

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Provide clear direction



- Indicate participation expected, i.e., how many posts/replies, style, length, content
- Provide samples of what is expected
- Share how comments will be graded
 - e.g., grading rubrics (see links on the next page)

Ask questions that lead to answers you want to read



- Leads to an all-round better experience for students and teacher
- Problems, case studies, and other application questions/scenarios results in better student posts than essay questions
- Use prompts that invite students to tell stories or relate experiences related to course content

Start with easier to answer question(s)



- Familiarizes students with the process
- Perhaps also not graded and part of getting to know students
- Formative feedback is ongoing
 - helps faculty to focus on student learning
 - helps students to better understand how to improve

Model the way



- Be present on discussion boards
 - be careful to not reply too soon or to every comment
 - too much, too soon can inhibit students' response
 - also use 'comfortable language'
 - formal or 'perfect' replies may also inhibit students' responses
- Ask clarifying/guiding questions – as we would in the classroom
- Work with the student(s) and their thoughts
- Direct conversations with supportive feedback
- Encourage critical thinking.

Summarize each discussion board when complete



- Brings the ideas together in one place
- Useful as a study tool
- Evidence that we keep track of the discussion
- Save outstanding samples as a resource to share with students having difficulty

If not graded, keep track of students' participation



- Recognize excellent contributions
- Reach out to those not contributing; follow up as needed

Be realistic with your expectations



- For example, if you have one discussion board question per week and expect students to provide two posts and two replies then you will need to read 4 comments per student per week
 - 25 students = 100 posts per week
 - 50 students = 200 posts per week
 - 100 students = 400 posts per week
- alternatively discussion board questions on alternate weeks
- alternatively one post and one reply

Resources

Kelly, R. (2016, May 18). How to Foster Critical Thinking, Student Engagement in Online Discussions. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/how-to-foster-critical-thinking-student-engagement-in-online-discussions/>

Simon, E. (n.d.). 10 Tips for Effective Online Discussions. Retrieved from <https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2018/11/10-tips-for-effective-online-discussions>

Wesch, M., Darby, F., & Kelly, K. (n.d.). Welcome to ACUE's Online Teaching Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://acue.org/online-teaching-toolkit/#sec1>

Zambrano, R. (2018, January 8). How to Deepen Online Dialogue. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/deepen-online-dialogue/>



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