Promising Practices in the Online High School

Teacher Guide

Introduction

This guide contains recommendations from K[12] and promising practices collected from schools, teachers, department heads, Super Users, and others. The purpose of this guide is to provide tips, ideas, workflows, and potential solutions for teachers working in their courses. This guide is certainly not comprehensive, nor is it to dictate what a teacher absolutely must do. It serves as a reference point where teachers may see what promising practices other teachers and schools have discovered and utilize those practices where relevant. **Teachers should check with their schools regarding required policies and practices.**

Please note that views of the Learning Management System are subject to change without prior notification.

Also note that teachers should work with their schools before making any changes to their courses since it may impact school, local, and/or state requirements.

Calendar/Class Plan Promising Practices

The new Online High School platform features a course calendar tool known as the Class Plan. K[12] strongly recommends that teachers use the course calendar to pace students and to recommend a daily to-do list for each student. K[12] also strongly recommends ceasing the practice of placing detailed weekly schedules in course announcements or the creation of static calendars as course items.

What is the Class Plan?

The Class Plan tool is provided to teachers in order that they can:
- Tell students what lessons and assignments/assessments they should be working on each day in the course
- Inform students of Due Dates by which specific activities must be completed. Due dates are typically reserved for graded items that count significantly towards the final course grade
- Alert students to the earliest date they can access a course lesson, activity, or assessment (a.k.a. the Start Date) and the last date on which they will have access to an item (a.k.a. the End Date)
- Remind students about specific time-bound events, like online tutoring, office hours, group instruction, or in-person meet-ups

How do Students Experience the Class Plan?

Students see the Class Plan events in four areas: the Class Plan widget, the larger Class Plan tool, and the Upcoming Events and Course Schedule areas of the course content.

The Class Plan widget shows students today's date and access to a mini-calendar, and a list of upcoming Class Plan items. This list shows events in date order, but only shows items that are from today onward, and not events that are in the past, *or are scheduled earlier on the current day*. This is *not* the entire Class Plan: this is only intended to provide students with guidance for today and onward for the next several days. Current day events are always indicated by a bright blue day

indicator. Future event day indicators are light blue. Note: In item assigned to a specific time of day on the current day will only appear on the Class Plan widget until that time – then it disappears from this view.

The Class Plan Tool shows students has several views that allow students (as well as teachers and learning coaches viewing student accounts) the ability to see current, future, *and past* Class Plan items. Students (and other users) can print any of these views.

The Upcoming Events page in the course content area lists course events connected to course content, start dates, end dates, and due dates for the next seven days.

The Course Schedule view in the course content area shows all past, current, and future course events.

It's important to note that:

- When the Class Plan is *not* used, these tools show no information, but are not hidden from view.
- When the Class Plan contains too little information (ex. Only due dates and not daily guidance on what *learning* activities to complete) students can become lost and fall behind. Or they may focus only on completing assignments without having completed the requisite learning activities beforehand.

When teachers create Class Plan events, they can take four forms:

- **Direct Link to Content Modules (Units or Lessons):** When clicked, these events take the student directly to the unit or lesson to begin working.
- **An Event with Quick Links to Specific Activities:** When clicked, these open on the screen and require the student to click on the specific activity item posted in the body of the event.
- **An Event with No Quick Links to Specific Activities:** When clicked, these open on the screen so the student can read the content in the body of the event.
- **Indicators of End and Due Dates:** When an end or due date is assigned to an item in the Content area of the course, these automatically appear on the Class Plan. (IMPORTANT: Placing Start and End dates on a content item restricts student access to that item before and after those dates, respectively).

Minimum Promising Practices Recommendation: Teachers should use K^{12}-provided pacing guides in the creation of a single daily calendar item listing all activities to complete on each day of the course. Due dates for graded work should be listed as separate calendar items, as well as end dates for items that will no longer be accessible past that date. Calendar items should be created no more than 4 weeks in advance of the current date to prevent excessive rework due to necessary changes to course content or school calendar. Also recommend an operations staff person or school administrator add school holidays and school calendar dates to the School calendar.

Maximum Promising Practices Recommendations: Same as the minimum recommendation, but teachers link items in each calendar event to the actual lessons and activities in the course, allowing students to immediately access the course content item with a single click. This has the added benefit of showing calendar dates within the actual course content area by using the "Upcoming Events" tool.

- Use provided Pacing Guides to identify the dates on which lessons should be completed and graded items due.
- Create **Direct Link** events linked to lessons for each day of the course as indicated by the pacing guide.
- Add Due Dates for items that count towards the final grade of the course (teacher or school discretion on whether or not all graded items due dates).
- Set Due Date times to 11:59 PM local time to ensure that students see these items on the Class Plan widget for the entire day.
- Create Class Plan events for the first 3 to 4 weeks of the course during course set up. Then each week add events for an additional week. In this way you are ahead of the students, but can 'course correct' the Class Plan easily if needed.
- When the teacher wants to assign students to only do specific parts of a lesson on a given day, create an event with Quick Links to specific activities. When clicked, these open on the screen and require the student to click on the specific activity item posted in the body of the event.
- Only add Start and End dates to content items to which you want to restrict student access before or after those dates.
- Cease the practice of placing detailed weekly schedules in course announcements or the creation of static calendars as course items.
- Decide in advance, along with school leaders, what kinds of items require due dates. All graded items in the course, including low-point daily quizzes? Or just larger more point-heavy items?

Adding Class Connect Sessions to the Class Plan

Teachers should add Class Connect sessions as an Event on the Class Plan and point students to the Class Connect widget on the school home page. Teachers can add the URL link to the school home page inside the Event to point students to the Class Connect widget.

Student Experience Example: When Recommendations Are Followed

Learning to use the Class Plan tool effectively starts with understanding the student experience.

Let's begin with an example of the student experience of the Class Plan when a teacher is using this tool as recommended.

Refer to the Class Plan to the left, viewed on March 6th, 2015.

Notice that no past events appear in this widget view.

The teacher has created an all-day Direct Link event for today that is tied directly to Lesson 3 indicating that the student should complete all parts of Lesson 3 today.

The teacher has created an all-day Direct Link event for tomorrow that is tied directly to Lesson 4 indicating that the student should complete all parts of Lesson 4 tomorrow.

On March 10th, the teacher…

>>has created an all-day Direct Link event tied directly to Lesson 5

>>created an all-day Direct Link event tied directly to the Lesson 5 Discussion to call out that the discussion should begin that day.

>>added a Due Date on March 13th to the Lesson 5 Discussion Activity indicating students that they must post to the discussion no later than that date.

>>added an End Date on March 14th to the Lesson 5 Discussion Activity indicating students will lose access to the item after that date.

Figure 1: Class Plan Example Following Recommendations

In this first example, the student knows:

- the exact lesson the teacher wants her to do on each day of the course
- when an important graded assignment is due (Lesson 5 Discussion)
- when a multiple-day activity starts (March 10th for Lesson 5 Discussion)
- when the multiple-day activity ends (March 14th for Lesson 5 Discussion)

What is not evident from the Class Plan tool is what activities make up the lessons 3, 4, and 5.
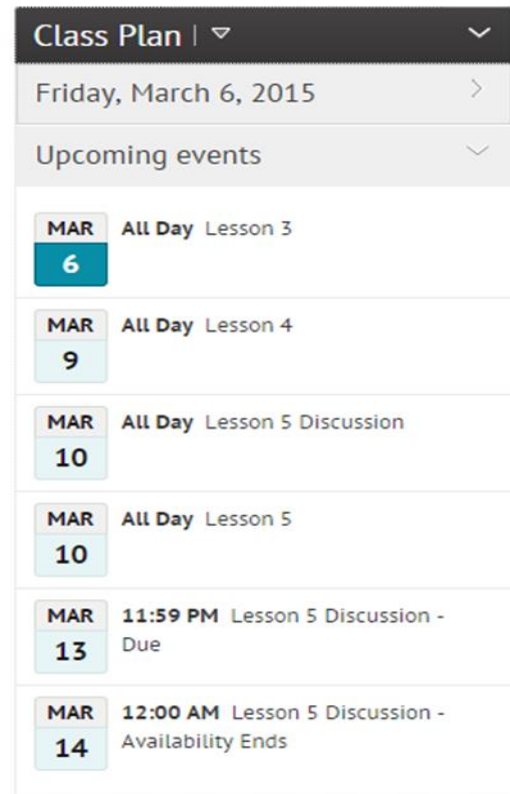
However when the student clicks those **Direct Link** lesson events, she is taken to the Content area and sees the lesson displayed showing the individual activities for that lesson (shown at left).

Now it is evident to the student that to complete the lesson she must complete the lesson introduction, the learn activity 3, post to the lesson 3 discussion, and submit the Lesson 3 Multiple Choice quiz.

To begin working, the student clicks on the first activity, and then proceeds through the lesson using the content navigation arrows.
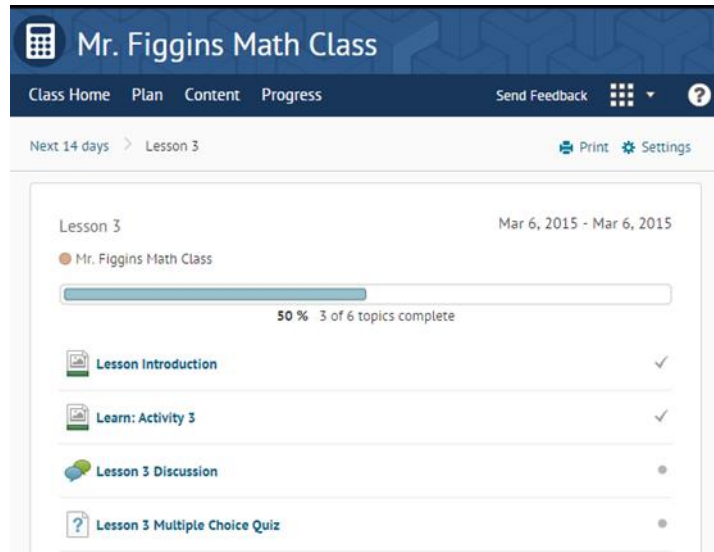
Figure 2: Lesson View When Clicking A Direct Link Event

Looking at the other Class Plan views also shows the benefit of following the recommended uses.

•   The Agenda view of the larger Class Plan tool, as well as the Upcoming Events view of the Content area, shows the lessons and the lessons comprising them that are due today and forward making it easy for students to see what is in store for them in the coming days and weeks.

•   The Course Schedule view of the course shows a full view of the course calendar events and dates (start, end, and due) for the entire course. So a student who falls behind and wants to see what they have and have not completed can use this view to get caught up.

Figure 3: Course Schedule View

Student Experience Example: When Recommendations Are Not Followed

Compare the student experience in the last example with these teachers who failed to follow the recommendations.

No Class Events Created

This teacher has not created any Class Plan events. As a result the Class Plan is empty, indicating under "Upcoming Events" that "There are no events to display."

Instead this teacher has copied and pasted a weekly to-do list from a pacing guide into an announcement.
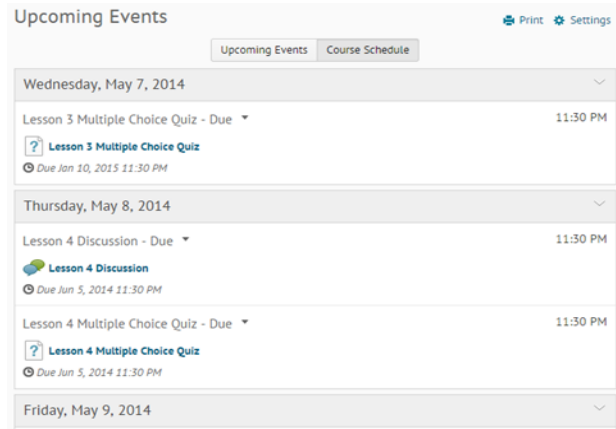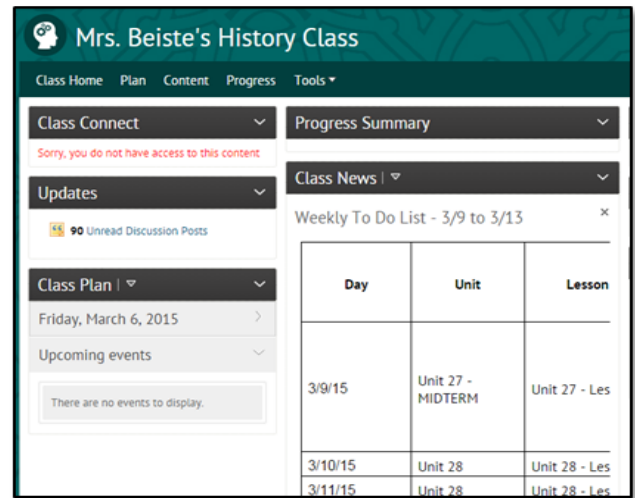
While this can be initially effective, when or if the student dismisses the announcement, they then must open the News tool to find the dismissed item. Additionally, the student now must manually navigate into the course content to find and begin their work.
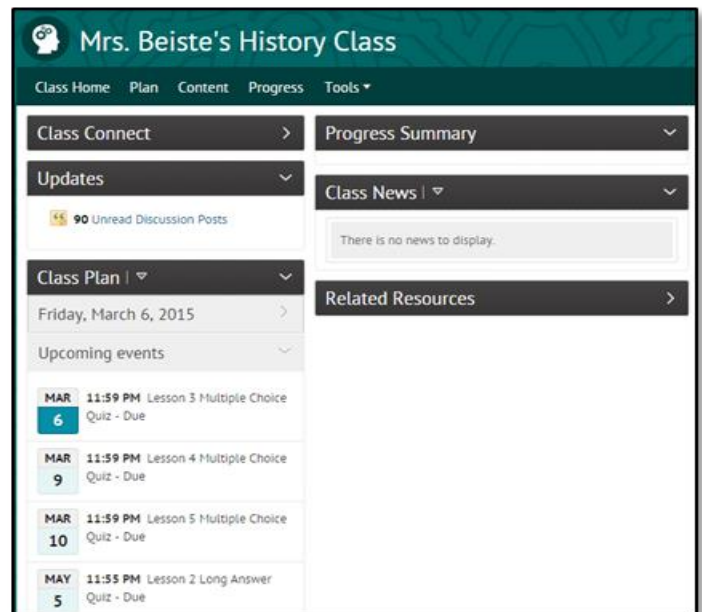
Only Due Dates Added

This teacher has set due dates for course items, so they appear in the Class Plan

The trouble here is that the student has no direction as to what learning activities he is to complete before completing these graded items. In this instance, the teacher has sent students a pacing guide document for the week by k-mail.

While the student has been provided the information needed, it is not 'at their fingertips' upon entering the course. They have to revisit K-mail, or open a printed or digital copy of the k-mailed directions. When the learning coach visits the class as their student, they too don't have an immediate indicator of what is to be done that day.

And if a student gets behind in his work, he now needs to dig through K-mails to find out what they should do to get caught up.

Due Dates Set on Lessons

This teacher has done something different. He has set a due date on each lesson in the course. He's done this from inside the Content area of the course, setting a due date for each full lesson

The effect of this, at first, appears to be positive. The student sees which lesson she is to complete each day. Clicking the Class Event item takes the student directly to that lesson.

What are not immediately evident are some other effects.

Notice that the current date is March 6th, but there appears to be nothing scheduled for today. Notice the time each of the lessons' due dates has been set: 3:00 pm. This screenshot was taken at 3:26 pm, and so the event for today does not appear since it is technically in the past (remember: the widget only shows current and future items).
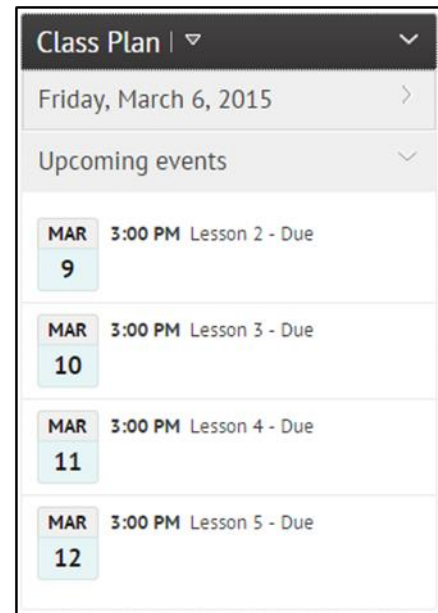
The use of Due Dates in this way can also cause difficulty with the "Overdue" indicator on the student's Progress Summary as well as on the Learning Coaches' My Students widget. The student in this example completes all of her work every day except for the last screen of the learning activities. As a result, the Overdue indicator says "6": To be complete, every item inside a lesson must be completed.
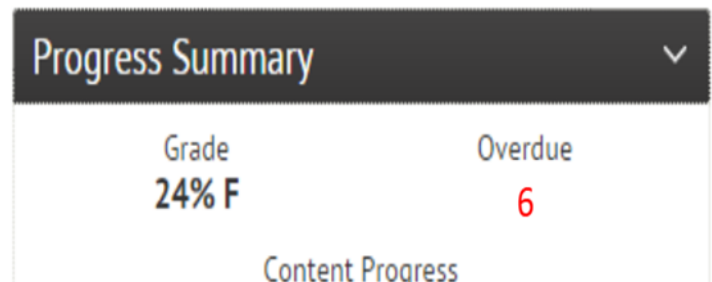
Using Modules Promising Practices

The K^{12} Online High School platform content tool follows a module/activity organizational structure.

Modules are, essentially, containers. They can contain other modules and/or activities. In the courses you teach, modules are used to represent the different Units of a course, and also the lessons inside those units. Look at the image on the right. Note how a module is used to represent Unit 1. Also note how modules are used to represent the lessons *inside* Unit 1. These items are not learning content – they simply provide the organization of the learning content.

Activities are the actual learning, practice and assessment items in a course. Activities are organized inside a module. In the example on the right, the **activities** "Lesson Introduction" and "This is my lesson" are activities stored inside the **module** Lesson 2 which, itself, is stored inside another **module**, Unit 1.
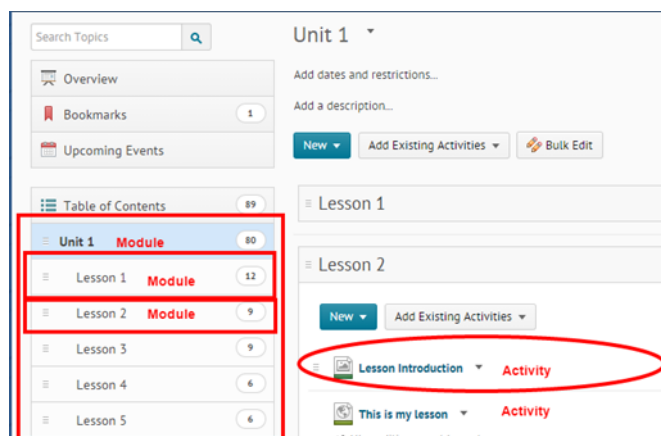
Only modules can be directly connected to Class Plan items so that, when clicked, the content opens immediately. As a result, it is recommended that you organize your course into daily 'chunks' through the use of Modules to provide the smoothest connection for your students between the Class Plan and the content. In semester courses designed for a 90 day semester, this is done for you through the use of lessons.

At times, you may want to direct students to complete specific **activities** on a given day of the course. It is possible that these **activities** are normally found in separate **modules**. In cases such as this, you have two options in how to direct students to complete this work from the Class Plan.

Insert Quick Links to the activities inside the content area of the Class Plan item for the day. The result of this method (see right) is that students have to open the Plan item and then click each activity individually to have them open on the screen. While this certainly provides the student with their task list for the day, it may be frustrating given the extra number of clicks required by the student to get to work.
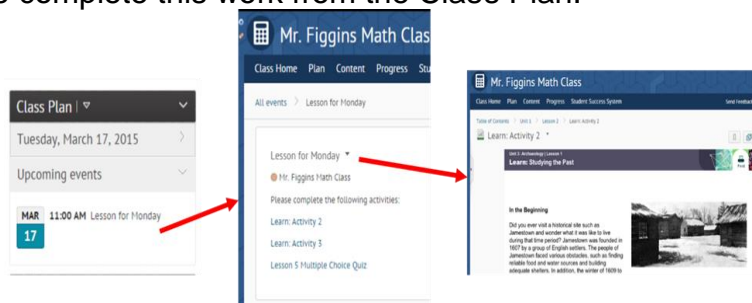
Create a Module of the daily activities and link the Plan item to that Module using the Add Content button.

This method results (see right) in a single calendar item that, when clicked, takes the student directly to the list of activities they need to complete that day. By organizing the activities inside its own module, the content can simply complete each activity, one after another, until they've finished the day's activities.
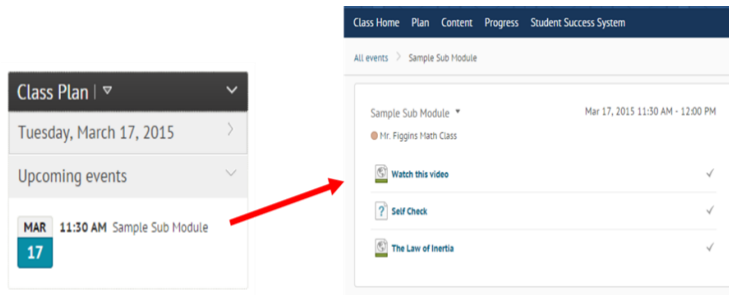
When You Might Want to Use Modules

When you want students to only do part of a lesson today and other parts on other days.
Many courses are published using modules representing lessons, and having several activities inside that module to comprise the entire lesson. However you may want students to break up the lesson across several days. In these cases, you can create sub-modules inside the lesson and place each day's activities into the sub-module representing that day's activities.
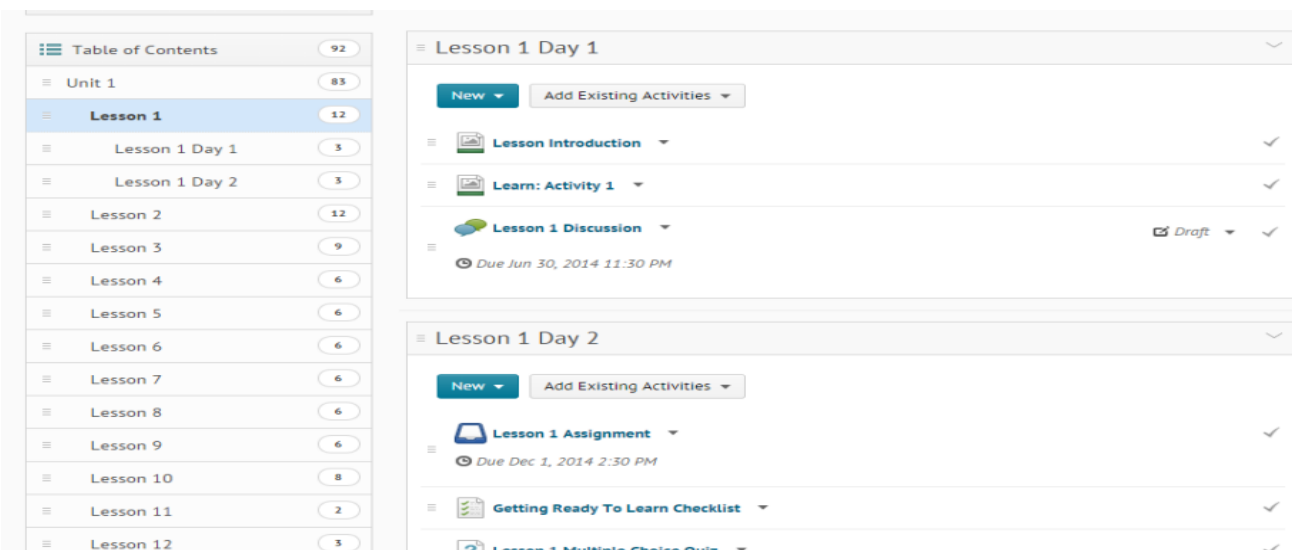
When you want to combine two other modules/lessons into one.
If your course is comprised of a few lessons that would not be enough work for a single day, you can combine them into a single module.
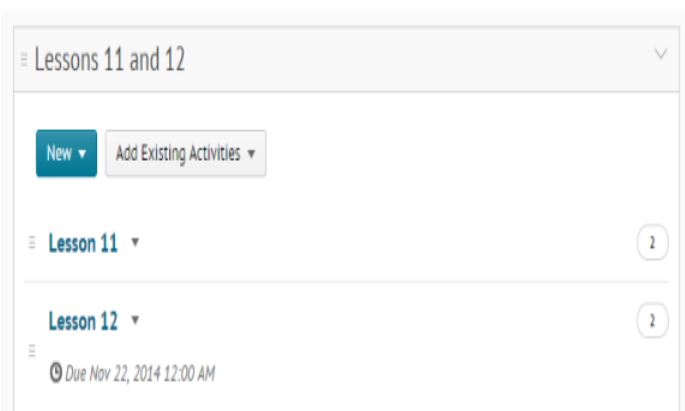
When you want to create a whole new lesson comprised of multiple activities.
Without combining your activities into a module, they will appear as separate and unrelated. By combining learning activities into modules, you provide a structure for the student, as well as a single point of entry into those activities from a Class Plan event.

When you are teaching in a block schedule.
If you are teaching in a block schedule, you can combine modules to so that students have only one module to visit that day. This also allows you to provide them with a single plan event for that day linked directly to that module. In the image below, the teacher dragged and dropped lesson 2 into lesson 1 and renamed the lesson 1 module to be Lessons 1 and 2. Notes the indenting indicating that Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 are sub-modules of the Lessons 1 and 2 module. The teacher can now link students directly to the Lessons 1 and 2 module from the class plan.
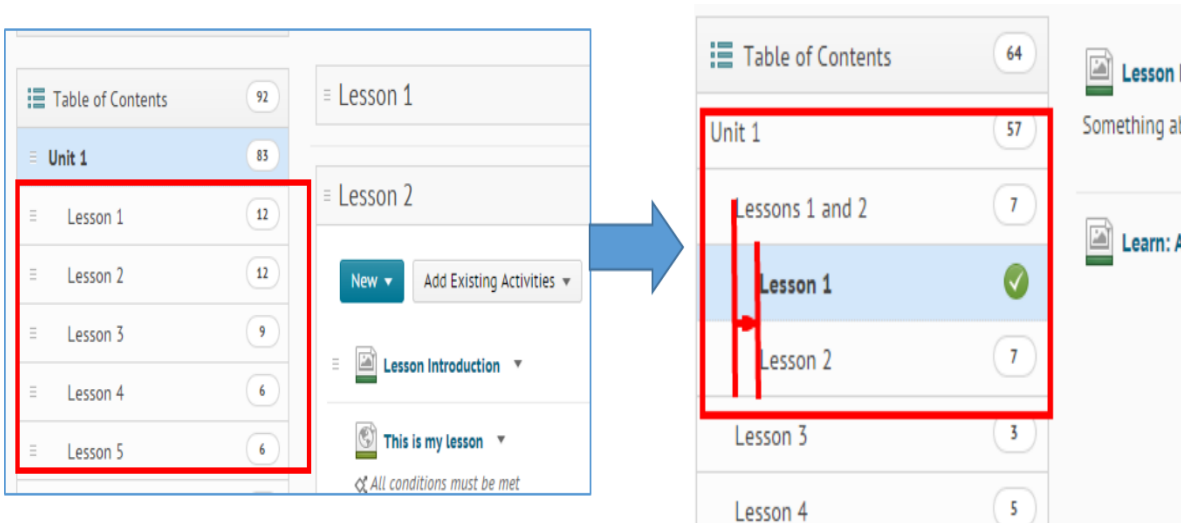
News Promising Practices

The Online High School platform features a News tool at both the School Home and Class Home pages. The News tool replaces the Announcements tool inside previous high school courses. Because of this, you may hear News items referred to as announcements.

Promising Practices Recommendations:
- News items should be informative, engaging, entertaining, individualized and encouraging messages to whole classrooms or groups of students whenever possible.
- Weekly all-class announcements pointing out the highlights of the coming week should add the teacher's "voice" to the course without replicating the function of the Class Plan (calendar). Limiting the number of unnecessary announcements will reduce the subsequent number of text messages and emails triggered by student's notification settings.
- K^{12} recommends that teachers use release conditions, the {FirstName} replacement string, QuickLinks to course content, and multi-media to create engaging and personalized News in response to student effort and performance in a classroom. When written in the first-person voice, such News items increase the level of teacher-presence and individuality experienced by the student. News items used in this way can place teacher instructional guidance directly in front of the student each time they enter the course.

Examples of the use of release conditions and replacement in encouraging and instructional News items:

- You're Making a Great Effort!
  Hi {firstname}!
  I noticed you worked on the first three lessons and took the first three quizzes in the course. Congratulations!! Sometimes the hardest part in an online course is to just get started. And you know what they say: the longest journey starts with the very first step. In this case, the first 3 steps!
  Keep up the great work!
  (*Release Conditions*: All students with activity on the last screen of lesson 1, lesson 2, and lesson 3, and with submissions of quiz 1, quiz 2, and quiz3)
- A Valiant Try – How About Some Help!
  Hi {firstname},
  The unit test didn't go so well, did it? Don't be discouraged! I know you worked through all of the lesson in the unit – sometimes you just have to try again! If you'd like another chance at the test, just fill out this **worksheet** while you review the following activities in the unit:
  - 2.01 Exponential Expressions and Equations Part I, 2.04 Learn: Exponential Growth, and MathCast: Compound Interest
  Then submit the worksheet to the Unit 1 Second Chance dropbox. Once I see that you completed the worksheet, I'll clear your previous attempt at the test and you can try again.

I KNOW you can do better – good luck!
(*Release Conditions*: All students with a score of <60 on the unit test and activity on the last activity in lessons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Using Powtoons to Create News Items

Submitted by Theresa Vierra at CAVA San Mateo

I am using Powtoons for News. After sharing it with YouTube, you can get an embed code for your class.

- Teachers can get a free account @ https://www.powtoon.com/lp/toonup/
- I recommend using one of Powtoons creations and editing them.
- After you create the Powtoons and save it, share through YouTube.
- After a few minutes, you will get an email saying:

  > "Here is the URL to your YouTube video:
  > https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ooVNpLxt4s&rel=0
  > View your Powtoon: https://www.powtoon.com/online-presentation/f6lzAjLAw5B/healthy-news-113015/"

- Open up your You tube video and click share
- You are now given an embed code that works in K^{12}:

  <iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/8ooVNpLxt4s" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

Note: You have to pull Powtoons up through YouTube, because for some reason, K12 blocks Powtoons, otherwise. This is the "workaround".

News Tool Tips from Teachers and Super Users

- Click this link: http://screencast-o-matic.com/u/eZPJ/MrsSaporitosNewsItems to view a demonstration video containing several tips for News items, including using PowerPoint to create them, using Release Conditions, and several other topics. – *created and submitted by Holly Saporito at TXVA*
- I also use quizlet.com, where I create a flashcard set, embed them into my class, and they have audio built in. The kids can turn it on or off. https://quizlet.com/78080485/unit-5-review-flash-cards/ - *submitted by Theresa Vierra at CAVA San Mateo*

Groups Promising Practices

The Online High School platform features the ability to assign students to groups inside a course. Groups can include students from multiple sections in the course. Course groups can be used by teachers as a way of organizing students in their course, or a way to provide individualized pathways through a course by using group membership as a release condition (e.g. students can be assigned to groups related to specific novels thy chose to read). There is no limit to the number of groups a teacher can create in a course, and no limit to the number of groups into which a student can be enrolled. Groups can be manually created by the teacher, auto-created by the system, or self-enrolled by the students themselves. Students can see the names of other students in their group, as well as the group name. Benefits of the use of groups in a course include:

- Tools like Gradebook , Dropbox, Class Progress, Classlist, and Insights Reports can use membership in a Group as a filter, improving the usability and readability of those tools.
- Group membership can also be used as a Release Conditions
- Teachers can make copies of discussion forums and topics and assign them to different groups of students, ensuring they have manageable discussions.

Promising Practices Recommendations: It is recommended that teachers use groups to differentiate instruction, and as an organizing method when sections are not used in a course. Because group names can be seen by students, care should be taken when naming them so as to not be offensive in any manner.

Using Groups and Release Conditions to Assign an Alternate Assessment or a Project to a Student

Many K^{12}-designed courses come with alternate, optional assessments or honors projects teachers can choose to use if they wish. Teachers can use groups and release conditions to easily assign alternate assessments and projects to students.

- Begin by creating a group where you can put students who will take the assessment

- Go to the alternate assessment

- Place a release condition on the assessment that the student must be a member of the newly-created group to see the assessment

- Make sure to unhide any hidden assessments by publishing the item after the release condition is set. By default these items will be in draft mode so students cannot see them. Even if a student fulfills the release condition, they will still not see items in draft mode.

- Do the same for the item's dropbox folder (if applicable) and grade item

- You may need to unhide the grade item so students who fulfill the release condition can see it

- When you want to assign the alternate assessment to a student, place the student in the group. The release condition is then met and the student can access the assessment

Click HERE to watch a video (4:08) covering these steps.

Note that teachers will need to use these steps to assign Honors projects to specific students (not the entire class), especially if the project has a due date. Otherwise all students will see an overdue status if they do not complete the project if a due date is assigned to the project.

Create a Release Condition

Release this item when the following condition is met:

Condition Type

Group Enrollment ▼

Condition Details

Group

-- Select Group -- ▼

-- Select Group --
Alternate Asessment Groups
   Unit 1 Alternate Assessment

Gradebook Promising Practices

The K[12] Online High School platform features a robust gradebook tool. While it is very configurable to meet a wide variety of needs, the 'stock' gradebook is configured in such a manner as to:

- Meet the most typical school use of gradebooks
- Take advantage of the K[12] course design that uses relative point value to "weight" items in a course
- Assign grade items to categories that
    - Can guide teachers to the types of assignments for which students require more assistance
    - Supports alternate weighting in the gradebook
- Progress views in the system are updated in real time and accurate

Promising Practices Recommendations: K[12] recommendations include:

- Teachers should choose their school's Grade Scheme as part of the course set-up to ensure accurate recording of grades in the TotalView Student Information System.
- Teachers should Release Final Grades at the beginning of the course so students can see their grade during the semester. Otherwise students will not see their grade.

- Teachers should use the default grade item categories so that near-future data analysis tools and supports any weighting.
- The 'Drop Ungraded Items" and "Automatically keep final grades updated" settings should be kept as enabled so as to ensure accurate and updated course grades are being displayed throughout the system.
- Strongly recommend that teachers get clearance from their academic leaders when employing weighting in their gradebooks, and to seek assistance in the weighting configuration from the Academic Services team due to the complexity of those settings.
- Use the Grade Item Statistics tools to review student performance and identify students requiring assistance.

The Relationship between the Online High School Gradebook and Associated Tools

There is often confusion surrounding the connection between course activities (e.g. quizzes, dropboxes, discussions, etc.) and the Grades tool (a.k.a. Gradebook). This document is aimed at clarifying the relationship between course activities and the Grades tool.

Understanding the Relationship between Tools and Grades

Most high school courses are made up of a combination of Quizzes, Dropboxes, and Discussions. It is important to note that each of these items is specific tools. Grades (a.k.a. the Gradebook) itself is also a specific tool.

Items created in the Grades tool are call "Grade items" and serve to store scores or other data relevant to a student's performance on course-related activities.

Grade items can exist alone, having no connection to content or activities in the course. For example, a teacher can create a grade item called "Sept 28 Participation" in which she manually records a participation grade for attendance at a live ClassConnect session. There is no item inside the course related to this grade item.

Similarly, **course activities** made using the quiz, dropbox, or discussions tools **can exist in the course without having a corresponding grade item** in the Grades tool. For example, a teacher may use the quiz tool to create a self-check quiz for students that is purely intended for the student to be aware of their own understanding of a concept. It is not the teacher's intention to have this count for or against the student's grade. So the teacher does not create a Grade Item for the activity.

The number of points a student can earn on a quiz, dropbox, or discussions is called the _score_.

The corresponding grade item in the Grades tool for an activity stores the _grade_. Most often, the grade is equal to the score. In a way, the grade item is simply a container into which the score is stored.

When you DO want the activity in the course to appear in the Grades area, you must create a grade item and then connect the activity to that grade item. When this is done, the _score_ can be set to automatically populate the _grade_ for the related Grade item. For example, a teacher creates an original quiz called "Animal Biomes Quiz". She then creates a grade item called "Biomes Quiz" and connects the quiz to the grade item. When set up correctly, the _score_ generated by about animal biomes quiz for a student is auto-entered as the _grade_ in the Biomoes Quiz grade item.

When you first get access to your course offerings, this work has already been completed for you in advance by K[12] during the publishing process. However **if you create new course activities and want them to appear in the gradebook, you need to create grade items for those activities and connect them to each other.**

Managing Activities and Grades

Because activities (quizzes, dropboxes, and discussions) **and Grades are all separate tools, changes to one will not automatically be reflected in another.**

Examples:

- Placing a quiz into Draft mode in the content does _not_ hide the grade item from the students' Grades tool.
    - In this example, the teacher would need to separately set the Grade Item to "Not

visible".

- Deleting a dropbox from the course completely does not delete the related grade item in the Grades tool.
    - o In this example, the teacher would also need to separately delete the grade item for the dropbox assignment from the Grades tool.
- Setting a Start Date on a grade item for a discussion does *not* prevent students from accessing the discussion before that date.
    - o In this example, the teacher would need to set a start date for the Discussion forum itself.
- When access to and visibility of a quiz in a course is controlled by a release condition, the related grade item is not automatically controlled by the same release condition.
    - o In this example, the teacher would need to explicitly set the same release condition on the Grade Item to stop students from seeing until they meet the release condition.

Changing Grades

Teachers often must make changes to the scores on students' quizzes, dropboxes or discussions. Perhaps they realize a question was incorrectly written, so they need to add a point to a score of the quiz. A dropbox rubric may have been incorrectly set up, so the students who earned a 3 in a category actually need to score a 5. A student might post a late post to a discussion that more clearly indicates their understanding of a concept, so the teacher wants to add a few points to their already scored work.

Keep in mind how grade item really is a container into which course activity scores are stored. In addition, recall how changing an activity does not automatically change the related grade item and vice versa.

Because of these two key points, **it is important that changes to scores be made in the *activity tools* themselves, and not in the associated Grade Item.**

For any item that is a "quiz", "dropbox", or "discussion", **teachers should do all grading and score adjustments in the tool itself rather than in the Gradebook** for this reason.

Example:
- Teacher Chris Robertson assigns 1.01 quiz to his class. This is a computer-scored quiz. Student A.J. Tyvand earns an auto graded score of 6/10 when he takes the quiz in the online high school
- In Mr. Robertson's course he allows a student to review their missed quiz questions and Kmail the missed questions, with proper solutions, to Mr. Robertson for after-the-fact additional credit. In this case student A.J. takes that action and submits the extra

work to Mr. Robertson
- Mr. Robertson in turn wants to update A.J.'s grade to 10/10
- If Mr. Robertson manually does update A.J.'s **grade** on the item in the Grades tool, that **score** would not be updated in the Quiz tool, creating confusion. When AJ looks at the list of scores in the Quiz area of his Course Progress view, he'll still see the **score** of 6 out of 10. But the **grade item** for the quiz would show 10 out of 10
- Instead, Mr. Robertson should enter the Quiz Tool, locate 1.01 Quiz and manually enter A.J.'s 10/10 there. This will ensure that both the Gradebook, the tool itself, and Progress all have accurate information for A.J.

Understanding the Progress View

As illustrated in the previous section, it should be clear that the information about *scores* in the Progress view can - if a teacher is not careful - fail to match the *grades* shown in this same view.

How to Filter Active/Withdrawn Students in the Gradebook

Some schools require that a withdrawn student receive a grade in a course before they are withdrawn. When students are given a grade and then withdrawn they still appear in the gradebook. Currently there is no way to remove withdrawn students from the gradebook, but there is a way to filter active vs. withdrawn students in the gradebook using groups.

To do this:

- create a new group category ("active students")
- using the "# of Groups" option, create 1 group ("active students")
- ensure "auto-enroll new users" is selected
- then create the group

This will create one group that has all students in the course enrolled in that group and will automatically add new enrollments.

As students are withdrawn from TotalView Schools, the teacher can remove the students from the "active students" group. Then in the grades tool use the "View by Groups" option and select the "active students" group. This will display the "active students" group and thus filter out the withdrawn students.

Grading and Feedback Promising Practices

The K[12] Online High School platform provides new and added functionality that permits teachers to provide more robust feedback to students on their submitted work. Additionally there are often several ways to approach the task of scoring and providing feedback and grades to students on assignments and assessments.

**Promising Practices Recommendations:** K[12] recommendations include:

- Feedback should be provided to students as rapidly as possible: preferably within 24 hours but no more than 72 hours.
- Read/view all files submitted to a dropbox to stop "unread items" alerts from appearing for the teacher.
- Use video notes when appropriate to provide feedback to student dropbox files when appropriate and to reduce the time it takes to provide feedback.
- Use QuickLinks in assignment feedback to point student back to existing course content.
- Provide students with remedial instruction as part of the feedback.
- When feedback is best served via a screencast (e.g. screen recording of a teacher completing a math problem), teacher should upload these as Video Notes while in the Insert Stuff tool, and then embed those videos as the feedback for the appropriate assignments.
- Teachers should refer to provided training to learn the many ways to approach scoring, providing feedback on, and assigning grades to different types of assessments and assignments in order to find the process that works best for them.

Should I Grade in the Tool or in the Gradebook?

To answer this question, it's important to understand how the individual course tools communicate with the gradebook.

Communication between Tools and the Gradebook is One Way Traffic

The quiz tool, discussion tool, and dropbox tool act as separate tools that communicate via one-way traffic to the gradebook. The gradebook does not send any information back to the individual tools.
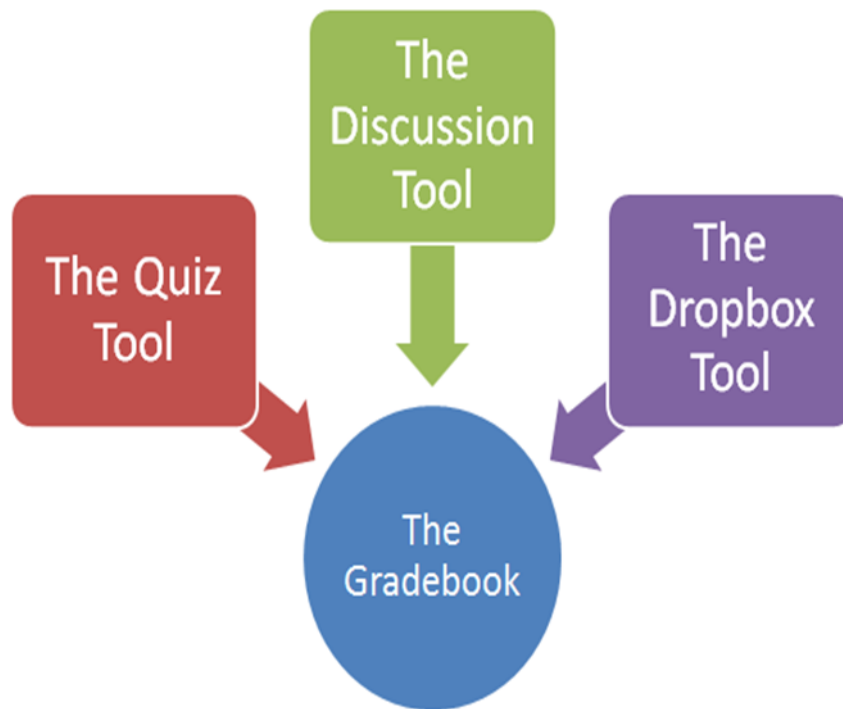
For example, if a teacher grades quizzes from the gradebook and not the quiz tool, the grades will appear in the gradebook, but grades will not appear in the quiz tool when the teacher views the student grades in the quiz tool. If the teacher grades the quizzes in the quiz tool, the grades will appear both in the quiz tool and in the gradebook. The grades flow from the tool to the gradebook, but not vice versa.

An analogy is to imagine a teacher grading individual papers and recording the scores in the gradebook. If the teacher grades the individual paper, writes the score on the paper and in the gradebook, then the grade would appear on both the individual paper and in the gradebook. But if the teacher just records the grades in the gradebook, then the scores would not appear on the individual papers.

Regardless of whether the teacher grades from the tool or the gradebook, the gradebook will always be up to date no matter from which area the teacher grades.

Tools Generate Alerts in the Updates Widget

Another thing to consider is how alerts are generated. Alerts for ungraded quizzes, unread discussion posts, and new dropbox submissions appear in the teacher's Updates widget. These alerts are generated by the tool, not the gradebook. If a teacher grades quiz and dropbox items from the tool or the gradebook, those alerts will disappear. However, if the teacher does not grade a discussion post from the discussion tool but from the gradebook, then the post is still recognized as "unread" by the discussion tool and the alert remains. The teacher would need to go into the tool and mark the posts as read to eliminate the alert.
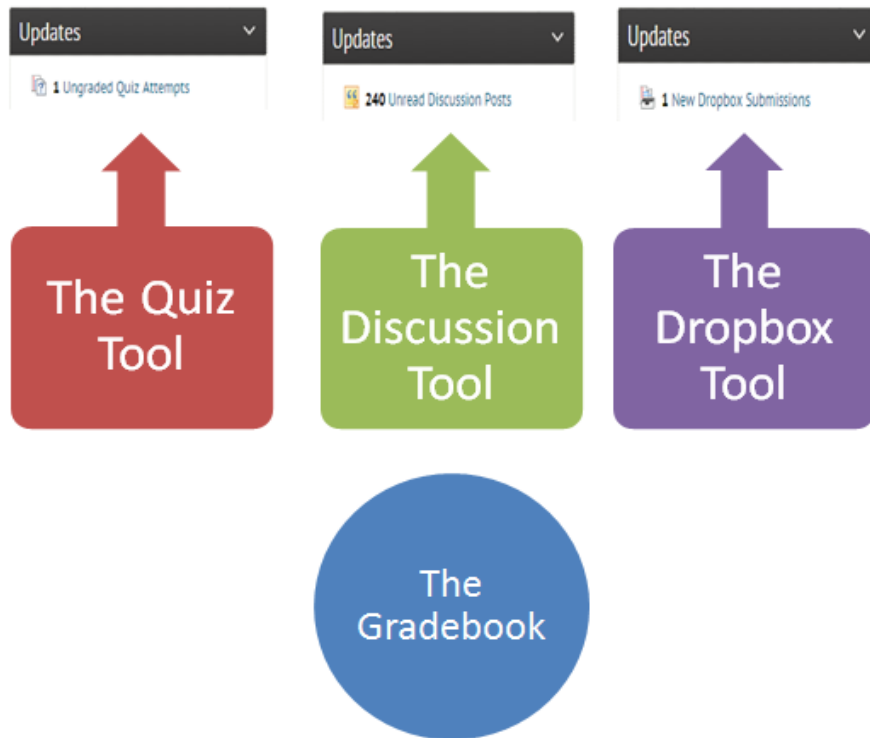
Grades and Feedback in the Progress Area

It helps to understand how the different areas within the Progress tool receive information from other areas of the course. The "Grades" area of Progress talks to the Gradebook. But the "Discussions", "Dropbox", and "Quizzes" areas within Progress talk to their respective tools. Thus adjustments made directly in the Gradebook for Discussion, Dropbox, and Quiz items would not show up in their respective tabs within Progress.

Similarly, feedback in the Progress area is fed there by the tools, not by the gradebook. For example, if a teacher grades from the dropbox tool and writes comments in the feedback area in the tool for the student, the feedback comments will appear along with the grade in the Progress area for that item.

If a teacher grades and provides feedback for an item from the gradebook, the grade will appear in the Progress area for that item but not the feedback. The student in this case would need to go to the gradebook to see the feedback.

Grades will always appear in the "Grades" area in Progress for an item regardless of whether a teacher grades from a tool or the gradebook, but grades and feedback will only appear in the individual tool sections ("Discussions", "Dropbox", "Quizzes") of the Progress area if the teacher grades from the tools.

Manually Inserting Zeros for Missing Work

Teachers can use the filter tools in the gradebook to search for missing grades and insert zeros for them according to school policy. Similar filters exist in the discussion, dropbox and quiz tools. Teachers can use the filter to insert zeros for missing work or posts in the dropbox and discussion tools.

However, there is a caveat in the quiz tool. *An attempt must be made on the quiz for the teacher to view the attempt and adjust the score for that attempt in the quiz tool.* If a student has not attempted a quiz, there is no place in the quiz tool to insert a zero. The teacher would need to go to the gradebook to insert a zero for a missing grade.

Personal Workflow Considerations

Each person has their own work style. A process that works great for one person may not be comfortable for another. One teacher may find the alerts annoying and thus do all their grading in the tools. Another may find that working in the gradebook is more comfortable and efficient for them and do not mind going to the discussion tool to mark all posts as read to turn off the alert. The gradebook itself has two different views: Standard and Spreadsheet, and some teachers who need to continually insert zeros for missing work may want to do their grading from the Spreadsheet view. Since there are several options on where to grade student work, teachers may want to try each one or a combination of options to find what works best for them.

Summary

To summarize:

- Tools report information to the gradebook, not vice versa
- Tools trigger alerts in the Updates widget
- Ungraded quiz and new dropbox submission alerts will disappear if teachers grade those items from the gradebook. Unread discussion post alerts only disappear if the teacher goes to the discussion tool to read/grade/mark posts as read

- The "Grades" area of Progress is populated by information from the gradebook. The individual tool areas of Progress, "Discussions", "Dropbox", and "Quizzes" are populated by information from their respective individual tools. Thus the "Grades" area is always populated with information regardless of where the teacher grades, but the individual tool areas are not populated unless the teacher grades from those tools
- Feedback appears in the Progress area for an item only if the teacher provides feedback from a tool. If a teacher provides feedback from the gradebook, the feedback will appear in the gradebook but not the Progress area. Grades always appear in the Progress area regardless of where they were input
- Teacher can search for missing assignments by using the filter tools in the gradebook and insert zeros. Teachers can also do this in the discussion and dropbox tools. However, teachers cannot manually insert a grade for unsubmitted quiz attempts in the quiz tool. They would need to do this in the gradebook
- Teachers need to consider their own personal workflow efficiency when deciding where to do their grading in the platform

Therefore:
- If teachers want the scores to appear in both the tools and gradebook, want the alerts in the Updates widget to reflect actual course activity, and want grades and assignment feedback to appear in their respective tools area in Progress, it would make the most sense to do the grading in the tools themselves rather than the gradebook
- If the teacher needs to manually insert zeros for missing grades, doing this from the gradebook is required for unsubmitted quizzes
- If a teacher does not mind going to the discussions tool to mark posts as read or chooses to ignore the alerts altogether, does not mind that the scores in the tool and gradebook do not match, directs students to go to the gradebook to view grades and teacher feedback, and finds that grading from the gradebook to be more comfortable and efficient for them, then they can do all their grading from the gradebook

Video
Click the below link to view a video created by Andrea Wells at Idaho Virtual Academy demonstrating and explaining the above concepts.
http://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/co61YPfRk5

How to Excuse a Grade

To excuse a grade:

- Go to the Item you want to grade
- On the Grade screen for the item, simply leave the excused item blank. **If the grade for an item is left blank, the points possible for that item will not be counted towards the student's final grade.** It is only when a numeric grade is inserted that the points for that item will count towards the student's grade

Note that only numbers can be inserted in the score box. If the teacher wants to have a written notation that the grade is excused, then:

- Click the Feedback icon for that item
- In the Feedback area, write your note, such as "excused". This will allow the student to see the note as well
- Click Save

Since no grade was inserted, the item can be considered as excused and will not count toward the student's final grade.

Note that once Feedback has been given, the Feedback icon will display a "sunshine" image, indicating that a comment has been made. This can help identify which items have been excused since the numeric score box will be blank.

Searching for Students with a Specific/Missing Grade Percentage

Teachers can use the Search Options to search for and display students with a specified grade percentage or missing grade. This is particularly useful when searching for students who are missing a grade or for inserting zeros.

- Go to the item you want to search or use the search tool on the Enter Grades screen to search the entire Gradebook

- Click Grade All in the Dropdown Menu if searching in an individual item

- Click Show Search Options

- Check the Score checkbox and select the item you are currently in

- Select the "greater than", "less than", "equal to", etc. symbol in the dropdown menu

- Insert the score percentage you are looking for in the % box. **If you are searching for items that have not been graded, leave this box blank** (see example on the right)

- Click the magnifying glass (search) button

The students with the specified grade percentage are now displayed.

Click HERE to watch a video (1:32) covering these steps.

Grading a Quiz for Completion

Submitted by Erin Landry at LAVCA

There are some times when we want to grade an item for completion rather than for accuracy, but still want to know what the student's true score on the assessment was.

Example: Pretest. Here are the steps to grading these items so that you still have the statistics needed.

- On your course home page, your updates widget should show how many ungraded quizzes you have.
- Clicking on the text will take you to Manage Quizzes which is where you need to go first.
- Find the assessment that has items to be graded
- Click on the drop-down menu next to it and select Grade
- You will now see a list of students who have completed the assessment and their grade.
- Click the Published to select all kids, or just click on the box if you have only a few students that need publishing.

How you set up your quiz to appear in the gradebook will determine if these grades are sent to the gradebook.

- If the "Auto Export to Grades" box is checked, the grades will automatically be sent to the gradebook and you'll need to override these grades. If this box is not checked, then your grades will not be transferred but you will still have to give your students the completion grade
- Click on the Grades tab
- Find the assessment you need to give grades to
- Click on the drop-down menu and select Enter Grade
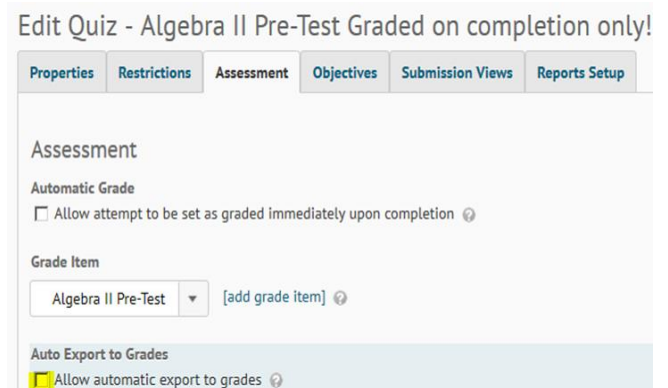
- A list of all students will be shown
- Two types of images will be shown for those students who have completed the assessment and those that started, but have not submitted yet
- Give all students that have a completed assessment grades (students with 2nd image above). Click Save and Close

Students who have not submitted

?		/ 25

Tips from Teachers and Super Users for Grading in the Dropbox

- I sort by submission date so that I am grading assignments that were handed in on time first. I make a detailed comment regarding each Test in the Comment box while the document is open to the left - it's one big improvement over the previous OLS. – *submitted by Beth Wilson at WAVA*

- I go in through the updates window, that way I know how many items need to be graded. If any of the submissions are late, I click on the key and press now so as to remove the alert, then I correct the item, add my response, and click publish. Then I go to the next student until completed. – *submitted by Michelle Hunter at WAVA*

- The number one time saver for me is filtering the submissions by submission date before I start grading. I then grade from top to bottom and if I don't finish an entire category, when I come back the submissions are still grouped according to ungraded submissions. – *submitted by Ken Martin at WAVA*

- If you are having students submit multiple items to the same dropbox, such as quiz corrections, open up two browsers. One for the dropbox and one for the gradebook. This will allow you to enter grades as you are viewing the dropdox item. – *submitted by Kathy Christianson at WAVA*

- My best tip so far for grading dropbox items is once I have graded the bulk of the items (like 100) and I have say, 7 new submissions, I click the box "only show users with unread submissions" then I click the search magnifying glass above. This brings up only the new unread items so i don't have to scroll all the way thru all items to get to the new ones mixed in alphabetically. – *submitted by Tracey Spencer at ORVA*

- Click this link: http://screencast-o-matic.com/u/eZPJ/MrsSaporitosdropboxgrading to view a demonstration video containing several tips for grading Dropbox items. – *created and submitted by Holly Saporito at TXVA*

Tips from Teachers and Super Users for Grading Discussions

- Click this link: http://screencast-o-matic.com/u/eZPJ/MrsSaporitosgradingdiscussions to view a demonstration video containing several tips for grading discussions. – *created and submitted by Holly Saporito at TXVA*

Tips from Teachers and Super Users for Grading Quizzes

- Create an answer key that includes frequently used comments. This will allow you to copy and paste instead of having to retype the comments. – *submitted by Kathy Christianson at WAVA*

Tips from Teachers and Super Users for Grading in General

- A general tip for new teachers is always to use multiple screens. Have a document opened on one monitor with standardized feedback that teachers use most often for particular questions. A teacher can have many on a single page so that he or she can quickly copy and past them for feedback. Having multiple screens helps me to speed the process up and saves lots of time. – *submitted by Ken Martin at WAVA*

- I set 1 hour each day to grade-I have it set on my outlook calendar. Students are now use to this and know, if they submit it by 1pm then it will most likely get graded that day. I get fewer questions and my inbox and grading amount stay low. – *submitted by Holly Saporito at TXVA*

Extra Credit Promising Practices

This section contains promising practices and teacher tips about extra credit.

Extra Credit Assignments & Allowing for Extra Credit Points

Submitted by Mary Moorman at OHVA

If I want to have an extra credit question in a test/lab/worksheet—here's how to make sure they get their points:
1. Grades
2. Manage Grades
3. Dropdown next to item name
4. Edit grade Item
5. Scroll down below the description box, below Grading, and Maximum points
6. Check box which says Can Exceed

<mark>NEXT!!!!!</mark>
<mark>Nothing will happen correctly unless you have ALSO checked Can Exceed for the Category</mark>!!!
1. Grades
2. Manage Grades
3. Dropdown next to Unit (Category) where the extra credit is being offered
4. Edit grade Item
5. Scroll down below the description box, below Grading, and Maximum points
6. Check box which says Can Exceed

Click HERE to view a video demonstrating what steps teachers must perform to include extra credit points in the final grade total. *Thanks to Shana Van Grimbergen from OHVA for providing the video.*

Tips from Teachers and Super Users about Extra Credit

- I used Khan Academy (khanacademy.org) this year. Simply 1 ex for a Level 2 skill and 2 ex for a Mastered skill in geometry. – *submitted by James Radulovich at CAVA*

Dropbox and Rubrics Promising Practices

The K[12] Online High School provides teachers and students with a Dropbox tool that allows students to submit assignments to teachers, and for teachers to grade and provide feedback on assignments and assessments. Students can not submit a dropbox item without a file attachment.

Promising Practices Recommendations:
- K[12] recommends that dropboxes be used for the submission of teacher-scored assignments and assessments.
- Teachers can bulk download and bulk upload student submissions
- Teachers can create rubrics to help grade dropbox assignments and then associate the rubrics with dropbox items

Teacher-Created Video of How to Use the Rubric Tool

Submitted by Abby Brown of OHVA

Brief recap from a teacher: I remembered from my ETSU days that we had interactive rubrics that scored student submissions in our version of D2L. So…I went in today (my students had a writing assignment that was due last night) and I played around.

You have to create your rubric and associate it with the assignment you want to use it for, but once you do, you simply click the criterion for each level in the rubric it and it populates the student's score! And you're done!!! And it should count as feedback, too – so it would be killing two birds with one stone!

Here is the video showing you how to use the rubric tool in D2L:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_F7CQ-ByLZxckF5Nl94T2V4dHc/view?usp=sharing

User Profile Picture Promising Practices

The K^{12} Online High School features User Profiles that can feature such items as a user-uploaded profile picture, hometown, month and day of birth, social network profile links and other such biographical information. These are intended to help students and teachers to feel more connected and to help build a sense of relationship and familiarity with each other in the online learning environment. At launch, only the User Profile avatar image will be enabled for all users. Profile pictures appear next to student names in discussion forums, classlists, pager messages, and Progress views. Profiles are a global tool that cannot be turned on or off at different schools or in different courses. Users must upload their own images – there is no central manner in which to load images.

Promising Practices Recommendations:
- K^{12} recommends that teachers be required to post appropriate pictures of themselves.
- Students and Learning Coaches are encouraged to do the same, substituting avatar images (e.g. smilies, clip art characters) when they are uncomfortable uploading actual images of themselves.
- All users should be encouraged to maintain a single image of themselves, particularly during any single semester as other users may become accustomed to looking the image instead of the name inside classrooms.
- Use the View as User functionality to access profiles when inappropriate images must be removed.

Discussions Promising Practices

The K[12] Online High School provides a robust Discussion Forums tool that allows teachers to create prompts and both student and teachers to respond to prompts with posts and replies, allowing rich asynchronous discussions. The tools provided for the creation of these prompts, posts, and replies includes both rich-text, URL linking, QuickLinks to course content, and the insertion of images, video, and audio capabilities. These provide the ability for users to have engaging and multi-media rich discussions in courses and at the school level.

Promising Practices Recommendations:
- Use the provided Discussion assignments when provided as these can increase student engagement and the feeling of a learning community.
- When a teacher dislikes provided Discussion assignments, encourage them to create alternate prompts as opposed to removing discussion assignments altogether.
- Discussions should include no more than 30 students responding to a given topic or prompt. Create copies of Topics and assign them to sections of groups of students of no more than 30 students so as to create manageable discussions while engendering the feeling of a small learning community.
- Don't reply to every posting, but definitely read/review each posting for appropriateness of content.
- Delete any post including inappropriate content, but not before taking and saving a screenshot of the item for future reference.
- Groups can have discussions created for them to allow members to have group-specific conversations.
- Teachers should subscribe to all discussion forums and topics to ensure that they receive alerts when new posts are made to the discussion.
- When used at the school level, links to discussions must be provided in Plan/Calendar or News items, otherwise users will have no access to them.
- Use start and end dates to prevent students from beginning discussions too early or continuing them for too long: both behaviors do not create good discussion experiences and can increase the burden on the teacher related to discussion monitoring.

Switching Discussion Views

Teachers can switch the default view from Reading to Grid and vice versa in two different areas:

- Go to the User Menu
- Click Account Settings
- Click the Discussions tab
- Under Default View, select either Reading or Grid
- Click Save and Close or Save

The default view has now been changed.

Note that certain components of each view can be adjusted on this tab as well.

OR
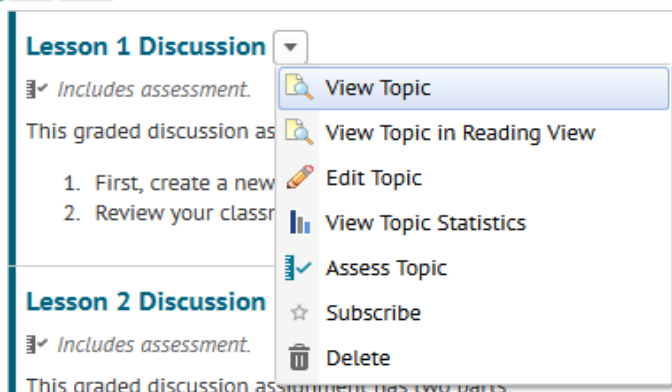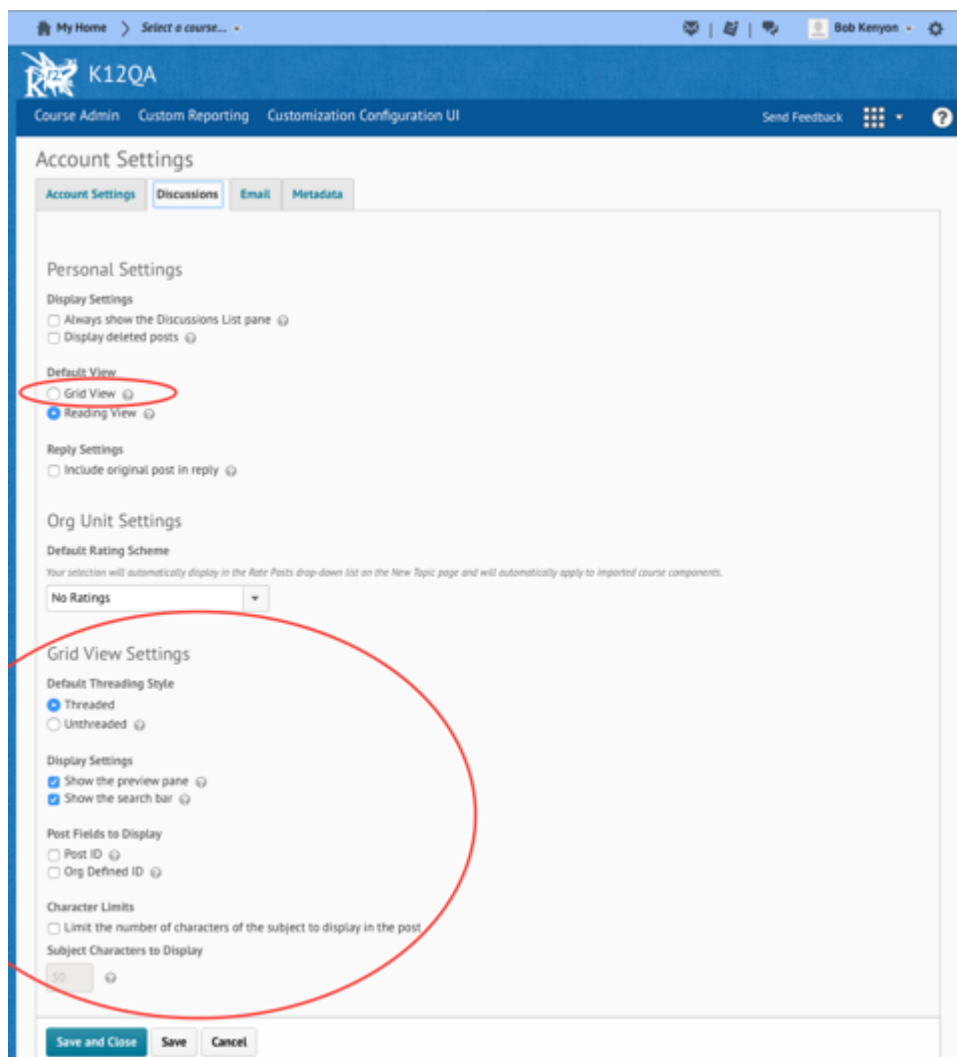
- Go to the Course Admin area
- Click Discussions
- Click Settings
- Under Default View, select either Reading or Grid
- Click Save and Close or Save

The default view has now been changed.
Students can change their default view in the first method above, under account settings.

Additionally, teachers can view an individual discussion in the alternate view on a one-off basis after a default view has been selected.

- Click the individual

discussion dropdown menu
- Select "View topic in [Reading/Grid] View".

That discussion will now be displayed in the chosen view.

Click HERE to view a video (2:08) demonstrating these steps.

Lesson 1 Discussion ▾

Includes assessment.

This graded discussion as...

1. First, create a new...
2. Review your classr...

- View Topic
- View Topic in Grid View
- Edit Topic
- View Topic Statistics
- Assess Topic
- Subscribe
- Delete

Lesson 2 Discussion

Includes assessment.

This graded discussion assignment has two parts.
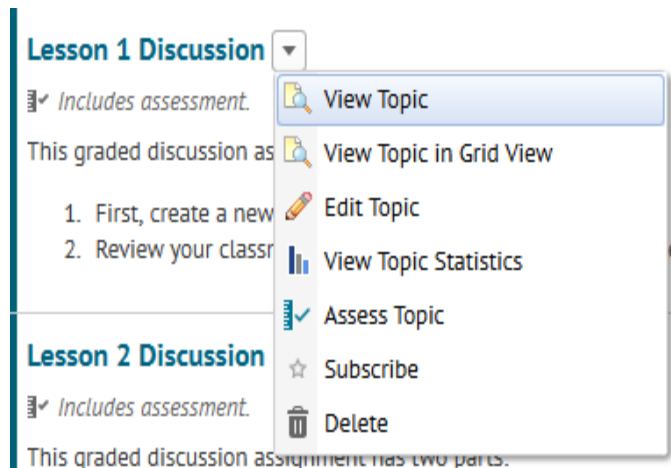
Helping Students Prepare Short Constructed Responses

Submitted by Matt Moore at Colorado Preparatory Academy

Click the link below to view a presentation on how to prepare students to give thoughtful, detailed, concise answers to questions, particularly broad and open-ended questions. This presentation also applies to live session activities, essay questions, standardized testing, and many other scenarios.

https://sas.elluminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/playback.jnlp?psid=2015-11-19.0957.M.1DE518C85D407D482694308A1C3FE5.vcr&sid=559

Using Current Events to Spark Discussion

Submitted by Matt Moore at Colorado Preparatory Academy

Click the link below to view a presentation on how to use current events to start a discussion. This presentation also applies to live session activities, spotlighting course content, essays, and many other scenarios.

https://sas.elluminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/playback.jnlp?psid=2015-11-19.0832.M.1DE518C85D407D482694308A1C3FE5.vcr&sid=559

Click the icon below to open the worksheet mentioned in the video.

Current Events
Discussion Worksheet

Teacher Created and Managed Items Promising Practices

The K^{12} Online High School provides teachers with a robust set of tools for creating course content. These include the ability to create original online tests or quizzes, dropbox folders, discussion forums, audio or video clips, checklists, surveys, and even files from the web or their own computer. In addition, teachers can manage content provided them in their courses as well as their added content. Teachers can prevent access to content through start and end dates as well as passwords. They can build individualized pathways through their course by controlling access and visibility of content through the use of complex release conditions.

Promising Practices Recommendations:
- Teachers should only add content to their course that they originally produced or have explicit permission to use in their course from the content authors/publisher.
- Teacher created or added content should:
    - Align closely to course objectives and state standards.
    - Conform to widely accepted accessibility standards such as sufficient contrast between text and background colors, image tagging, and closed captioning or transcripts of video and audio content.
    - Be appropriate to the grade level of students and topics addressed by the course
    - Follow sound instructional design standards for online learning
- Teachers should *never* delete content from a course, particularly when it is content that was provided with the course when it was created for the teacher and students. Instead, teachers are encouraged to *hide* content from student view and to move it to a hidden unit if necessary.
- Reorganization of course content should be approved by an instructional leader form the school to ensure that the quality of the course is not comprised.
- Only us Start and End dates to prevent students from accessing those course items before and after those dates.
- Set due dates on important high-point assignments, but not on daily low-point assignments like quizzes. This prevents students from quickly feeling overwhelmed if they fall a day or two behind.

Resources for Creating Items in Your Online High School Course

Teachers and schools may want to create items in and modify their courses. There are several resources available that teachers can search for how-to instructions and videos. It is important to understand that these resources do not show how to modify already-created courses, but show how to build items from scratch.

Please note that teachers should check with their schools before making any changes to their courses since changes may impact state and local standards.

Also note that teachers and schools should use caution when modifying their courses since course edits and modifications can "break" a course.

Description	Link
A searchable resource center containing text and video instructions	https://documentation.desire2learn.com/en
This site contains many videos showing how to create various course items	https://community.brightspace.com/?action=search&search=10.4&parent=%2fresources%2fvideos
"How to" videos on the Brightspace by D2L Community site	https://community.brightspace.com/resources/videos
"How to" videos on a You Tube page	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSxTdOzKAFOCZjXav1aCRQ

The Help button located on the upper-right and side of in your courses also links to the resource center mentioned above.

Classroom Set up Promising Practices

When teachers are assigned and given access to their classrooms, there are several tasks to be completed in order to prepare the online classroom for their students.

Promising Practices Recommendations: In advance of students gaining access to the online course classroom, teachers should:

- Fill out the Teacher Contact Information in the Course Materials section of the content with their contact information
- Set up their recurring ClassConnect sessions using the "Create New Session" link in the Class Connect widget.
- Create copies of discussion topics for each section or group of students of up to 30 students and use release conditions to assign each copy of each topic to only one of the groups.
- Write a welcome announcement with an embedded welcome video or Video Note introducing yourself to the students and giving them an overview of the course.
- In the Gradebook tool, select the grading scheme for the school in which the course is being offered.
- Insert additional content, lessons, activities, and assessments into the course to meet local and state standards.
- When creating assignments or assessments, create the gradebook grade item at the same time, setting the point value and selecting the appropriate gradebook category for that item.
- Hide lessons or activities that should not be seen by students by placing them in 'draft mode' – but do not delete them. If you need to, you can create a hidden (draft mode) unit at the end of the course into which you can move these items.
- Use the pacing guide provided in the Course Materials section of the course to create 1 single Calendar (Class Plan) item for each day in the course that lists the lessons, assessments, and assignments students are to complete that day.
- Set due dates for important assignments and indicate that they should appear on the Calendar tool so they populate the Class Plan.
- Set start and end dates for course assignments or assessments that should only be access during a specific period of time, such as unit tests and discussions. When appropriate, check the option to have these appear on the Calendar/Plan.
- Create groups if necessary to facilitate organization of students in your course or specific instructional techniques or goals.
- Create instructional and motivational news items based on release conditions reflecting important student behaviors in the course (e.g. a congratulatory one for completing the first lesson and quiz, an instructional one pointing students to a remedial YouTube video if they have not passed a specific assignment).
- Subscribe to all discussion forums and topics.
- Open the Course Progress view and click Settings: Replace any of the four indicators with others that may be of more interest to you.

- Open a single student's User Progress screen and click settings: Uncheck "Objectives" and any other tools that you won't using in your course.
- Adjust the number of attempts or time limit for quizzes as necessary to meet local needs.
- Enable TurnItIn (TII) plagiarism checking service on any dropbox assignment for which students will be submitting text documents that are not in the form of a template or worksheet.
- Adjust Advanced Originality Checking Options on dropbox folders with TurnItIn enabled.
- Click "View as Student" in the drop-down menu under the teacher name in the header to review the course from the student perspective to ensure proper settings and experience.

For more information, visit the "How to Set Up Your Course in the K[12] Online High School" course in K12Training.com.

Text Message Notifications Promising Practices

Students, learning coaches, teachers, and other staff can opt-in to receive text notifications about different events occurring in the K[12] Online High School (e.g. new post to a discussion, feedback received from a teacher, etc.) Text messaging charges may apply, and users are notified of this when they sign up for text message alerts using the system forms.

Promising Practices Recommendations: It is recommended that schools include student handbook policies related to text messaging.

- Indicate that those opting in for text alerts could be charged by their cell phone or mobile providers.

Setting Notifications

To set Notifications:

- Click on your name in the minibar
- Click Notifications

Now you are on the Notifications page. You can scroll down and set contact methods, summary activity and instant notification preferences, customization options, and exclusion options.

- Click Save when finished setting your Notifications.

As mentioned previously, many individual items in the course, like dropboxes and discussions, have the option to select and add it to your notifications. Keep an eye out for these options and add them to your notifications as you see fit.
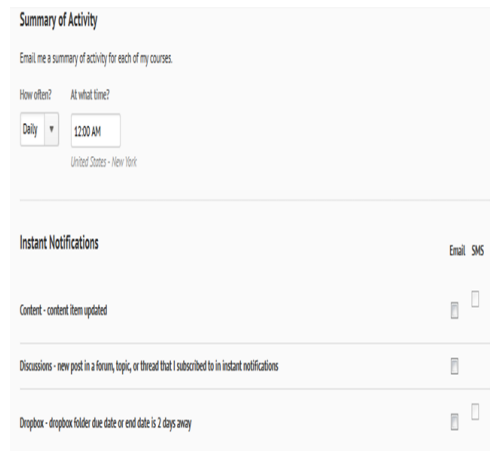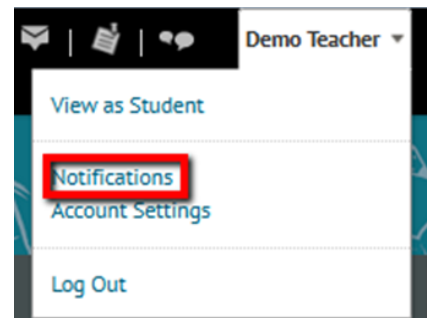
ePortfolios Promising Practices

ePortfolios can be powerful tools that allow students to save, reflect upon, and share samples of their work and their performance in their courses. Schools may want to consider policies regarding what kinds of items students should add to their ePortoflios, whether or not teachers can/should add items to student ePortfolios, and when/if students can share their ePortfolios with others.

Best practices, considerations, and handbook information TBD.

Intelligent Agents Promising Practices

The Online High School platform features an Intelligent Agents functionality that teachers can use to automatically generate email-based (*not K-Mail-based*) alerts to be sent to students and/or their Learning Coaches, parents or other users who audit (monitor) their progress and performance. This occurs when the teacher adds a replacement string for the student and auditor's email addresses. Intelligent agents are triggered by a user meeting release conditions set by the teacher according to a schedule and frequency also set by the teacher.

Promising Practices Recommendations:

- Since intelligent agents are email-based, schools should use caution when using Intelligent Agents. The quality of email addresses in the system can impact whether or not these alerts are received as intended. Schools requiring close monitoring and record-keeping of family communication should use Intelligent Agents as a supplement to the use of K-mail.
- In addition, these schools should require the teacher to receive a copy of the Intelligent Agent alert by including their email address in the BCC area of the intelligent agent, thereby creating a written record of Intelligent Agent alerts sent. These can be used to prompt the creation of Notes in K-mail about the intelligent agent having been sent.
- It is recommended that Intelligent Agents be used for both positive and negative feedback to users (i.e. don't only use it when students are under-performing…use them for encouraging and congratulatory purposes as well.)

Release Conditions Promising Practices

Promising Practices Recommendations:

- Release conditions release items, but do not take them away
- For example, a teacher sets a release condition on a News item that if a student gets below a 70% on a quiz, a "try again" message appears in the student's News area. If a student gets below a 70% on the first quiz attempt, they get the message. If the student gets above a 70% on the second attempt, the "try again" message does not disappear. It was simply released based on the student meeting the initial "below 70%" condition.
- Items with release conditions do **not** appear on the student's Class Plan until the condition has been met
- For example, if a teacher sets a release condition on Quiz 1, the quiz will not appear on the student's Class Plan until they meet the condition.
- Items with release conditions will not appear as overdue until the condition has been met by the student
- For example, if an item has a due date and a release condition set, it will not appear on the student's Class Plan until the condition has been met. If the student has not met the condition until sometime after the due date, the item will also not appear as overdue until the item is released. This can cause confusion for LCs and students
- Don't set release conditions on items with due dates (see above) and vice versa.
- Password protect items that get due dates rather than assigning a release condition. Then teachers can create a content item that provides the password and set a release condition on that. This way the item with the due date will appear on the student's Class Plan.
- For example, a teacher wants students to be blocked from taking the unit test until they finish all of the lesson quizzes. The teacher password protects the Unit test with the password "rutabaga". The teacher creates a content item titled: "Congratulations! You can now access the Unit Test with this password: rutabaga". Then the teacher sets a release condition on the content item that the student must complete all of the unit quizzes. When the student fulfills the conditions, they can then access the content item with the password and use the password to unlock the test.
- If a teacher does need to assign an item a due date and a release condition, they will need to train students that if they get behind, they will see their overdue items increase if they do not meet the release condition until after the due date.

- Set up conditions before users access the course

  Create all of your course materials and set up your release conditions before the course opens to users. This gives you a chance to check for mistakes in the conditions or for circular, contradictory, or unnecessary conditions. If you add new release conditions after users have accessed the course, users might be confused by resources disappearing. Since conditions cannot be reset, you also risk having users meet conditions before your resources are ready (for example, accessing a content topic before it is finished).

- Avoid unnecessary conditions

  Each condition you associate with a tool takes additional time for Learning Environment to process. Using as few conditions as possible to set up a learning path minimizes the amount of time that users spend waiting for pages to load.

  For example, say for your second week of class you have set up a content topic, a quiz, and a dropbox folder. You want to require users to read the topic before taking the quiz, and you want them to read the topic and attempt the quiz before submitting the week's assignment to the dropbox folder. On the dropbox folder, you only need to attach the condition that users attempt the quiz; you know they must read the content topic before they can take the quiz, so there's no reason to add this condition to the dropbox folder as well.

- Avoid circular references

  A circular reference makes it impossible for users to satisfy a set of conditions. For example, if you set the condition that users must view a content topic before they can access a dropbox folder, and then set a condition that they must submit a file to the dropbox folder before they can access the content topic, you have a circular reference. Users can't satisfy either condition without satisfying the other one first.

  Circular references are more likely to occur with long chains of conditions. For example, a content topic that depends on a quiz that depends on a dropbox folder that depends on a checklist that depends on the content topic.

- Avoid impossible conditions

  Ensure that your conditions are not impossible for users to satisfy. For example, a condition that users must achieve greater than 100% on a grade item would be impossible (unless bonus marks are available for the item). If users are unable to satisfy a condition, they are unable to access the content or tools to which the condition is attached.

- Avoid contradictory conditions

  Contradictory conditions occur when two or more conditions that cancel each other out are associated with an item. For example, the conditions "User must achieve greater than 49.9% on Grade Item 1" and "User must achieve less than 50% on Grade Item 1" are contradictory. Users could not satisfy both conditions at the same time; they would not be able to see the item associated with these conditions.

Example Release Condition Scenarios

- **Scenario 1: Release content based on learning ability and course performance**

  You can include additional content in your course specifically for users who need extra help and release this content to users who score below a specified threshold on a quiz or grade item. Alternatively, you could release a special dropbox assignment to course users who attain a high score.

- **Scenario 2: Release content in stages**

  To reveal content topics to users only after they have read prior content, attach release conditions on the later topics or modules that require users to view earlier topics. This can provide a clear path through the material and prevent users from becoming overwhelmed by a large table of contents at the start of the course.

- **Scenario 3: Release content based on enrollment date**

  If your course has rolling enrollment, so students can begin and complete the course at various times, you can set course materials and assessments to become available relative to a users' enrollment date. This allows you to provide a structured path through the course for every user regardless of their enrollment date.

- **Scenario 4: Customize content for groups within a course**

  If your course has group projects and you want to provide different instructions or resources for each group, you can create separate content topics or modules for each project and attach release conditions based on group enrollment. Group members working on one project will see content related to their work without being distracted by content not relevant to them.

- **Scenario 5: Use a checklist to organize activities**

  You can create a checklist that lists the activities users should complete throughout the course. For example, a checklist for the first week might include reading the course's introductory content, posting a message to an introductory discussion topic, and submitting a list of learning goals to a dropbox folder. You can set release conditions based on users checking off items from their checklist. For example, you might release a news item on your course's homepage once users check off that they have completed the first week's activities.
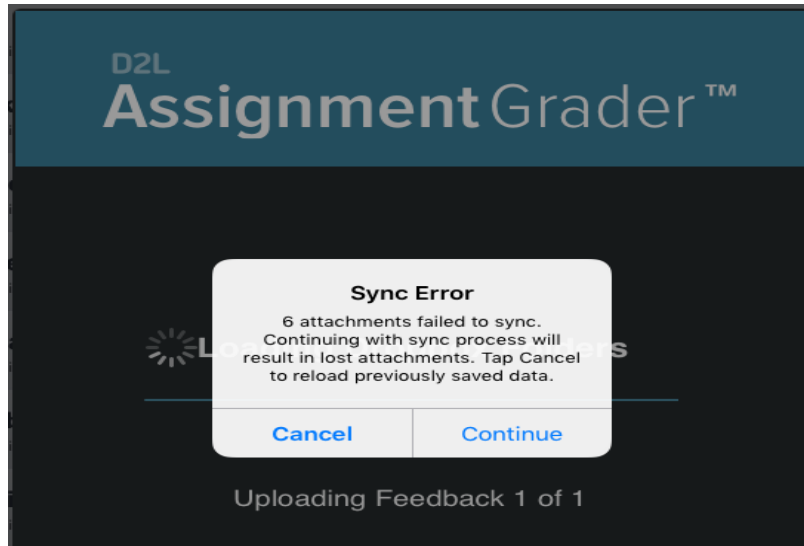
Miscellaneous Promising Practices

This section contains promising practices and teacher tips about topics that don't easily fit into other categories.

iPad Grader Tips

Submitted by Mary Moorman of OHVA

If you get the below error message, try clearing the cache in the D2L Program.

I also turned on auto-submit feedback and that will automatically sync your feedback files as soon as you click out of that student's test.