information about Elluminate, please contact the Center for Teaching &amp; Learning.</p>
<b>Pager Tool</b>	<p>The pager is an online messaging tool that you can use to send text messages directly to other users (students, colleagues) who are currently logged into [D2L]. This tool allows course participants to pose questions on a one-to-one basis to fellow users and instructors. The pager is an excellent, just-in-time communication tool that identifies users who are online and gives users the ability to communicate efficiently from anywhere within their course.<sup>4</sup></p>

## General Strategies

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<sup>4</sup> From: *Teaching with Desire2Learn v8.2*. Page 227.

Given the considerations specified in the introduction, as well as the tools outlined above, here are some general strategies for providing feedback to your students:

If you are teaching courses consisting primarily of professionals, part-time students and/or parents, they will most likely only participate in the course at night or during the weekends. Your feedback strategies—and, in fact, your entire course structure—will need to accommodate this. Set up virtual office hours (using Elluminate, Chat, or even just being online to immediately respond to discussion postings or email) during these times and make sure your assessment due dates accommodate this timeframe as well.

With large-enrollment courses, regular, individual feedback may not be possible, as you could end up spending a significant amount of time responding to students as opposed to teaching the course. In this case, it is best to select a strategy that will help divide the students into groups and provide mechanisms for structured feedback. (See **Discussions for Large-enrollment Courses** for more details.)

Every couple of weeks or so, query your students as to how things are going with the class in general. Some students wait until they fill out their evaluations to vent any frustrations or share any problems they had, simply because they were never asked during the course. Your students will appreciate the opportunity to give you feedback, it will not consume much of your time, and you can get ideas on how to improve the class.

Another effective strategy for feedback is the use of a frequently asked questions (FAQs) discussion topic where students can post questions about the course or content. Because it is likely that if one student has a question, another will have the same question, this can help limit the amount of email to which you will need to respond. Additionally, many faculty have reported that students answer each others' questions, especially in regard to technical or "how to" questions.

Peer review can be a useful way to extend the amount of feedback to students without over-extending yourself. There are many different types of peer review including, but not limited to: A forum where students can bounce paper topics off of each other.

A process through which they read and critique each other's assessments.

Providing a period, before an assessment is due, in which students can submit assessments to you for ungraded feedback.

## Specific Strategies

### **COURSE MAIL VS. EMAIL**

When using email as a communications tool, it is best to only use course mail for the following reasons:

Course mail can be filed in folders, just like your external email.

Because the course mail is internal to your course, you do not need to worry about any junk mail, nor do you need to worry about overly-aggressive junk mail filters accidentally deleting your students' email.

Again, because course mail is internal to your course, you need not worry about a student's email being misrouted or lost via the Internet. Course mail messages are also delivered immediately, so there will be no time delay in receiving a student's messages.

D2L has a confirmation tracking feature to see when recipients read your message.

Course mail provides a self-contained course record, as all course-related mail is in one location and does not get mixed up with non-course-related email.

Additionally, another effective strategy is to have students set up a mail forward which will send a copy of any course mail they receive to their preferred-external-email address. They cannot respond to course email outside of D2L, but it will at least let them know that they have new email.

### **DISCUSSIONS AS ASSESSMENTS**

If you would like to use discussion participation as an assessment, there are a few tools and strategies that can help with this. First, D2L can be used to actually grade an individual student's participation in a topic. This can be extremely helpful in determining their performance as you can single out that student and see what they have posted and in what context they posted.

In terms of strategies for discussions, one common way to facilitate communication is to post a message as a lead off at the beginning of the topic. You can then require your students to respond to your original posting and two other students' responses. More often than not, they will not stop there, so this is a good way to create active and engaging discussions.

As for an instructor's role in discussions, there are many different opinions on this matter, and which role you adopt will likely be determined by the content of the course. Some instructors view themselves as the content expert, so they will lead discussions and actively participate therein—akin to a lecture, where the instructor leads and the students posit questions. This is quite common in undergraduate courses.

Other instructors feel the discussions are there for the students, so they act more as a moderator—guiding the discussions only when they go off course. This is more common in graduate-level courses.

**An important note:** if you want to use discussions as assessments, it is important to regularly provide feedback on how students are doing. If a student is only assessed once on how he or she is performing on the discussions, he/she will not have an opportunity to improve. That said, it may be helpful to assess students after every topic, module or every few weeks, depending on how the course is structured. (See also Rubrics.)

### **DISCUSSIONS FOR LARGE-ENROLLMENT COURSES**

If discussions are your only assessment in a large-enrollment course, then providing individual feedback on students' postings may be possible; however, for those courses that use discussions as only part of their assessment, without some sort of structure you may find yourself overwhelmed. To help avoid this, below are some strategies for dealing with discussions in large-enrollment courses.

One effective way to use discussions with a large number of students is to use discussion groups. This can be done in various ways, but it is best to limit the number of group to four to six, just to keep management of the groups reasonable; remember, each group you add will require additional work.

The simplest method of using groups in discussions is to create a forum in D2L for each module in your course. Then create a topic under each module's forum for every group and then assign your students to a specific group. You should instruct your students to only post in their group's topic. The benefit of using this method is that it is relatively easy to set up and it still allows students to read what is going on in the other groups.

If you would prefer that your groups do not have access to each others' topics, then you can use the group management tools inside of D2L to limit access. Please refer to the internal D2L documentation on how to do this.

Once you have set up the groups and you are ready to post a discussion topic, D2L allows you to do so to multiple topics at once, so you need only compose your question or discussion lead-off once and post it to all of the groups at the same time. The students can then respond to your posting, as well as to each others' postings.

When you are reviewing the discussions, try and limit your feedback to the group as a whole, rather than to individuals. Obviously, if someone is completely off track, you will want to contact them individually and, conversely, if someone is doing very well, you will want to let them know, but if you limit feedback to the groups and to a few individuals, you will significantly cut back on the number of postings you would have needed to do if everyone was posting in the same topic. Additionally, your students will not need to read nearly as many postings and it will be easier for them to navigate the discussions as they will only see a fraction of the courses' postings.

One additional step that many students find helpful would be to create a "Summary" topic for each module, in addition to your group topics. In this topic, you would post a summary of all discussions, themes, etc. happening in the groups into one thread for your students to review. This is helpful in many ways: it will show the perspectives of other groups, it will provide a quick way for students to assess their group's discussions in comparison to others', it will provide a convenient way for students to quickly reference an entire set of discussions in preparation for an assessment, etc.

Here is a rough outline of how this may appear in D2L:



**Figure 1: Example D2L Group Discussion Layout**

## Lectures

There are many different ways of facilitating lectures in an online environment. Below is a list of some of the ways to do so:

<b>Illuminate</b>	<p>Because Illuminate sessions can be recorded, an instructor can begin a session, load up their PowerPoint slides and annotate their lecture in front of whatever students can attend the live session. At the conclusion of the session, the instructor will be sent an email with a link to the recorded session, which can be sent to those students who could not attend the live session. Even students who were present can review the recordings as a study aid.</p>
	<p>In addition to running a live session, an instructor can enter a session by themselves, load their PowerPoint slides, hit record and run through their lecture. Just like in the scenario above, they will receive a link to the recording, which they can distribute to all of their students, who can view the session when they have time.</p>
<b>Narrated PowerPoint Slides</b>	<p>PowerPoint has the ability to record speech directly into its slides. An instructor can annotate their slides and then upload the PowerPoint file to their course for the students to access.</p>
	<p>The only caveat to this is that it can produce very large files,</p>

depending on the length of the lecture, which may be difficult for students to download. Additionally, not every student has access to PowerPoint.

### **Webcasts (e.g. Podcasts)**

Another simple method of recording lectures is to use a voice record or a computer with a sound recorder like Audacity (<http://audacity.sf.net/>), to record a lecture. You can then upload the file into D2L and/or have ITS stream the file to your students.

In general, you should record lectures as MP3s, which is the most common audio format, using a low sampling rate in order to keep the files smaller.

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If you have any questions about these, please contact the Center for Teaching & Learning.

### **PEER EVALUATION**

Having students evaluate each other at the conclusion of a group assessment is another useful feedback tool, not only to the students, but also to the instructor. Peer evaluation can take many forms, from simply asking each student in the group to evaluate the other participants by filling out a questionnaire, assigning a grade to their peers, etc.; however, these may not present a true assessment of each students' participation due a number of reasons, not limited to:

Students may be nervous to give each other an honest assessment, for fear of reprisal from their peers.

Students may feel that the once a large project is complete, they do not want to deal with it anymore, so just fill out assessments as quickly as possible.

Some students may just give everyone the same grade, just to make things easier.

In order to address some of these issues, R. A. DeFusco, G.V. Karels and T. S. Zorn developed the following strategy as published in the fall 1989 edition of the *Journal of Financial Education*<sup>5</sup>:

Each student is given 100 points to distribute to all their peers in the group assessment with the following rules:

The student cannot award any points to him/herself.

The student must distribute the points objectively based on his/her peers' performance.

The student must distribute all 100 points.

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<sup>5</sup> "Agency Theory: An Application to Grading Group Projects," R. A. DeFusco, G. V. Karels and T. S. Zorn, *Journal of Financial Education*, Fall 1989.

No single student can receive more than 100 total points. If, through the evaluation process, they do receive more than 100, the instructor will simply ignore the extra points.

Once the points have been assigned, the instructor adds up all of the points for each student, which will serve as each student's share of the group's grade for the assessment. For the examples below, assume the group received a 90% on their assessment:

If a student received 100 points or more, then their individual grade for the assessment will be equal to the group's grade, which in this example is a 90%. Remember: as stated in rule four, no student can receive more than 100% of the grade, so any extra points are ignored.

If a student received less than 100 points from their peers, then the total number of points becomes a multiplier. For example, if one student received 95 points, then their grade would be as follows:

Percentage of peer evaluation points received	95%
Percentage received on group assessment	90%
<b>INDIVIDUAL GRADE FOR ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>85.5%</b>

According to Karels, instructors “do need to talk about this voting scheme at the beginning of the semester so students understand how it will work. [Students] should see it is in their best interest to do their fair share. Doing too little penalizes them. Doing too much does not earn them any extra.”

## **RUBRICS**

Rubrics can be a quick and effective way to provide your student with more feedback than just a traditional letter or numeric grade. Using a rubric, you can articulate exactly what you are expecting from them and how they will be graded based on their performance.

Oftentimes, when grading assessments, rubrics will write themselves. That being the case, developing a formal rubric can save time in grading, yet provide clarity in terms of the grades students receive. Furthermore, rubrics help provide a more-uniformed approach in setting expectations and providing feedback. See below for an example discussion participation rubric:

## DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION RUBRIC<sup>6</sup>

	A+	A	B	C	D	F
INTERACTION	Actively supports, engages and listens to peers (on-going)	Actively supports, engages and listens to peers (on-going)	Makes a sincere effort to interact with peers (on-going)	Limited interaction with peers	Virtually no interaction with peers	No interaction with peers
PREPAREDNESS	Arrives fully prepared at every session	Arrives fully prepared at almost every session	Arrives mostly, if not fully, prepared (on-going)	Preparation is inconsistent	Rarely prepared	Never prepared
PARTICIPATION	Plays an active role in discussions (on-going)	Plays an active role in discussions (on-going)	Participates constructively in discussions (on-going)	When prepared, participates constructively in discussions	Rarely participates	Never participates
COMPREHENSION	Comments advance the level and depth of the dialogue (consistently)	Comments occasionally advance the level and depth of the dialogue	Makes relevant comments based on the assigned material (on-going)	When prepared, makes relevant comments based on the assigned material	Demonstrates a noticeable lack of interest in the material (on occasion)	Demonstrates a noticeable lack of interest in the material (on-going)
GROUP DYNAMIC	Group dynamic and level of discussion are consistently better because of the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are often better because of the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are occasionally better (never worse) because of the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are not affected by the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are harmed by the student's presence	Group dynamic and level of discussion are significantly harmed by the student's presence

<sup>6</sup> Developed by Adam Chapnick, University of Toronto.  
<http://www.uu.edu/centers/faculty/resources/article.cfm?ArticleID=469>. Accessed 1/14/2007. Minor updates by Eric James Mosterd.