# Tips for Using Sakai's Gradebook

Setting up your Gradebook

- **Use a simple grading scheme of categories & percentages (or total points)**
  Sometimes instructors make their grading schemes overly complex. The result can be confusion for students (and for instructors too). If you'd like advice on simplifying your grading scheme, email us at sakaihelp@durhamtech.edu

- **Choose POINTS -- not percentages** (in Gradebook > Settings > Grade Entry)
  When we get calls from instructors saying students' grades "don't look right", the reason is often that the instructor chose percentages instead of points.

- If you "drop lowest" grade in a category, **ALL items <u>in that category</u> must have the same point value!**

- If you do NOT drop grades, then items within a category do not have to have the same point value. But be aware that the Gradebook uses **weighted averages** – therefore items with higher point values contribute more to the course grade.

Creating Gradebook items and entering grades

- When adding items to the Gradebook, be sure to assign the item to a category (if using categories) AND check the box to **include the item in grade calculations**.

- A few Sakai tools -- including Assignments and Tests & Quizzes -- can create gradebook items automatically for you and transfer grades into the Gradebook. You do NOT need to add items to the Gradebook for activities that use these two tools.
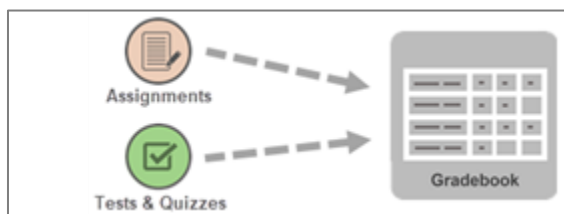
- If you see a **gray padlock**, it means you cannot enter or edit grades for that item within the Gradebook. A padlock indicates that the Gradebook item was created by another Sakai tool (e.g. Assignments or Tests & Quizzes), and grades must be entered or changed in those tools.

- Remember: When a student doesn't turn in an assignment or misses a test, no grade is assigned, and that student will have an empty cell in the Gradebook. **An empty cell has no impact on a student's course grade** – leaving a cell empty is the same as "forgiving" the assignment. To penalize students for missed work, the instructor must assign a grade of zero.

What do students see?

- To see EXACTLY what students see when they look at the Gradebook: click on a student's name in the Gradebook, then click on the **Student Review Mode** tab.
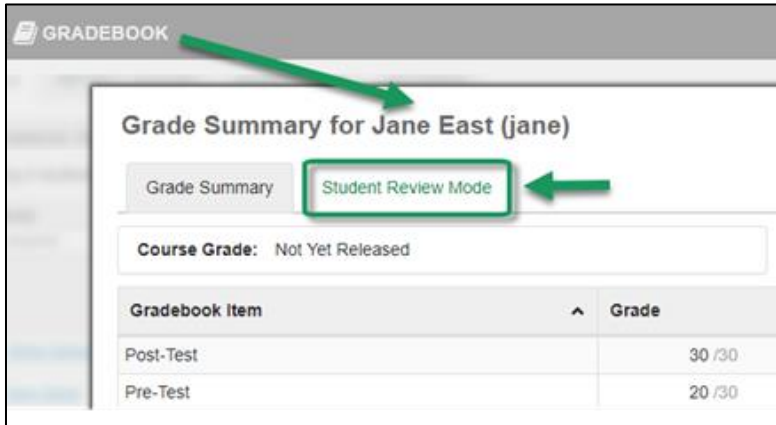
Tips for checking that everything is right

- In the Gradebook, be on the lookout for items that show a small **crossed-out eye** and/or **crossed-out calculator** icon in the column heading. These icons indicate that the item is **not visible to students** and/or **not included in course grade calculations**, respectively. To fix this, you can edit the item details and choose options to release the item to students and to include the item in course grade calculations.

- Alternatively, on the top right of the Gradebook, click on the **Bulk Edit** button to view the status of all of your Gradebook items. **Check the box** beside Gradebook items that **need to be released to students** and **included in the course grade calculations.**

- At the end of the semester, use our handout on finalizing grades [http://bit.ly/finalize-grades] to make sure everything is correct.

For more info on using Sakai's Gradebook tool visit Durham Tech's Sakai Resources for Instructors web site [https://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/index.php/Sakai_Resources_for_Instructors]