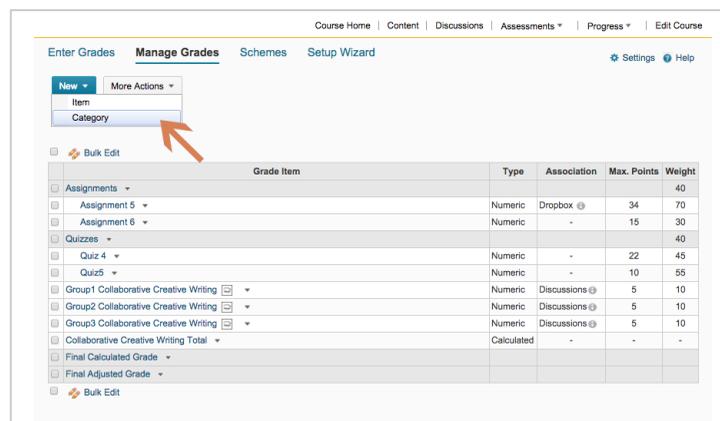# Grading Group Discussions

Upon creating groups, it's possible to also create group-specific Discussions and Assignment Dropboxes. To set up Group Discussions as assessment items, the most common workflow to facilitate grading is by Utilizing a Grade Category.

Creating Groups

1. Create the groups using the Groups tool (Edit Course/Groups).
2. Check the box to set up discussion topics for each group.
3. Provide a Forum Name for the new discussion topics.

Preparing the Gradebook

1. In Grades (Progress/Grades), click on the blue "New" button, selecting "Category".

2. Name the category to describe the group discussion topics.
3. Input the desired weight for the category.
4. Under "Distribution", choose the category option to "evenly distribute the points across the items".
5. Click "Save and Close".
6. Finally, click on Settings in the gradebook, and select the "Calculation Options" tab. Under Grade Calculations, select "Drop ungraded items".
7. Save.

Note: Dropping ungraded items is a critical step in this workflow. Treating ungraded items as "0" will penalize students for not posting in the group discussions they had no access to. If you are using "Treat ungraded items as 0" for the rest of your gradebook, see note at the end of this document.
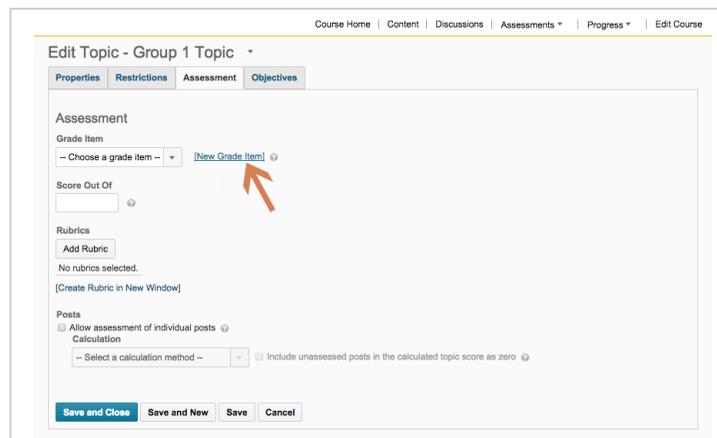
Preparing Discussion Topics for Assessment

1. Under the 'umbrella' discussion forum you've created (in the Discussions area of the course), choose "Edit Topic" **for each topic** that was created when the groups were created.

2. Select the "Assessment" tab and click on "New Grade Item".

3. Give the new grade item a name, to easily identify it as part of the group it relates to, and choose the related Category (created in Grades) from the dropdown menu to connect the two. Select "Save".
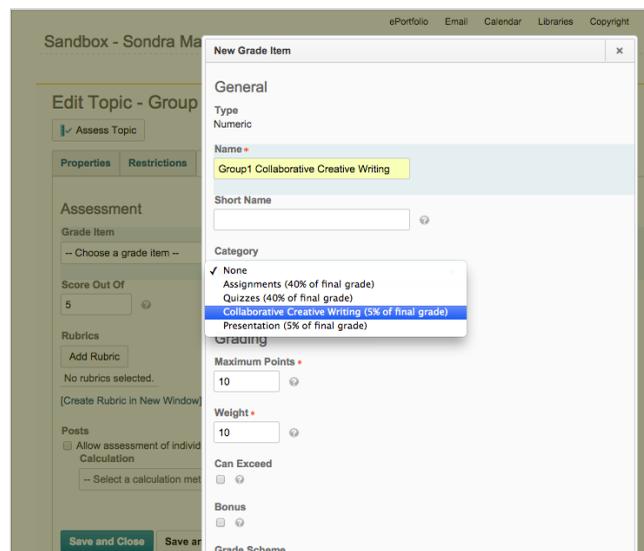
4. Enter a value in the "Score Out Of" box (the value should be the same for all topics within the group).
5. Select the "Save and Close" button.
6. Repeat these steps for each of the topics created for each group.

Grading Student Postings

Once students have posted in their group discussion topics, to grade postings:

1. In Discussions, beside the topic you're going to grade, click on the small black arrow and select "Assess Topic".
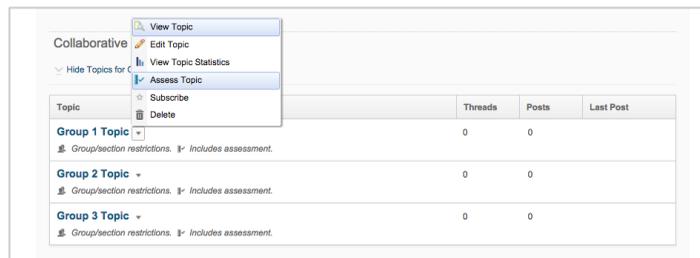
2. Click on the "Assessments" tab, and in the dropdown menu beside "View By", select "Groups", and then click "Apply".
3. When you click on a student's name, you will see all posts made by that student within the topic. Enter a grade for the student, select the blue "Save and Close" button, and proceed to grade the other students in the group, making sure to enter zeros for those who did not post.
4. Repeat for each group topic.
5. Each student should have a grade in just one of the discussion topics. Do not enter zeros for the groups in which the student is not a member, leave these as "ungraded".

NOTE: If you are using "Treat ungraded items as 0" for the rest of your gradebook, go to the category and select to drop all but 1 of the items in the category and the grading will work properly.

Calculated Grade Item

It is also possible to grade group discussions using a calculated grade item.