



Working in the D2L Grade Book

Grades Area

Enter Grades

Manage Grades

Grades Settings

Grades Schemes

Setup Wizard

Instructions

The Grades tool is used to create grade items and schemes for measuring users' performance; record grades; and share a grade book and statistics with users.

Use this page to view, create, edit, and delete grade items and categories.

Grades List

New Item

New Category

Reorder

Delete

	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Major	Text	-	-	-	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Athlete?	Text	-	-	-	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assignments				10	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 01 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 02 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 03 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 04 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 05 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 06 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 07 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 08 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 09 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 10 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 11 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 12 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 13 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 14 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox	100	6.7	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quizzes				20	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Colonial Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes	100	25	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colonial Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes	100	25	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revolutionary War Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes	100	25	































































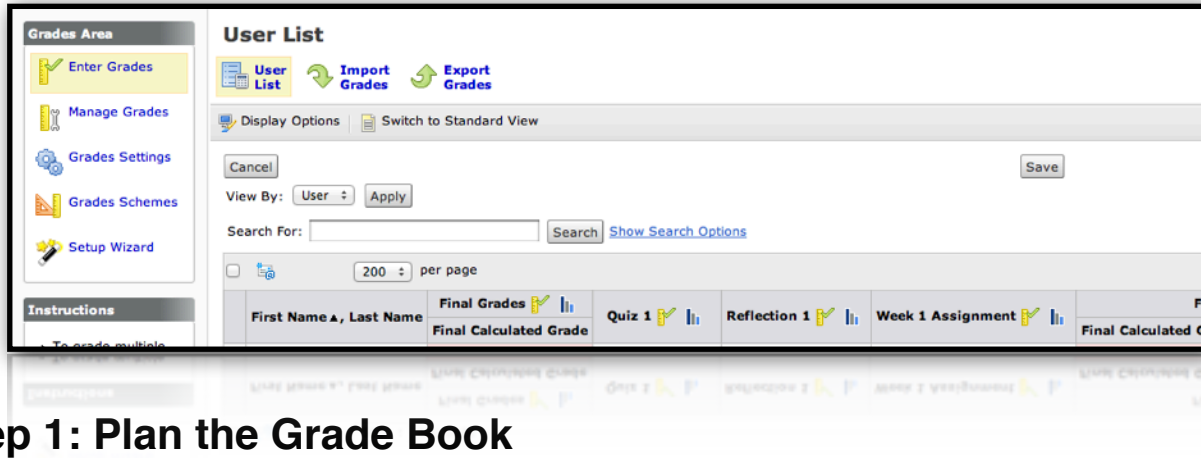
	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight	Actions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Major 	Text	-	-	-	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Athlete? 	Text	-	-	-	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assignments				10	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 01 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 02 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 03 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 04 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 05 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 06 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 07 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 08 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 09 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 10 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 11 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 12 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 13 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 14 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15 Assignment	Numeric	Dropbox 	100	6.7	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quizzes				20	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-Colonial Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes 	100	25	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colonial Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes 	100	25	 
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revolutionary War Quiz	Numeric	Quizzes 	100	25	 

Table of Contents

Desire2Learn Grade Book Concepts	1
Examples of Grading Systems.....	2
Establishing a Grade Scheme	3
Importing and Exporting Grade Items	4
The Grades Setup Wizard	5
Creating a New Category.....	7
Creating a New Grade Item.....	8
Communicating with At-Risk Students	11

Desire2Learn Grade Book Concepts



Step 1: Plan the Grade Book

Planning is the most crucial step in working with an online grade book. Before you can use the Grades tool you have to set up a grade book, and before setting up a grade book there are certain questions you need to answer:

- What categories of grades do you have?
- What grade items will make up these categories?
- How much will each grade category be worth? Each item inside the category?
- How will you calculate final grades?

Step 2: Determine a Grading System

Determining a grading system is the first action step in establishing up your grade book. Grading systems determine how grade items in your grade book contribute to students' final grades. There are three grading system options: a weighted system, a points system, or a formula system.

- The **Weighted System** allows grade categories to represent some percentage of a final grade.
- The **Points System** allows grades items to represent an amount of points that are totaled for a final grade.
- The **Formula System** allows the instructor to develop a custom formula to calculate the final grade. The formula system is based on the points system, but allows you to set conditions around grade items to determine the final grade.

WEIGHTED SYSTEM EXAMPLE

Assignments Category (20% of final grade)
- Assignment 1 Item (50% of Assignments)
- Assignment 2 Item (50% of Assignments)
Final Exam Item (80% of final grade)

Final Grade: ____ / 100%

POINTS SYSTEM EXAMPLE

Assignments Category (40 points)
- Assignment 1 Item (20 points)
- Assignment 2 Item (20 points)
Final Exam Item (200 points)

Final Grade: ____ / 240 points

Step 3: Establish a Grading Scheme

A grade scheme is a way of organizing users' performances on grade items into levels of achievement. A grade scheme can include any number of achievement levels. Each achievement level has its own range of acceptable grades and a symbol, such as a numeric value, letter, or text description, to represent it. You can create your own grade schemes or use schemes set up by your organization.

GRADE SCHEME	EXAMPLE
Letter	F, D, C, B, A, A+
Numeric	2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0
Text	Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, Exceeds Expectations

Examples of Grading Systems

Weighted Grade System

In a Weighted System a grade category represents a certain percentage of the final grade. The points you assign to an individual grade item contribute to the category of which they belong. 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 incomplete until *all* items in the category are graded.

A+	97—100
A	93—96
A-	90—92
B+	87—89
B	83—86
B-	80—82
C+	77—79
C	73—76
C-	70—72
D+	67—69
D	63—66
D-	60—62
F	0—59

Assignments10% of Final Grade

One assignment is due each week. Each assignment will be worth 100 points. I will drop the 3 lowest scores.

Quizzes.....20% of Final Grade

Pre-Colonial Quiz	100 points (25% of Quiz grade)
Pre-Colonial Reflection	5 point bonus (1.25% weighted bonus)
Colonial Quiz	100 points (25% of Quiz grade)
Colonial Reflections	5 point bonus (1.25% weighted bonus)
Revolutionary War Quiz	100 points (25% of Quiz grade)
Revolutionary War Reflections	5 point bonus (1.25% weighted bonus)
Early National Quiz	100 points (25% of Quiz grade)
Early National Reflections	5 point bonus (1.25% weighted bonus)

Research30% of Final Grade

Rough Draft	5 point bonus (5% weighted bonus)
Research Paper	100 points (100% of Research grade)

Exams.....40% of Final Grade

Midterm Exam	100 points (50% of Exams grade)
Final Exam	100 points (50% of Exams grade)
Midterm Exam Reflections	5 point bonus (2.5% weighted bonus)

Points-based Grade System

The Points System allows grade items to represent an amount of points that are totaled for a final grade. The sum of the Maximum Points values for all grade items does not need to equal 100. With the points system you do not specify a category's weight or total points. It is the Maximum Points assigned to an individual grade item that counts toward the final grade.

A+	1257—1270
A	1156—1256
A-	1143—1154
B+	1130—1142
B	1029—1129
B-	1016—1027
C+	1003—1015
C	902—1002
C-	889—900
D+	876—888
D	775—862
D-	762—773
F	0—761

AssignmentsPossible 120 points

One assignment is due each week. Each assignment will be worth 10 points. I will drop the 3 lowest scores.

Quizzes.....Possible 420 points

Pre-Colonial Quiz	100 points
Pre-Colonial Reflection	5 point bonus
Colonial Quiz	100 points
Colonial Reflections	5 point bonus
Revolutionary War Quiz	100 points
Revolutionary War Reflections	5 point bonus
Early National Quiz	100 points
Early National Reflections	5 point bonus

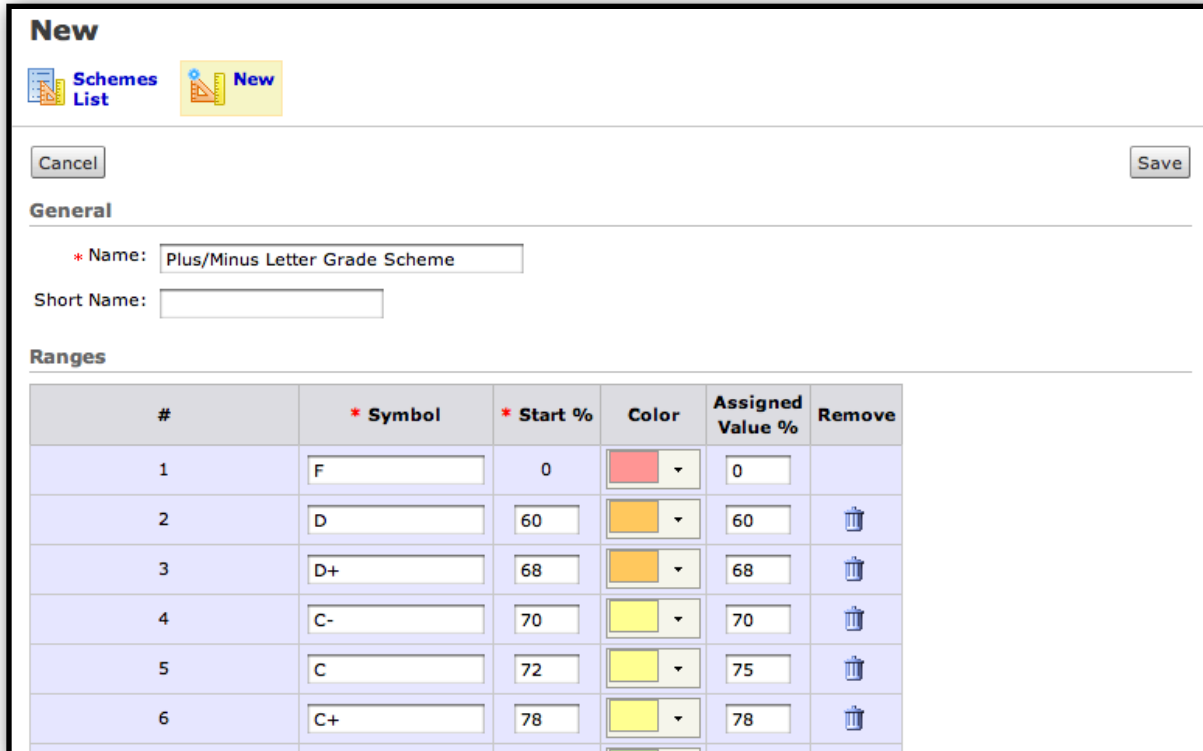
ResearchPossible 260 points

Rough Draft	10 point bonus
Research Paper	250 points



Exams.....Possible 510 points

Midterm Exam	250 points
Midterm Exam Reflections	10 point bonus
Final Exam	250 points

Establishing a Grade Scheme



New






 **Schemes List**  **New**

General

* 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="Orange"/>	<input type="text" value="60"/>	
3	<input type="text" value="D+"/>	<input type="text" value="68"/>	<input type="text" value="Orange"/>	<input type="text" value="68"/>	
4	<input type="text" value="C-"/>	<input type="text" value="70"/>	<input type="text" value="Yellow"/>	<input type="text" value="70"/>	
5	<input type="text" value="C"/>	<input type="text" value="72"/>	<input type="text" value="Yellow"/>	<input type="text" value="75"/>	
6	<input type="text" value="C+"/>	<input type="text" value="78"/>	<input type="text" value="Yellow"/>	<input type="text" value="78"/>	

A **GRADE SCHEME** is a way of organizing students' performance on grade items into distinct levels of achievement. A grade scheme can include any number of achievement levels. Each achievement level has its own range of acceptable grades and a symbol to represent it (e.g., A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.).

After the initial planning stages and before adding grade items, you *must* create a grade scheme to categorize students' achievements. You can create your own grade schemes or use one that has been set up by your department.

Step 1: Create a New Grade Scheme.

To begin creating a new grade scheme, click the **Grades** tool on the course menu bar. From the **Grades Area** on the left side of the screen, click **Grades Schemes**. From the Schemes List screen, click the **New** icon.

From the New screen, enter a **Name** for the grade scheme.

Step 2: Define Grade Ranges.

By default, only three ranges appear. If you need more—and chances are, you will—enter a number in the Add Ranges text box at the bottom of the table and then click the **Add Ranges** link.

The Ranges table contains five columns of note:

- **Symbol:** The text or number you place in the symbol field is what will be displayed to students.
- **Start %:** Start % is the lowest grade included in a range. The first range starts at 0 and ends at the next range's Start %.
- **Color:** Associating a color with a grade range is purely optional, but helpful.
- **Assigned Value %:** Applies only to grade schemes used with Selectbox grade items; ignore otherwise. A numeric value in the Assigned Value % textbox will be the numeric value Desire2Learn assigns to the grade item.
- **Remove:** Clicking the trash can in this column will remove the range from the grade scheme.

Step 3: Save the Grade Scheme.

Once you've defined the appropriate grade ranges, click the **Save** button. You will receive a message noting that the grade scheme has been saved successfully.

Importing and Exporting Grade Items



Many instructors find a spreadsheet an efficient and productive way to keep track of their students' grades. If you choose to keep grades in a spreadsheet, you don't have to re-invent the wheel in Desire2Learn. Simply import and export grade items to ease the building and upkeep process.

Importing Grade Items from a .CSV File

To begin importing grade items, click the **Grades** tool on the course menu bar. From the **Grades Area** on the left side of the screen, click **Enter Grades**. On the User List page, click **Import Grades**.

Step 1: Select the .CSV File to Import.

Click the **Browse** button to locate the .CSV file you want to import. Once you have selected the file, click the check box beside **Create new grade item when an unrecognized item is referenced** if you want to create new grade items from those contained in the import file. Once you've completed this, click the **Next** button.

NOTE: Desire2Learn recommends that you do not import a user's first name, email, or a weighted grade.

Step 2: Create New Grade Items.

If you are creating new grade items, there are additional steps that must be taken. First, select the **Create New Grade Item** check box beside each of the items you want to create. Determine the grade item's **Type** using the information in the drop down menus. Once you've completed this, click the **Next** button.

Step 3: Establish New Grade Item Properties.

Once you've taken the first steps to create grade items, you'll need to provide some details about these grade items. These details may include grade category, maximum points, whether or not a score can exceed those max points, and whether or not this item is a bonus grade. Once you have provided the proper details, click the **Next** button.

Step 4: View Errors and Warnings.

If there are any errors or warnings that resulted from the import, you will receive a message detailing those. Items that have errors are not imported. Once you have reviewed them, click the **Next** button.

Step 5: Preview the Import.

Confirm the changes that will take place and click the **Import** button. You will receive a message noting that the import has been accomplished successfully.

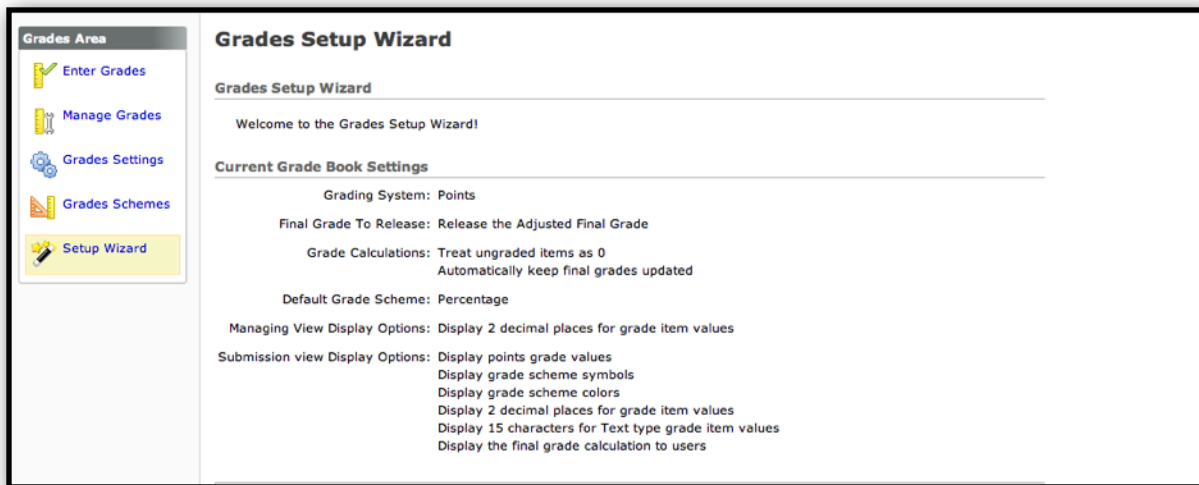
Exporting Grade Items to a .CSV File

To begin exporting grade items, click the **Grades** tool on the course menu bar. From the **Grades Area** on the left side of the screen, click **Enter Grades**. From the User List page, click **Export Grades**.

Select the **Key Field** you want to use to identify users, **Both** is an advisable selection. Identify the **Grade Values** and **User Details** to export.

Choose the grades you wish to export by placing a check mark beside the appropriate grade item. Once you've done this, click the **Export to CSV** button. A new window will appear. Click the link in the new window to save the file in its proper place.

The Grades Setup Wizard



The **Grades Setup Wizard** is a quick and easy way to establish and customize your course's grade book *before* creating the items that will populate that grade book. The wizard directs you through seven essential steps to set up your grade book.

- Step 1: Select a Grading System.
- Step 2: Determine how the Final Grade will be released to students.
- Step 3: Tell D2L how to automate grade calculations.
- Step 4: Establish a default grade scheme.
- Step 5: Set the number of decimal points to display.
- Step 6: Determine how grades will appear to users.
- Step 7: Review your grade book properties.

When a course is copied from semester to semester your customized grade settings **do not** remain the same. Instead they revert to their default settings. For this reason, you must run the Grades Wizard every semester.

To access the Grades Setup Wizard, click the **Grades** tool on the tool menu and then click **Setup Wizard** from the Grades Area menu on the left side of the screen.

Step 1: Select a Grading System.

In Desire2Learn there are three grading systems to select from: a weighted, a points, and a formula system.

Weighted Grading System

A Weighted System allows a grade category to represent a certain percentage of the final grade. The Maximum Points you assign to an individual grade item contributes to the category to which they belong. 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* the items in the category are graded. Therefore, releasing calculated final grades to users before the end of the course may be misleading to students.

Points Grading System

The Points System allows grade items to represent an amount of points that are totaled for a final grade. The sum of the Maximum Points values for all grade items does not need to equal 100. With the points system you do not specify a category's weight or total points. It is the Maximum Points assigned to an individual grade item that counts toward the final grade.

Formula Grading System

A Formula System allows you to develop a custom formula to calculate a final grade. The formula system is based on the points system, but allows you to set conditions around grade items to determine the final grade.

Step 2: Determine how the Final Grade will be released to students.

There are two options to choose between: a calculated final grade and an adjusted final grade.

- **Calculated Final Grade** — A student's final grade is the grade that is automatically calculated based on your grading system. Choosing this option denies you the ability to adjust the final grade without manually altering individual grade items.
- **Adjusted Final Grade** — Like the calculated final grade, a student's final grade is still automatically calculated based on your grading system. The difference is that once the final grade is calculated, the instructor can modify students grades before releasing them.

Step 3: Tell D2L how to automate grade calculations.

The grade calculations step provides two additional choices for automating grading. Specifically, it lets you determine how D2L will handle ungraded items (drop them or assign a grade of zero) and whether you want to keep users' final grades up to date automatically.

How you determine to handle ungraded items will be influence by which type of grading system you have chosen. If you use a weighted grade system, you will likely want to drop ungraded items. If you use a points-based grade system, you will likely want to treat ungraded items as 0.

Step 4: Establish a default grade scheme.

Grade schemes define how grades are organized or labeled within a course or for a particular grade item. Select a grade scheme that matches how your final grades will released to your students.

NOTE: The only grade schemes that will be available are those you have established.

Step 5: Set the number of decimal points to display

This step controls how *you* see grade calculation data. If you choose to include decimal points in your students' grades, you may display up to five decimal points. Again, this option only affects how *you* see the grades.

Step 6: Determine how grades will appear to users.

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 (logic) behind their final grade.

- **Points Grade:** Determines whether or not to display the points grade along with students' scores (e.g., 8/10, 15/25, or 60/100).
- **Grade Scheme Symbol:** Determines whether or not to display the Grade scheme symbol along with students' grades (e.g., "A", "B", "Pass", "Fail", etc.).
- **Grade Scheme Color:** Determines whether or not the grade scheme color is displayed in the submission view of grades. The grade scheme color can only be displayed if the grade scheme symbol is also displayed.
- **Decimals Displayed:** Controls the number of decimal places students see in the grade book.
- **Characters Displayed:** Determines how many characters (between 0 and 50) of a Text grade item display on the user list.
- **Final Grade Calculation:** Determines whether students can see *how* their final grade was calculated. Students can see which grade items contributed to their final grade and how much; which grade items were bonus grades; and whether their grade was adjusted. This option is only available in the weighted and points grading systems.

Step 7: Review your grade book properties.

Take a moment to ensure that all settings are as you prefer them. If needed, click the Back button and make any necessary changes.

Creating a New Category

New Category

[Grades List](#) [New Category](#)

Properties **Restrictions**

[Cancel](#) [Save and New](#) [Save](#)

General

* Name:

Short Name: ?

☒ [Show Description](#)

Grading

Weight: ?

☐ Allow category grade to exceed category weight ?

Distribution: ☒ Manually assign weight to items in the category

☐ Distribute weights by points across all items in the category

☐ Distribute weight evenly across all items

At its most basic level, categories are organizational elements within the grade book. For example, you can group separate items into categories of assignments, quizzes, participation, discussions, research, etc. But categories are far more than just an organizational and visual aid. Particularly if you are using a weighted grade system, categories are essential elements of a grade book.

When we organize our grade book using categories, we can easily see how much one set of grade items contribute to the final grade, we can control the distribution of a grade's weight, and—without having to develop complex formulas—we can very easily drop the highest and/or lowest grade(s) within a category.

Step 1: Create a New Category.

Working inside a course, click the **Grades** link from the Course menu. On the left side of the screen you will see the **Grades Area**. From this area, click **Manage Grades**. This will take you to the **Grades List** screen.

Once you are on the Grades List screen, click the **New Category** icon at the top of the screen.

Step 2: Establish Basic Properties of the Category.

In the **Name** textbox, assign a name to the category (e.g., Assignments, Quizzes, Research, Exams, etc.). If you wish to add a description to the category, click the [Show Description](#) link and type this in the text area that appears.

If you are using a weighted grade system, you will need to provide a weight for the category. The weight is the percentage that this category will contribute to the final grade.

If you would like the category to exceed the maximum points or weight assigned to the category, click the **Can Exceed** or **Allow category grade to exceed category weight** check box, respectively.

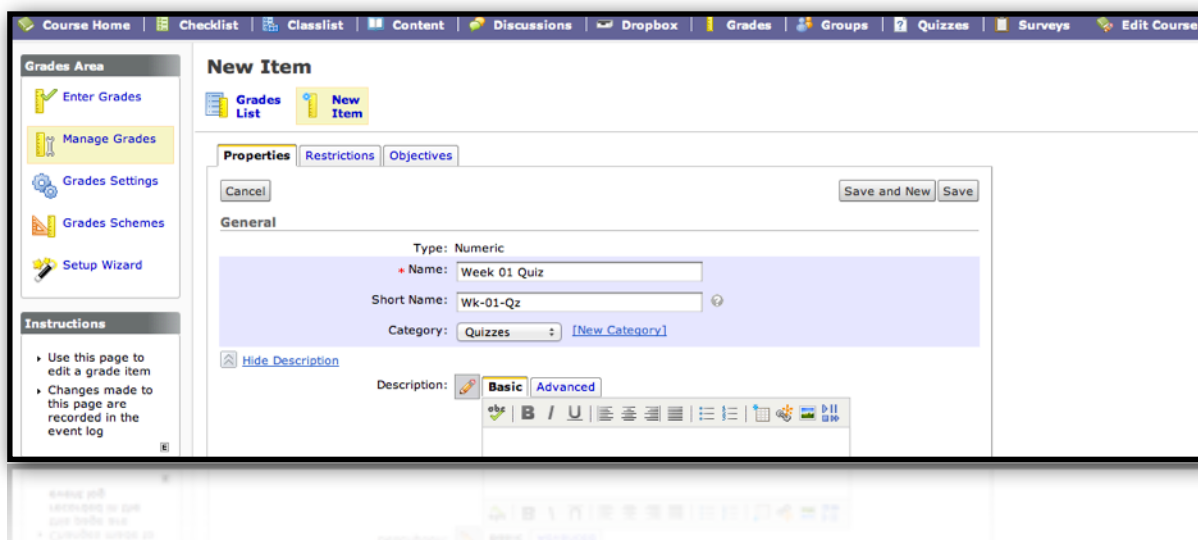
Distribution is a crucial area. This is where you tell D2L how to distribute points or weights across grade items in the category. If you wish to drop the highest or lowest grade(s), this is where you instruct the grade book to do this.

Step 3: Save the Category.

Once you have customized the category to your liking, click the **Save** button.

Once you begin creating grade items, you will be able to associate those grade items with the categories you have already established or you can create categories on the fly from inside the New Grade Item screen.

Creating a New Grade Item



Grade items represent individual assignments, quizzes, performance measurements, etc. by which you will evaluate users. Grade items can be tied to other course objects (e.g., quizzes or discussion forums) or 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.

Types of Grade Items

Grade Type	Grade Type Explanation	Example
Numeric	Grade users by assigning a value out of a specified total number of points	8/10
Selectbox	Grade users by assigning a grade scheme equivalent to a percentage grade	90%-100% = "Excellent"
Pass/Fail	Grade users using a simple pass/fail grade scheme	"Pass" or "Fail"
Formula	Automatically grade users using a custom formula based on achievement on other grade items	IF{ MIN{ [ITEM1.Percent], [ITEM2.Percent] } < 50, 0, 100 }
Calculated	Display users' cumulative achievement across multiple grade items	Midterm Grade = Item1 + Item2 + Item3 / Total points * 100 = 73%
Text	Provide comments that are not counted towards users' final grades. Text grade items do not contribute to the calculated final grade	"Athlete" or "Non-major"

For purposes of this tutorial we will create a Numeric Grade item. While the steps to create other grade items vary slightly, the concepts used will be similar.

Step 1: Create a Numeric Grade Item.

Working inside a course, click the **Grades** link from the Course menu. On the left side of the screen you will see the **Grades Area**. From this area, click **Manage Grades**. This will take you to the **Grades List** screen.

Once you are on the Grades List screen, click the **New Item** icon at the top of the screen. From the New Item screen, click the link to create a **Numeric** grade type.

Step 2: Establish Basic Properties of the Numeric Grade Item.

Enter a **Name** for the new grade item. You may enter a **Short Name** of the grade item (e.g., Week 1 Quiz = Wk1_Q) that will display in the grade book to save space.

Categories help you organize and group grade items inside your grade book. For example, you could have separate categories for Assignments, Quizzes, Case Studies, Participation, Discussions, etc. By grouping items in a category you can distribute points equally across grade items in the group and/or drop the highest or lowest item. To associate a grade item a category, select a category from the **Category** drop-down or click **New Category** to establish a new grading category.

A **Description** of the grade item is optional but can be helpful. If you want to make the description available to users, select **Allow users to view grade item description**.

Edit Item: Week 01 Quiz

Grades List | Edit Item | Event Log

Properties | Restrictions | Objectives

Cancel Save

General

Type: Numeric

Association: This grade item is associated with the quiz **'Week 01 Quiz'**

Name: Week 01 Quiz

Short Name: Wk-01-Qz

Category: Quizzes [New Category]

Hide Description

Description:

☐ Allow users to view grade item description

Grading

Step 3: Establish Grading and Display Properties.

In the **Max. Points** field enter the value you want the item graded out of (e.g., ___ / 100). If you want to allow users' grades to exceed the maximum value specified for the item, select **Can Exceed**. If you want the item to be a bonus item, select **Bonus**. Bonus items are not included in the max points for a Category or Final Grade; rather, they are added on top of the calculated grade. Bonus items cannot make grades exceed the maximum points specified, unless the Can Exceed option is selected.

If applicable, select a **Rubric** to associate with the grade item or click **Create Rubric in New Window** to develop a new rubric.

Click the **Show Display Options** link to allow certain grade information to be displayed to students.

Once you have customized the grade item to your liking, click the **Save** button.

☐ Allow users to view grade item description

Grading

Max. Points: 100

Can Exceed: ☐

Bonus: ☐

Exclude from Final Grade Calculation: ☐

Grade Scheme: -- Default Scheme -- (Percentage)

Rubrics: Add Rubric

No rubrics selected.

[Create Rubric in New Window]

Display Options

Hide Display Options

Submission View: ☒ Display class average to users

☒ Display grade distribution to users

Managing View: ☐ Override display options for this item

Show: ☒ Points grade

☒ Grade scheme symbol

☒ Grade scheme color

Cancel Save

(Optional) Set Release Restrictions for a Grade Item.

By setting release restrictions for grade items, instructors can greatly influence students' learning experience in a course. Working from the Edit Grade Item screen, click the **Restrictions** tab. There are two types of grade restrictions: visibility and release conditions.

General Visibility

The most common restriction relates to a grade item's visibility. Instructors often choose to provide access to a grade item on a particular date and then end access to the item on another date.

To do this, select **Grade item is visible for a specific date range**. To establish the dates of availability, first select **Has Start Date** and/or **Has End Date** and then customize the specific date and time. You can create a coordinating Calendar event by selecting **Display in Calendar**.

Release Conditions

Release Conditions allow instructors to specify requirements that students must satisfy before they can access a certain course element. One way instructors use release conditions is by providing additional quizzes to students who either score poorly or exceptionally well on a particular exam. Other instructors allow students to access an exam only after submitting the assignment for that week. Release Conditions allow for a tremendous amount of customization.

To establish new release criteria, click the **Create and Attach** button in the Release Conditions section.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Item' dialog box with the 'Restrictions' tab selected. The 'General' section has three radio buttons for visibility: 'Grade item is always visible', 'Hide this grade item', and 'Grade item is visible for a specific date range' (which is selected). Below these are two checked checkboxes: 'Has Start Date' and 'Has End Date'. The start date is set to 5/17/2012 at 11:44 AM, and the end date is set to 5/24/2012 at 11:44 AM. Both date pickers show 'United States - New York'. The 'Display in Calendar' checkbox is also checked. The 'Release Conditions' section has a 'Hide Release Conditions' link, 'Attach Existing' and 'Create and Attach' buttons, and a 'Remove All Conditions' button with a trash icon. Below these, it says 'To access this item, users must satisfy: All of the following conditions'. A single condition is listed: 'Receives less than 70.00 % on grade item: Midterm Exam' with a trash icon. 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons are at the bottom.

(Optional) Associate Learning Objectives.

Working from the Edit Grade Item screen, click the **Objectives** tab. From the Objectives tab, click the **Associate Learning Objectives** button. A new window will open. **Browse** for available competencies and learning objectives, or use the **Search** tab to find objects by its name or description. Once you have selected the appropriate learning objectives, click the **Add Selected** button.

Communicating with At-Risk Students

INTELLIGENT AGENTS allow instructors to establish certain criteria that, when met, trigger an event in the system. Intelligent agents are primarily communication tools that help build a sense of community by nurturing the professor-student relationship. One way instructors can use intelligent agents is to identify and encourage at-risk students or to reinforce those students who are excelling in their course work.

In this tutorial we will create an intelligent agent that monitors the grade book to identify students who score below 70 on the Midterm Exam. We will design the agent to email the individual student to let them know where they stand and what steps they might take to no longer be at-risk. The email will be copied to the course instructor. This tutorial presumes that you have created and are planning to utilize the D2L grade book in your course.

There are six steps to developing this intelligent agent:

- Step 1: Answer the preliminary questions.
- Step 2: Access the Intelligent Agents tool.
- Step 3: Begin building the new agent.
- Step 4: Attach criteria to the agent.
- Step 5: Set the action and define a schedule.
- Step 6: Prepare the email message.

Step 1: Answer The Preliminary Questions.

When building any intelligent agent you should always begin by answering three preliminary questions:

- 1. Purpose: Why are you building this intelligent agent?**
- 2. Criteria and Action: What does the agent need to do? What criteria will cause the agent to perform this action?**
- 3. Audience: Who will receive the communication?**

Our answers to these questions will help us navigate through the subsequent steps. Here are the answers for our assignment:

1. Purpose: To identify at-risk students.
2. Criteria and Action: When a student's Midterm grade is less than 70, send an email.
3. Audience: The individual student and the course instructor will receive the email.

While we have outlined an agent that focuses on those students who are at-risk for failure, one could easily modify this agent to identify and encourage those students who are excelling in their course work.

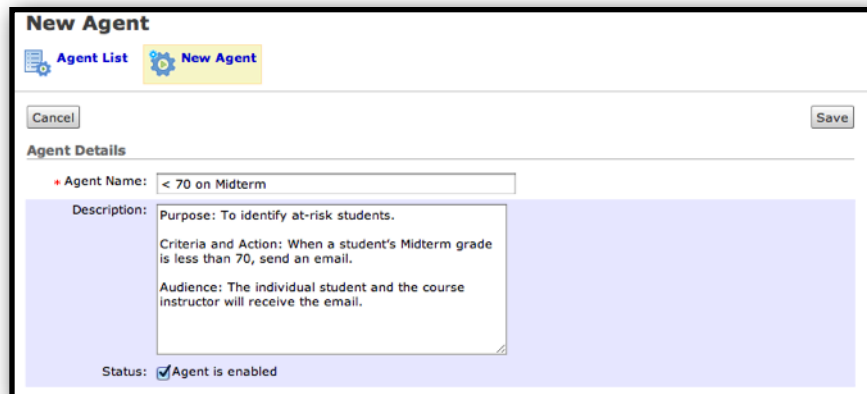
Step 2: Access The Intelligent Agents Tool.

To access the Intelligent Agents tool, working inside a course click the **Edit Course** button on the course menu bar. From the **Course Administration Tools** area, click the **Intelligent Agents** link.

Step 3: Begin Building The New Agent.

On the Agent List page, click the **New Agent** button. From the New Agent page, type a name for the agent in the **Agent Name** box. While adding a description of the agent is optional, it is a good practice. The description would be a good place to identify the purpose, criteria and action, and audience.

Once you have named the agent, click the **Status** check box in order to enable the agent.



Step 4: Attach Criteria To The Agent.

We need to identify the criteria that will cause it to run. There are three types of criteria you can attach to the agent:

- Criteria based on login activity. Student has or has not logged in D2L for a certain number of days.
- Criteria based on course activity. Students has or has not accessed your course for a certain number of days.
- Criteria based on customized conditions.

Because our agent will send an email when a grade is below a certain score, we need to create and attach criteria based on customized conditions. Click the **Create and Attach** button in the Release Conditions section.

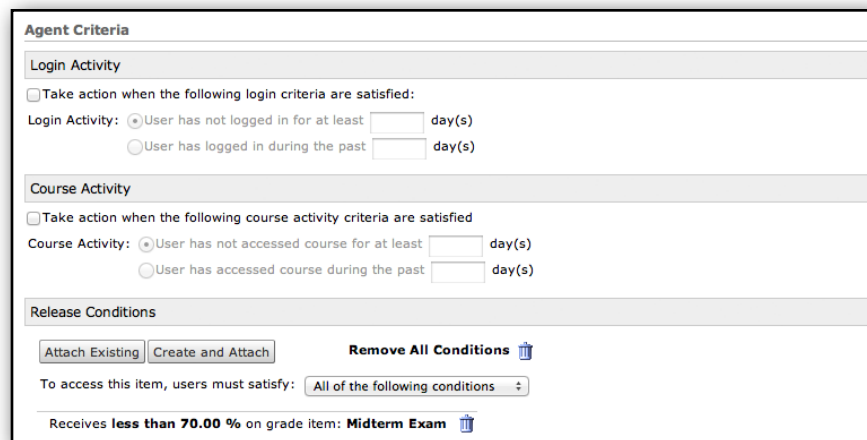
Criteria Based on Customized Conditions

From the **Condition Type** drop box select an item that will cause the action to occur. Because we are interested in at-risk students, select **Grade Value on a Grade Item**.

From the **Grade Item** drop box, select the grade book column that will be referenced. In our example, we will select the Midterm Exam column. After selecting the appropriate grade book column, provide the remaining conditional items.

Click the **Create** button. Your screen will refresh and you will see a statement summarizing the criteria you established.

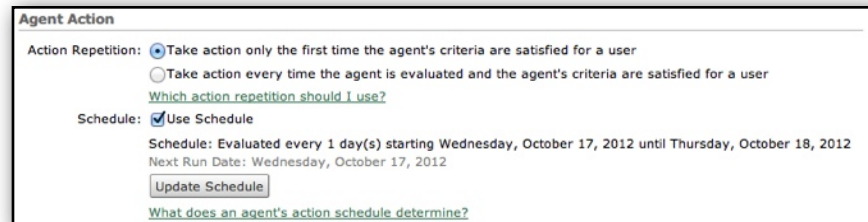
To create additional items, simply repeat the previous steps. If you add additional criterion, be sure to adjust the access for this item: users must satisfy “all of the following conditions” or “any of the following conditions”.



Step 5: Set The Action And Define A Schedule.

We must now set the action our agent will take. The **Action Repetition** setting is especially important for agents with multiple criteria attached. Since we only have one evaluation criteria established, select “**Only take action when users satisfy the agent’s criteria for the first time.**”

If you do not establish a schedule for an agent, you must run it manually. To schedule a date and time for the agent to run, select the **Schedule** check box, then click the **Update Schedule** button. From the **Update Agent Schedule** pop-up window we can customize when and how often the agent will run. Click the **Update** button to save changes to the schedule.



The 'Agent Action' window shows the 'Action Repetition' section with two radio buttons. The first, 'Take action only the first time the agent's criteria are satisfied for a user', is selected. The second is 'Take action every time the agent is evaluated and the agent's criteria are satisfied for a user'. Below this is a link 'Which action repetition should I use?'. The 'Schedule' section has a checked 'Use Schedule' checkbox. Below it, the schedule is defined as 'Evaluated every 1 day(s) starting Wednesday, October 17, 2012 until Thursday, October 18, 2012'. The 'Next Run Date' is 'Wednesday, October 17, 2012'. There is an 'Update Schedule' button and a link 'What does an agent's action schedule determine?'.


Step 6: Prepare The Email Message.

Work smarter, not harder. Replace Strings are placeholders that allow you to add dynamic information that is stored in the Desire2Learn system. A replace string is always enclosed in curly braces { }. For example, the {FirstName} replace string is replaced by the user's first name. The {CurrentDate} replacement string is replaced by the date.

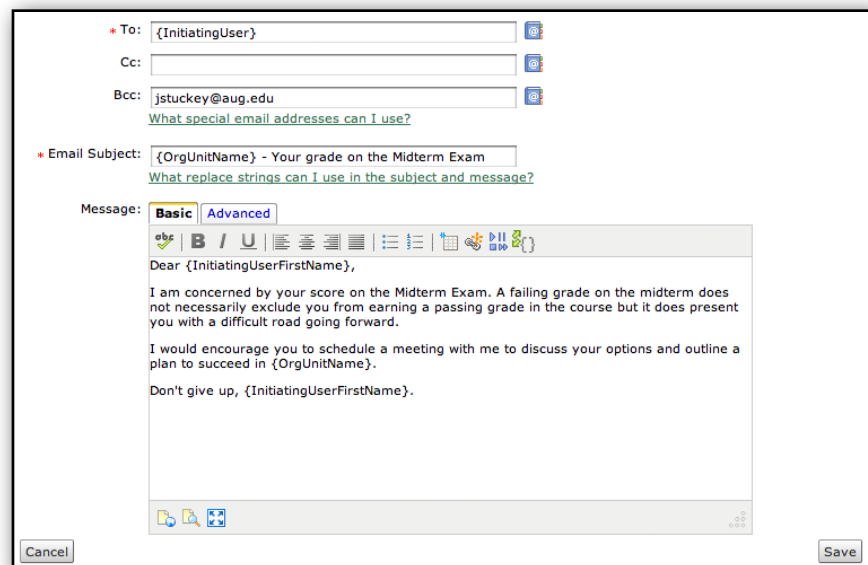
Begin by identifying who will receive the email. Rather than typing names of individual recipients, take advantage of the intelligence of the system. In the **To** field, type **{InitiatingUser}**; this will send an email to the individual student who scores less than 70% on the Midterm Exam. Below the To/Cc/Bcc section, the link labeled “What special email addresses can I use?” may provide you with assistance in adding system intelligence to your recipient list.

Add your email address to the **Bcc** field. This will send you a copy of the same email your students receive.

Type the subject in the **Email Subject** field. As a best practice, include the course name in the subject line of the email. This can be accomplished by using the replace string **{OrgUnitName}** (e.g., {OrgUnitName} - Your grade on the Midterm Exam). Below the Email Subject textbox, the link labeled “What replace strings can I use in the subject and message?” may provide you with assistance in adding system intelligence to your subject lines.

Type the body of your email in the **Message** field. As a best practice, personalize to your email message using replacement strings. This can be accomplished by using the replacement string **{InitiatingUserFirstName}** in the greetings section of your email (e.g., Dear {InitiatingUserFirstName}, ...). To easily insert replacement strings, click the Insert Replace String button on the Message toolbar .


When you've made all the changes you need, click the **Save** button.



The email configuration window shows fields for 'To:', 'Cc:', 'Bcc:', and 'Email Subject:'. The 'To:' field contains '{InitiatingUser}'. The 'Bcc:' field contains 'jstuckey@aug.edu'. The 'Email Subject:' field contains '{OrgUnitName} - Your grade on the Midterm Exam'. Below these fields are links for 'What special email addresses can I use?' and 'What replace strings can I use in the subject and message?'. The 'Message:' section has a 'Basic' tab selected and a rich text editor. The text in the editor is: 'Dear {InitiatingUserFirstName}, I am concerned by your score on the Midterm Exam. A failing grade on the midterm does not necessarily exclude you from earning a passing grade in the course but it does present you with a difficult road going forward. I would encourage you to schedule a meeting with me to discuss your options and outline a plan to succeed in {OrgUnitName}. Don't give up, {InitiatingUserFirstName}.' At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

(Optional) Run The Agent.

If you have established a schedule for an agent, it will run automatically as scheduled.

If you do not have a regular schedule set up for an agent, you must run it manually. To manually run an intelligent agent, click the **Manually Run Agent** icon  next to an agent's name on the Agent List page to run it manually.

