



Discussion Board: Strategies & Tips

- * Strategies to increase student participation
- * Tips for marking discussion board posts

What are IT discussion boards?

A Discussion Board is an IT communication tool “similar to the virtual chat, but is designed for asynchronous use, meaning students do not have to be available at the same time to have a conversation... [also] student conversations are logged and organized. Conversations are grouped into threads that contain a main posting and all related replies for easy retrieval.” (Retrieved April 20, 2004 from http://www.hamptonu.edu/con_ed/bbdiscussion.htm)

Sample Blackboard Discussion Forum (FCS 202)

Current Forum: MORAL STORY ANSWERS - blackboard assignment Read 24 times
Date: Tue Apr 13 2004 12:28 pm
Author: Balqees XXXXX <U21@zu.ac.ae>
Subject: Moral Story Answer

When I asked my friend about her opinion about what happened she said that she is disagree with the man's behavior for tow reasons. The first one is that she believes that every one has limited period of life and if she dies this is not consider as his fault and only the God who has the decision to stop other's life or let them to continue their life. The second reason is that if everyone steals to save other's life, so the life will be full of crimes. So, what stage and level is my friend in???

<< Previous Message Next Message >>

Current Thread Detail:

Moral Story Answer	Balqees XXXXX	Tue Apr 13 2004 12:28 pm
Step # 3 Balqees Moral Story Answer	Mariam XXXXX	Tue Apr 13 2004 1:13 pm
Re: bushra replied	Bushra XXXXXXXXXXXXX	Tue Apr 13 2004 1:29 pm

After reading Balqees's Moral Story i came to coclude that her friend is at level 2 in the moral development level. She states that if one person commits a crime, then our lives will be filled with crime. This refers to the 3rd stage in the level 2 which is Social System Morality. He also mentions that this is her time of life and god only hold in hand when its a person's time, this refers to our religion.

Who else agrees with me?

Why use IT discussion boards?

1. Self-directive
2. Allows ample processing time
3. Increases organization
4. Monitor progress and provide/receive feedback

5 Strategies to Increase Discussion Forum Participation:

1. Teach and review with students how to use BLACKBOARD (Bb):

- in-class demonstrations
- introductions / check'ins on Bb
- e-tivities (a) <http://www.atimod.com/e-tivities/intro.shtml> hosted by Gilly Salmon.
(b) Churchill, T. at University of Leicester, tc40@le.ac.uk

Helpful Resources (all links are working as of March 26, 2005)

1. A handout a professor provides to students on how to use Bb in his class:
<http://www2.austincc.edu/ghunt/Sp03/w47396DiscussionBoards.htm>
2. A easy to read handout that explains how to use the Bb discussion forum:
http://www.capital.edu/cc/it/bbhelp_discboard.html
3. How to set up Discussion Boards in Blackboard - easy to follow and many computer screen pictures http://www.capital.edu/cc/it/bbhelp_disccreate.html
4. Bb manual:
 - Instructor: http://company.blackboard.com/docs/cp/learning_system/release6/instructor/
 - Student: http://company.blackboard.com/docs/cp/learning_system/release6/student/

BONUS: Capital University Faculty Blackboard Help Centre (resource sheets)
http://www.capital.edu/cc/it/bb_faculty_help.html

2. Constantly use Bb

- post handouts in Bb (under course documents)
- direct questions about the course to the Q & A forum (see sample below)

1 Q & A: Ask your questions here :)

Modify

Remove

- o This is a forum for you to ask questions about course content, make comments about what you are learning, seek guidance on course assignments, careers; etc.
- o I will check this board 3x a week and when the traffic to the forum increases, I will check it every day.
- o Feel free to ask any questions you want. You can make anonymous posts (do not have to use your name).

Peace,

Dawn

[15 Messages]
[5 **New**]

5 Strategies to Increase Discussion Forum Participation, cont'd:

3. Use incentives

4. Use Bb in assignments

DISCUSSION BOARD QUESTIONS THAT WORK

Taken directly from Blackboard Support at the University of Alaska, Anchorage
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~bboard/instructor/tips/samplequestions.html> (retrieved March 31, 2005)

A. Avoid asking yes/no questions

Asking yes/no questions generates a thin discussion by allowing students to respond to a prompt briefly and with little reflection or critical analysis.

B. Avoid questions that call for purely factual answers

Questions that call for purely factual answers generally involve little debate, exchange, and discussion among students, often producing instead 22 disparate responses (one for each student in the class) that all report roughly the same thing.

C. Target reflection, interpretation, analysis, or problem solving

Generally, the aim of having a discussion is to prompt students to think in ways that stretch their understanding of a given topic/subject. For that reason, asking questions that call for reflection, interpretation, analysis, and/or problem solving leads to a much more instructive (and often more lively) learning experience.

D. Ask questions that solicit relevant personal opinion and/or personal experience

E. Ask questions that encourage students to engage with other students in the class

F. Ask questions that require connections to be drawn between past and present course material

cont'd:

5. KISS principle for making and replying to postings

- keep postings to 100 - 150 words
- decide in advance on spelling/grammar emphasis
- mark posts every day for 1 minute vs. a pile of marking at the end of the month
- set easy to manage criteria (e.g., post your answer and reply to two others within 3 days)

KISS
Keep it simple silly!

5 Tips For Marking Postings:

- #1. Facilitate (rather than lead the discussion – teach & encourage the class to “take over” the discussions)
- #2. Decide what and when to mark
- #3. Elicit opinions and personal experiences – easier to mark :)
- #4. Score reflects average
- #5. Use simple rubrics

Need Help?

Salmon, Gilly (2002).
E-tivities: The key to active online learning.
RoutledgeFalmer Publications.

1. IT staff
2. IT Mentors
3. WWW search
4. Library
5. Colleagues
6. Journal articles
7. Books

- A. *Review of Educational Research*
- B. *Journal of Higher Education*
- C. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*

Collison, G. et al.
(2000). *Facilitating online learning.*
Madison, WI: Atwood

Percell, C., (2004). Focused online discussions, moments of difficulty & student understanding. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22(2), 197-209.