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

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What is a Discussion Board?
- Message exchange area
- Asynchronous tool
- “Pull” technology

Discussion Board Benefits
- Extends time for reasoned inquiry beyond class time
- Provides practice in critical reasoning
- Enables less talkative students to participate
- Allows students to answer each other’s questions

Discussion Board Benefits (cont.)
- Enables use of secondary sources in discussions
- Stores a record or archive of conversations
- Allows participation of outside guests (or distant students) in discussions over a period of time

Blackboard Discussion Board Tour
- Forums – Discussion Board areas
- Thread – A series of messages
- Search – Blackboard has search functionality on the Discussion Boards

Creating Discussion Board Questions
- A common element for learning in a typical classroom environment is the social and communicative interactions between student and teacher, and student and student. The ability to ask a question, to share an opinion with a fellow student, or to disagree with the point of view in a reading assignment are all fundamental learning activities.

Discussion Board Roles for Instructors

- Moderator
- Facilitator

Effective Discussion Board Questions

- Do not have “Yes” or “No” answers
- Do not have one correct answer – invite alternatives or expansion
- Suggest that there are degrees/gradations involved
- Use verbs that require complex thinking skills

Effective Discussion Board Question Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Poses a problem others can answer/respond to</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>Discusses reasoning as a way to trigger discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>Challenges others’ statements/ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heuristic</td>
<td>Expresses discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Examines past events in relation to present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive</td>
<td>Interprets content through opinion supported by facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Interprets content through synthesis of other content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Provides relevant information from literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory</td>
<td>Clarifies, elaborates on previous messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicative</td>
<td>Calls for action, presents a proposal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question Board Types to Avoid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Only contains personal feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgmental</td>
<td>Only contains agree/disagree with no elaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Only contains personal experience with no reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive</td>
<td>Recapitulates what’s been said as the author’s own work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Off topic messages, including technical requests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Directed Discussions

- Directed discussions
- Focus on a specific topic or item
- Example of directed, threaded discussion
  

Online Debates

- Online debates
- Divide students into teams
- Assign roles (moderator, note taker, rebuttal)
- Require research to support argument
- Encourage requests for explanations/defenses of views
- Result: a consensus position
**References (1 of 2)**


**References (Cont.)**