

## **D2L Level 2 Starter Packet:**

The subsequent pages contain information, which comes from the [Instructor Help Menu of D2L](#), about the following 4 tools in Desire2Learn. When first learning the system, it's best to start with D2L Level 1 before going on to more inter-connected tools like Grades, Dropbox's more advanced features, Rubrics, and Advanced Release Conditions in News.

The following pages came from the Desire2Learn Help Menu and serves as starter information for an introductory user. It's best, though, to use the Desire2Learn Help Menu when logged into a course because the pages contain live links.

## **D2L Level 2 Tools**

- Grades
- Dropbox
- Advanced Release Conditions in News
- Rubrics

## **Additional Help**

- [Instructor Help Menu](#): access the Help Menu by logging in to D2L, click on Help for Instructors button.
- [D2L Training - Self-Paced Instructor Course](#): access these video resources with the Student tab when you login. If you do not have access, then click on the Self Registration button below the Help for Instructors button.
- Live workshops are available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at DVC (see email announcements for monthly training schedules) during the fall/spring semesters.

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## Topic Considerations with the Following Tools

Grades: which grading system is easier for you/your students?

- Setup Wizard: choosing Points vs. Weighted
- Creating Items (grade columns), Categories (which provide subtotals as well for grade items in a category), and choosing points/weights as a grade system
- Views: Standard vs. Spreadsheet
- Additional info beyond workshop: Formulas: See Setup Wizard and pages 5-10

Dropbox: which style of grading to use?

- Grading in the Dropbox (just points/feedback)
- Grading in the Dropbox (points/feedback/rubrics)
- Grading in the Dropbox – associating it with the Grades tool

News Tool: Release Conditions to Trigger a News Item

1. Release Conditions/Create and Attach New Release Condition  
Select condition type: Dropbox, Submission to Dropbox
2. Additional option:  
Use Insert Quicklink from the Content, advanced menu tab  
Choose a type of resource

Rubrics: Why use them, how often?

- Choosing Rubric, New, click on the hyperlinked, blue questions to determine choices.
- Compare with your other assessment measurements: Grades, Dropbox, and grading outside of D2L system (e.g., comments on a paper).
- SLOs in the course with a rubric for one assignment.

Considerations:

- Desire2Learn Help Menu/Videos
- Grades can pass from one tool to the next tool (e.g., Dropbox to Grades) and from Rubrics to Dropbox, to Grades. If you have these grading scenarios, consider making the scores/grading the same within each tool so that the scores match.
- Tools do not have to be connected, so you may have students look at their scores within each tool area (e.g., just in a rubric, a dropbox, or within a grade column).

- Add a sample student if needed to affect Grades and Dropbox. Go to Edit Course, Classlist, click Add participants, add existing users, and search under: Phil Hartman. Check box next to name, and for role, select student, for section select the section available. Login as that student with the following if needed:
  - Username: Phil2013
  - Password: student2013

## About Grades

The Grades tool displays your grades from assignments and tests. You can see your individual grades with instructor comments for each grade item and overall comments to the class about the grade item. Depending on whether your instructor shares this information, you can also view your class averages, grade distribution, and the grading formula used to evaluate you.

### For Instructors

Use the Grades tool to set up and manage grade books and schemes to evaluate your students' assignments and tests. Set up a grading formula to calculate grades; determine what coursework assignments you wish to grade; associate grade items with other tools; and control when grades are released to students, along with how much grade information they see. You can attach rubrics and release conditions, and associate learning objectives with grade items.

Use the Setup Wizard to help you create a grade book containing your grading system, grade calculations, grade scheme, grade items, and view and display options. If you would like to use Weighted Columns, access this option through the Setup Wizard.

Schemes organize student performance on grade items into levels of achievement, such as letter grades (F, D, C, B, A), grade points (2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0), or text (Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, Exceeds Expectations). You can set them up in the Setup Wizard or on the Schemes page. You can add new grade schemes and change the default scheme anytime.

Once your grade book is setup, use Manage Grades to view all the grade items you have set up for your course. You can also edit and create new grade items and grade categories, including their associated rubrics, release conditions, and learning objectives.

As your course progresses, use Enter Grades to select grade items and enter marks for each student in your course.



## Understanding the 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 grade book contribute to users' final grades. There are three options:

- Grade items can count as a percentage of a final grade worth 100%.
  - Grade items can be worth a certain amount of points that are totaled for a final grade.
  - You can define a custom formula for how grade items contribute to a final grade.
- Choose the option that best matches how you plan to evaluate users.

### Weighted system

The weighted system calculates grade items as a percentage of a final grade worth 100%. The Max. Points you assign to individual grade items can be any value, but their contribution towards the category they belong to and the final grade is the percentage value (weight) assigned to them.

Grade items in a category count as a percentage of that category, not of the final grade. Therefore, grade items in a category should combine to a weight of 100%.

For example, if you have a category worth 10% of the final grade with two equally weighted grade items, the weight of each grade item is 50%, (its contribution to the category), not 5% (its contribution to the final grade).

Since it's 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 might be misleading.

If your grade items do not add up to 100% you receive a warning message. You can ignore this message if you choose; a balanced grade book is not required. If the weights assigned to grade items do not sum to 100%, the tool adjusts the weight of each item. For example if you have three grade items with a weight of 25% each, each item is actually calculated as 33%. This is true for categories and the final grade.

### Points system

Use the points system when you want the Max. Points assigned to a grade item to be equal to its contribution to the final grade. Final grades are calculated by adding a user's score on all grade items together and dividing by the sum of the Max. Points values. The sum of the Max. 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 Max. Points assigned to an individual grade item that counts toward the final grade.

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**TIP** Make sure the Max. Points assigned to grade items reflect how much you want them to be worth. For example, don't grade each of your 20 homework assignments out of 50 points and then your final exam out of 80 points.

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Another option in the point system is to exclude an item from the final grade calculation. This enables you to evaluate a grade category, numeric grade item, selectbox grade item, or pass/fail grade item without including the grade in users' calculated or adjusted final grades. The Exclude from Final Grade Calculation check box is available from the Grading section of the New/Edit Item page and the New/Edit Category page.

You can achieve similar functionality in the weighted system by setting the grade item or category's weight to 0%.

### Formula system

Use the formula system when you want to calculate final grades using a custom formula that allows for conditions. The formula system is based on the points system, but allows you to set conditions around grade items to determine the final grade. For example, you could require that users receive at least 50% on their midterm and final exam to pass a course.

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**NOTE** The formula system might not be available at your organization. If you do not have this option, you can release the adjusted final grade and calculate your custom formula manually, or you can contact your site administration about getting access to this functionality.

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## Creating a formula in the grades formula editor

Use the Formula Editor to define a formula that calculates a grade item's value based on other grade items. When you create a formula, you specify which grade items you want included in the formula and the relationships between them. An example of a simple formula is one that calculates the sum of a number of grade items. A more complicated formula is one that drops the minimum or maximum value from a set of grade items.

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**NOTE** If the Formula Editor is turned off at your organization, contact your site administration about getting access to this functionality.

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The Formula Editor is available on the New Item page and Edit Item page for Formula items, and the Edit Calculated Final Grade page and Edit Adjusted Final Grade page for the Formula grading system.

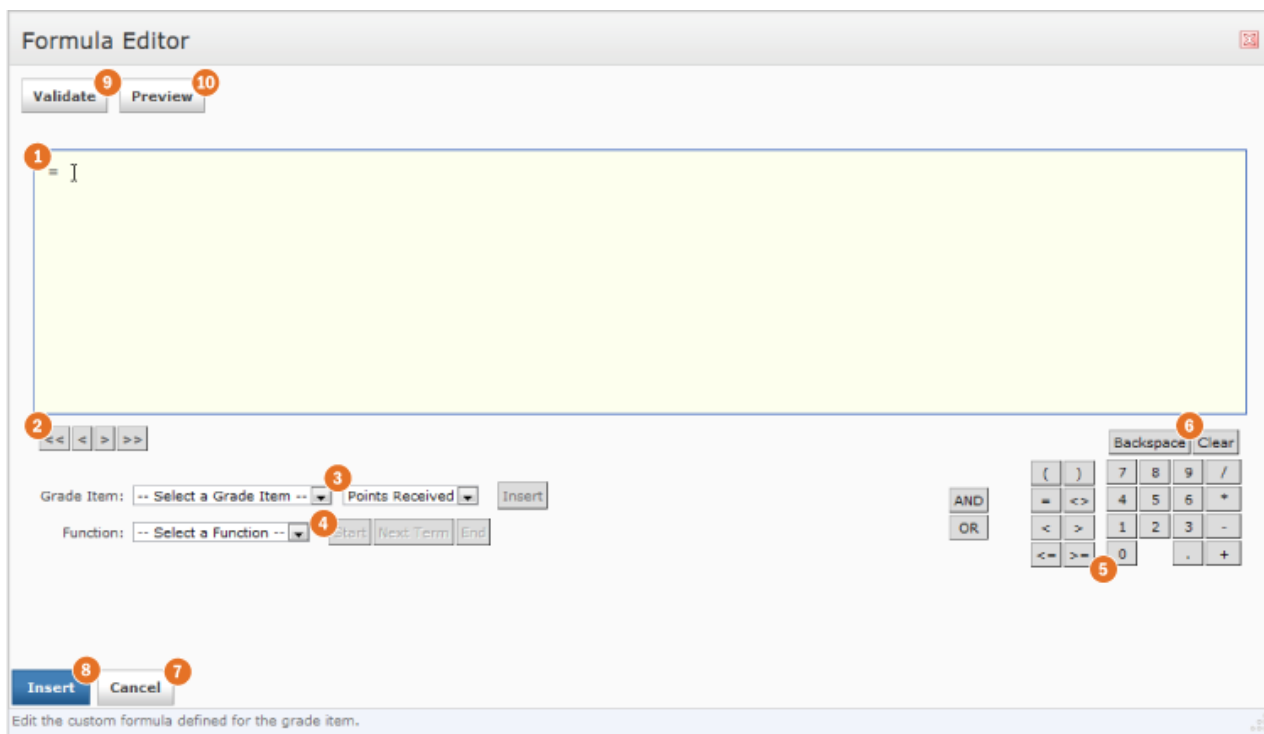
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### Access the Formula Editor

1. On the Manage Grades page, click the name of a formula grade item you wish to edit.
2. Click **Edit Using the Formula Editor**.

### Key Grades Formula Editor components







## Formula Editor

### 1. Formula area

The Formula Area is where the formula text is displayed. The equals sign (=) at the start of the formula cannot be deleted. A cursor shows your position in the formula. Click in the formula area to position the cursor.

### 2. Cursor placement

The cursor placement icons are used to move the cursor forwards and backwards in the formula. You can also move the cursor by clicking on the new location with your mouse. There are four options:

-  Move cursor to start of formula.
-  Move cursor to end of formula.
-  Move cursor back one element.
-  Move cursor forward one element.

### 3. Grade item parameters

Use the **Grade Item** drop-down list to view what grade items you can insert as a parameter in your formula. You can insert Numeric, Pass/Fail, Selectbox, and Formula type grade items. You cannot reference the formula grade item you are defining (this avoids a circular reference) or a final grade.

Use the **Grade Item Value** drop-down list to view the values associated with the grade item you want to use in the formula. There are three options:



- **Points Received** The grade the user achieved. E.g., 7 (out of 10 points).
- **Max Points** The maximum points available for the grade item. E.g., 10 points.
- **Percent** The percent grade the user achieved. E.g., 70%.

Click **Insert** to insert the selected grade parameter in the formula.

### Insert a grade item parameter in a formula

1. Select a **Grade Item**.
2. Select the **Grade Item Value** you want to use in the calculation.
3. Click **Insert**.

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### NOTES

For the weighted system, category and grade item weights are ignored in formula calculations.

Dropped grade items and bonus grade items are calculated the same as other grade items.

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## 4. Functions

The **Function** drop-down list contains a list of functions that you can use in your calculation formula:

- **MAX** Calculates the maximum (largest) value in a set of values.
- **MIN** Calculates the minimum (smallest) value in a set of values.
- **SUM** Calculates the sum (total) of a set of values.
- **AVG** Calculates the average for a set of values by adding all the values and dividing by the total number of values.
- **IF** Operates as a Boolean statement that returns either the value set as true or as false. You must define the condition (Boolean statement), true (then) value, and false (else) value.

E.g. If { [Item1.Points Received] >= 60, 100, 0 }

← Condition

 ↓  
True  
(then)
 

 ↓  
False  
(else)

- **NOT** Operates as a Boolean statement that returns the value set as true if the condition is false and as false if the condition is true.

Eg. If{Not{[Item1.Percent] = 100}, 0, 100}

Condition

False

True

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## NOTES

You can embed functions within functions.

The **Start**, **Next Term**, and **End** options are used to define elements of a function:

**Start** Starts the function selected in the **Function** drop-down list with an opening bracket ({}).

**Next Term** Inserts a comma to separate grade items or parts of a Boolean statement.

**End** Ends the function with a closing bracket (}).

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### Insert a function in a formula

1. Select a **Function**.
2. Click **Start**.
3. Enter a parameter.
4. Click **Next Term** to add another parameter or use the numeric keys and operators to define a condition.
5. Click **End** when you are done adding parameters and conditions.

### 5. Numeric keys and operators

The right area of the Formula editor contains a number of operators and a numeric key pad to build your formula. These operators are usually used in conjunction with at least one grade item.

### 6. Backspace and clear

The **Backspace** and **Clear** options let you delete parts of your formula to make changes.

- **Backspace** Deletes the element to the left of the cursor.
- **Clear** Deletes the entire formula.

### 7. Cancel

The **Cancel** button exits the Formula Editor without saving your changes.

## 8. Insert

The **Insert** button validates your formula and applies it to the grade book item or final grade you are working on. If your formula is invalid, you receive an error message and your cursor moves to the point in the formula that caused the error. The error type displays in red above the formula. See [Validation errors](#) for a list of potential errors.

## 9. Validate

The **Validate** option checks if your formula conforms to standard formula grammar. If your formula is valid, a confirmation message displays. If your formula is invalid, you receive an error message and your cursor moves to the point in the formula that caused the error. The error type displays in red above the formula. See [Validation errors](#) for a list of potential errors.

## 10. Preview

The Preview option lets you check how your formula will calculate grades for the first ten users in your user list. Click **Close** when you are finished viewing the grades. If your formula is invalid, you cannot preview grades.

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### Grades Formula Editor validation errors

Error	Description	Examples
Unexpected [token_type]  e.g., Unexpected operator	The formula contains a function component in an unexpected location	= 5=/1  = (5+1)2
Unbalanced parentheses	The formula contains an opening or closing bracket without a corresponding bracket	= 5+1)
Missing end of function	The formula contains an unclosed function	= SUM{[Item1.Points], [Item2.Points]}
Unexpected function end	The formula contains a closing bracket for a function that does not relate to a function	= [Item1.Points]/2}

Invalid number of operator parameters	The formula contains an invalid number of operator parameters	= [Item1.Points] +
Invalid number of function parameters	The formula contains an invalid number of function parameters	= SUM{ } = IF{[Item1.Points]<2,5}
Numeric value expected	A Boolean statement or operator was entered in place of a numeric value	= IF{5<2,1 OR 1,4} = SUM{1 = 2,3,4}
Boolean value expected	A Boolean statement was not entered for a condition	= IF {MIN{4,5},100,0} = NOT{4}
Invalid terminal	The formula contains an incorrectly used terminal	= [Item1.Points] + 3.2.5

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### Example grade formulas

Scenario 1: Give users who achieved over 75% on all grade items in a category 100% for the category.

= IF {MIN{[Week1.Percent],[Week2.Percent],[Week3.Percent]} < 75, 0, 100}

Scenario 2: Drop the lowest two grades in a set of three grades

= SUM{[G1.PointsReceived],[G2.Points Received], [G3Points Received]} - MIN{[G1.PointsReceived],[G2.Points Received]} - IF{MIN{[G2.Points Received], [G3Points Received]} = MIN{[G1.PointsReceived],[G2.Points Received]}, MIN{[G1.PointsReceived],[G3.Points Received]}, MIN {[G2.PointsReceived],[G3.Points Received]}}

Scenario 3: Fail users who receive less than 60% on either their midterm or final exam.

= IF {MIN{[Midterm.Percent],[Final.Percent]} < 60, 0, SUM {[A1.Percent],[A2.Percent],[G1.Percent],[G2.Percent],[Midterm.Percent],[Final.Percent]}}

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