USU
Uniformed Services University

Using Discussion Boards to Support Face-to-Face or Online Courses

Guidelines for Exemplary Posting and Discussion Board Creation

Indicator	Defined
Exploratory	Recognition of some confusion/curiosity or perplexity as a result of a problem/issue arising out of an experience/course readings; posing a problem and enticing others to take a step deeper into it.
Invitational	Inviting others to think together, to ponder, to engage by asking questions, requiring information, opinion or approval.
Argumentation	Expressing reasoning (with analogies, causal, inductive and/or deductive reasoning etc) to trigger discussion
Critical	Challenging or counter-challenging statements/ideas proposed by others OR playing devil's advocate
Heuristic	Expressing discovery (similar to - A ha! moments or expressions like - I find it!); directing others' attention to a newly discovered idea.
Reflective	Examination of past events, practices (why/how they happened) or understandings in relation to formal content
Interpretive	Interpretation of formal content through opinions that are supported by relevant examples, facts, or evidence.
Analytical	Interpretation of content through the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of others' understanding
Informative	Providing information from literature and relating it to course content/topic of discussion
Explanatory	Chain of connected messages intended to explain/make clear OR statements serving to elaborate on the ideas suggested in previous posts
Implicative	Assertions that call for action OR statements whereby participants formulate a proposal/ decision about how to achieve a certain end based on the insights they gained from the course readings/discussions

Be wary of the following types of posts and questions that create these types of post, as they do not result in positive discussion board outcomes:

Indicator	Defined
Affective	Short posts that ONLY contain a statement of personal feelings (likes & dislikes) Short posts that ONLY contain appraisal (praising & thanking someone) Questions or comments that add social presence to the discussion but do not contribute new information.
Judgmental	Short posts that ONLY contain brief statements of agreement without elaboration Short posts that ONLY contain brief statements of disagreement without elaboration.
Experiential	Posts that only contain personal experiences, narratives, descriptions that are not followed by reflection
Reproductional	Repeating/reproducing the ideas mentioned/proposed in the previous posts without elaboration
Miscellaneous	Opinions that seem to be off topic OR statements regarding technical problems/course logistics

From Uzuner, S. (2007). Educationally valuable talk: A new concept for determining the quality of online conversations. MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching 3(4). Retrieved 4 March 2008