


Discussion board posting guidelines

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Students unfamiliar with the online learning environment may not understand the importance of discussion forums, or may find it difficult to participate. Some students may simply get confused and not know what to do or how to post. Some may not be aware of the relevant behavior on the Internet or be familiar with netiquette guidelines. And just like in the US-to-face classroom, some students may be hesitant to contribute because of shyness. So what can you do to introduce students to discussion forums, encourage classroom interaction, and build a supportive community among your students online? You can set some recommendations to help your students navigate this very important part of your course. Consider, for example, the provision of a PDF document, a section of the curriculum, or the topic of a discussion forum that lists some of the following basic rules. Introduce yourself. Welcome activities will help you get to know your classmates and help you create a positive educational environment. Use off-topic forums to talk to other students. Ask questions. If you find something confusing or want to know more, feel free to ask questions. Make sure to place your questions in the appropriate thread. Participate. Don't hide in the background; it's not fair to hide and let others do all the work. Contribute to the discussion to get as much out of the course as possible and keep your class involved. Don't dominate the debate. Share your knowledge, but not to the point of excluding others. If you have something to offer, please share it, but let everyone make an equal

contribution to the discussion. Be intellectually strict. Do not justify careless or illogical thinking. Challenge yourself and each other. Be tactful. Be critical of ideas, but remember there are other people involved. Be tactful and kind. You can hurt the feelings of the person reading your post. Forgive the mistakes of the other students. Don't fix others, even if you follow the netiquette rules and use good manners. Just because you disagree with a student's position doesn't mean he or she is wrong. Instead, offer a different perspective to encourage further discussion. Read the full thread before you post. Read all the messages in the thread before replying so as not to repeat what others have already said. Try to add clarifying information or a new idea to the discussion. Be brief. Don't waste people's time by publishing basic, repetitive information. Make your point clear and fast. Re-read and check your messages. Practice professionalism. Remember how you look online; others will most likely judge the tone and quality of your writing. Reread your posts and edit for clarity and Give your sources. If you use the source, bring it up properly. Give credit where the loan is due. Turn on the links where appropriate. Keep your privacy private. Respect the privacy of your classmates. U U repeat personal information shared by others. Report technical problems. If the platform is not working properly, please let me know as soon as possible. Use the netiquette policy. Use the institution's network etiquette guidelines to address the issue of respect between students and teachers. Setting the rules for your discussion forums is one of the best ways to encourage open dialogue, create a safe environment for expressing different opinions, and establish a expectation of respect. By following the sentences above, you tell your students the value you place on the discussion forum. For further guidance on how to develop the basic rules for discussion forums, refer to Virginia Shea's influential book, Netiquette (1994). Training and Information Systems (IIS) Is expected to take part in the Course Forum. You should also respond to at least two student peers' messages on the topic of the discussion board. Peer-to-peer responses should be thoughtful, reflective and respectful, while at the same time provoking further discussion using knowledge of content, critical thinking skills, polling and relevant information on the topic. Check out the resources below for guidelines on how to participate in an online job forum. Guidelines for Forum Messages Engagement in Online Forums are how you would in a constructive, face-to-face discussion. There should be virtually no repetition in the original posts, so it is important to get an idea of what is already being discussed before jumping into the debate. Messages should continue the conversation and provide opportunities for additional continuous dialogue. Good post includes: What do you think? What would you do? What problem or challenge will follow the original question? Do not dilute I agree, or similar, statements. Expand by bringing in relevant examples, concepts and experiences. Stay on the theme of flow - don't get lost. Include the basic idea of your post in the subject line. Don't just post a link to another document/source. Provide a brief overview/highlight of the associated link. Include quotes and include links and page numbers, etc. weave in your publication related preliminary personal knowledge derived from experience, pre-course work, discussion or reading. Don't fold just to accommodate. Don't repeat what has already been stated. Make sure your post addresses a new opinion or thoughts not yet discussed. Characteristics of quality online message discussion - Substantial - messages should relate to the topic and provide information, opinions, or questions, concise - messages should be clear. Long-term messages don't get many answers - Provocative - others to respond or object - Explaining - explore, explain or expand the concept of connection - Timely participation/reading DB regularly and respond in a timely manner Publishing initial responses by midweek gives other students time to respond. Logical - contain a clearly stated conclusion, backed by premise, reason, proof and grammar - a good, clear, short post, free of typos and fragments (similar to the tone and the way you could use in a professional environment). Do not use all caps. Online communication lacks verbal signals. Respond carefully, be clear, and keep your suggestions and messages brief. Useful links:: Treat your discussion board post like any other written document or response to the school. You want to create a process that works for you and use this process to produce attractive ideas that promote the online conversation you have with your classmates and your professor. You should strive not only for completion, but also for discussion and participation. Before you start: Read your question carefully about the request or discussion - pay attention to the number of words, citation requirements, and specific recommendations, such as timelines and response requirements. Do you just answer one question or do you have to answer the question and then answer the other? Set an agenda, scheduling will help you stay on the task and keep up, especially with two parts of the timeline and subsequent responses. Narrow down what exactly you should be achieving in your post (are you arguing for or against something, are you stating your opinion, are you summing up the reading?). Designing a post: Before you start taking a few minutes to watch your peer's messages. This will allow you to see what other people are saying and give you the opportunity to even quote some of your peers. Start by posting in MS Word or another app. This will give you the opportunity to explore your ideas without fear of a random presentation before you finish. Use headlines or headlines to guide the reader through your post. Use a warm hole. Don't be too sharp or forward with your right bat. Allow the reader time to get into his post without feeling lost or overwhelmed. Avoid jokes. Because you are not in a face-to-face environment, it is easier for someone to accept what you say wrong. Let's take a look at your audience. Your post will be read by your professor and your peers, so be sure to keep a professional tone. Responding to a message: Address your classmates by their names by responding to their messages. Don't dominate the conversation. Ask questions and point out specific details that you found interesting about other posts. Keep in mind that your goal in response is rooted in keeping the conversation going. Quote or return a few ideas from the post you answer. Be respectful and non-competitive. Be like more specific to encourage discussion. Adcock: I use a simple column for my discussion boards. Requirements are made for clarity and critical thinking and word counting/grammar. Langbert: I use the classification system 0 (without participation), 1 (not done reading, but did college try the answer), 2 (wrong or bad grammar), 3 (good but unoriginal or inadequate grammar), and 4 (good grammar, clear thinking, and original). Stoloff: Some professors simply count the number of posts as a class-measure of quantity and interactions. Some of them provide a column and assess the quality of the grade for posts. Discussion tips have been a major online course for decades. But Carolyn Spear, manager of academic design and access at Wichita State University, believes many teachers default to using them incorrectly. Teachers often start the discussion board of the assignment, asking each student to respond to the scheduled reading. To prevent plagiarism, some learning management systems are configured, either by a platform, or by an institution or teacher policy, to reveal the full content of the topic of discussion only after the student has already posted. It sounds to me most of the time that what they want is a deep writing assignment performed by each individual student on a topic with the potential for students to comment on the work of other students, Spear said. At least in our LMS, it's best to do it in a blog. Although Spear questions the usefulness of discussion boards, she doesn't think they should be discarded. Lively discussions are among the hallmarks of eye-to-face courses. Skeptics of online learning argue that it is difficult to reproduce their meaning online - but Spear is not a skeptic. If two people can fall in love with the Internet, they can learn American history online, she said. Speer is not alone in seeking to update the discussion forum as a key source of personal interaction in online courses. Educators have different strategies in place to facilitate student engagement. One approach is to emphasize the quality and thoughtfulness of the responses by number and frequency. Another puts the instructor in the driver's seat, steering the conversations to sharper ideas as they might with the front of the class. A goal that unites all these efforts? Building learning experience around collaboration as a means for deeper understanding. The discussion boards are probably familiar to the millions of students who have taken at least one online course, and many face-to-face students as well. While many faculty places less weight classification on the discussion board participation compared to exams or essays, the value of interaction between students cannot be underestimated, according to Vanessa Dennen, a professor of educational systems and educational technology at Florida State University. This is the place to keep keeping up with other people to see who the other people are in the class, Dennen said. It's a bond connection all sorts of self-effective beliefs, along with a sense of community. What online discussions can do is whether learning management systems are the main vessel for discussion forums in online courses. Designers at Blackboard, one of the first major LMS suppliers to serve higher education, initially drew on discussion forums that already existed in technical circles, according to Phil Miller, Blackboard's chief learning and innovation officer. At first, Miller said, many teachers used them primarily to allow students to introduce themselves at the beginning of the course. Over time, Blackboard began to receive requests for more innovative options like the Fish Bow Approach, in which an instructor and a handful of students discuss the topic while the rest of the class is watching. This evolution reflects the trajectory of many experienced online instructors. Charles Hodges, a professor of educational technology at the University of Georgia, spent the early years of his teaching career online, demanding that students respond to a discussion post inspired by this week's reading. Over a 16-week semester, the process became tedious for him, and difficult from time to time for his students to navigate. When Hodges noticed that most of his students were responding to the request in the last 30 minutes before Sunday's deadline, he decided instead to require students to make an initial post on Wednesday, allowing a few days to discuss the leak. He also clarified his tips by asking probing questions such as What was the most challenging part of the chapter for you to understand? Or how can reading material apply to your professional practice? rather than just asking for a bland summary of highlights from the chapter. Still, it felt a little rushed, Hodges said. A few years ago, Hodges landed on two big fixes that proved successful. First, he halved the number of discussion posts per semester. Second, it now allows students to respond to discussion questions with PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, and concept cards in addition to writing. For some discussions he makes explicit suggestions for multimedia projects that would improve students' understanding. Students spend the first week of each two-week discussion module creating their own response. They then spend the second week evaluating each other's work, using tips from Hodges, such as Compare your concept card with the rest of the class. What's the difference? They make less discussion, but hopefully those discussions are more meaningful, more in-depth, Hodges said. How to make discussion tips inclusive advice from Jesse Stommel, Executive Director of the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Mary Washington. Create a caring community. Ask genuine, open questions. Wait for the answers. Let me tell you. Wander. The model that it looks to be wrong and recognize when you are wrong. Recognize that the right to speak is unevenly distributed. Make the audition visible. No matter how many Hodges experiments, some students want to use only discussion boards for a minimum amount for credit, he admits. But motivated students in their class, many of whom practice teachers, form relationships that go beyond the classroom itself. They develop a little understanding among themselves ... They notice someone who teaches in the same class or in content, Hodges said. They make these connections pretty quickly. Dennen believes that discussion boards can help students who may feel overwhelmed by the material get a first-hand look at what they can get from their peers. Twenty-five percent of my class will feel uncertain about the topic initially. But then 25 percent of my class who feels quite confident about it and very gung-ho is going to go ahead with the discussion, Dennen said. They provide a model for the rest of the students what to do. Their model feels much more achievable than mine. Rote's online discussions also put students in marginalized groups at a disadvantage, according to Sean Michael Morris, director of digital learning at the University of Mary Washington. He is concerned that the formulaic discussion encourages students to adequately express themselves or even shape their identity - especially if every student, regardless of background or identity, is expected to weigh in with roughly similar reactions. By asking open questions, giving students the opportunity to have dialogue in an uncollected or unclassified space, a discussion forum can become an online learning site for the college to make it happen, Morris said. The instructor's role is the ultimate goal of the discussion board assignment is to get students to talk to each other. However, the instructors, rethinking their discussion tips, emphasize that they play an active role throughout the process. Some students may be shy or reluctant to participate early on. In the first couple of weeks of their courses, Dennen makes a point of privately sending emails to students who have not made a big contribution. Students sometimes assume that they are far behind their classmates, whose discussion boards make them seem like experts; Dennen helps reassure them that students often feel that way and they shouldn't let it deter them from participating. This is the most important time to give students super-time feedback and evaluations on their performance discussion to let them know if their was on the way or not, Dennen said. Another experiment, Alexander Laskin, a professor of strategic communications at the University of the South, told students themselves to each other, using only emojis. Students had to guess what each other's emoji chains meant. In Wichita, Spear has developed a model discussion board that is seemingly much longer than average - but she doesn't complain. She teaches quantitative methods and methods of research classes in the institution's criminal justice program, as well as an introductory course in the American government. For each course, she starts the semester by creating five or so topics of discussion, each on a pre-set topic. Students must respond to at least one thread, but they can respond as much as they want. Later in the semester, she offers students the opportunity to start their own topics by warning them not to duplicate others. Instead of assigning an assessment depending on whether the student is posted, or the number of words in response, Speer gives high marks to posts that promote the discussion. Every student who posts is built on what other students have said is like a face-to-face conversation. You can confirm and confirm all day if you want, Spear said. I don't give credit for that. Over time, the classification became more effective as Speer developed a routine of steering conversations to certain topics that generate discussion. Speer also notes down for cluster wiring any day, and even more so for cluster wiring on the last day before messages are due. She says she has never received negative comments about her discussion board approach to student evaluation. I'm not afraid of my discussion boards. They don't feel like they're working for me, Spear said. They're not heavy. These are not my discussion boards. The new variation of the popular Voicethread video creation tool has been a boon for innovators of online discussions. At Bryant University, discussion tips consist of a combination of written essay-like responses, usually reported studies, with experimental video messages that express their opinions or tell a story, according to Bonnie Budd, Bryant's director of online learning. These students across the country have different time zones, Budd said. They become actual conversation, not just a task. Budd also helped present the university with a discussion post format known as 3C, developed by Jennifer Stewart-Mitchell, a K-12 lecturer who often publishes curriculum ideas. Each student's answer should include a compliment, a comment, a connection (3C) and a question (me). It gives them a basis to get away from I agree, Budd said. Regular and substantial interactions by federal lawmakers this year have been seeking to improve the federal standard of engagement in online courses. Follow along with Inside Digital Learning here. Enthusiasm for online discussions varies, even among who use them. Patrick Patrick An assistant professor of educational technology at Boise State University, said the federal requirement that online courses include regular and substantial interactions between students and faculty sets the tone for the focus on discussion boards that sometimes lack the necessary context. Sometimes we over-discuss online, Lowenthal said. He believes that teachers are concerned, for example, about allowing students to work on the project during the week without being placed on the discussion board promptly. Lowenthal encourages instructors to be more flexible - an online programming course may prove to be less of an online discussion than a course on English literature, for example. Sometimes discussions are more effective if students in the class are divided into groups, who then report to the whole group after they talk privately. In some cases, discussion boards operate through social networks that students already use. Desire2 Learn (D2L), for example, offers teachers the opportunity for a single thread of conversation that extends throughout the semester. The company is also closely studying the functionality of the chat app at Slack's workplace, according to Kenneth Chapman, vice president of market strategy at D2L. I see a much greater understanding of what the online space needs to feel more like a campus, Chapman said. Training management systems providers are also working to automate some aspects of the discussion board's work process in order to ease the burden of time and effort on instructors, especially in high-entry courses with dozens of posts for analysis. Blackboard has developed and is currently piloting algorithms that can gauge the level of critical thinking that students use when answering questions. Teachers can receive readings that help inform the grades they assign. What we don't do is we don't judge the subject of the post, Miller said. We're not trying to say whether it's right or wrong. We simply assess the depth and structure of the post writing. That feature, particularly as it gets closer to assessing the content of the student's response, has received a bit of a pushback from instructors who aren't ready for it, Miller admits. But the discussion boards are not leaving any time soon. The impulse to improve them is also not. You can hear in the workshop about how to design your online class, you should have discussions, Hodges said. But you really have to figure out on your own what will work for your students in terms of excellence in how to facilitate these discussions. what are two guidelines students should follow when posting to the discussion board. name three guidelines for posting on a blog or discussion board

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