What is a Discussion Board?

A Discussion Board is an asynchronous communication tool that allows students to collaborate with others through posting or answering questions. Students respond to a discussion board forum topic by creating a thread, or replying to an existing thread. Faculty can create a course discussion board forum where all students can participate and contribute to the discussion, or a group discussion board where only members of a particular group can access it. Faculty can determine whether or not to enable grading for each discussion board forum. Discussion boards can only be viewed from Blackboard and are not publicly accessible. A discussion board can also be referred to as a forum, message board, or bulletin board.

Creating a Discussion Board Forum

1. From the course menu, click Discussions
2. Click Create Forum
3. On the Create Forum page, provide a forum name and description
4. Set Forum Availability to ‘Yes’
5. Establish Forum Settings
   - Viewing Threads/Replies - Standard View allows to see all posts, or you can restrict the forum so students must post before they can read their classmates’ posts
   - Grade - Enable grading to make it easier to assess student posts. Rubrics can be associated with graded forums
   - Subscribe - Determine whether subscriptions are enabled for the threads or forums
   - Create and Edit - determine whether to allow students to post anonymously, delete their posts, edit their posts, create new threads, attach files, etc.
6. Click ‘Submit’
Grading a Discussion Board Forum

1. Click **Discussion Board** in the course menu
2. Click on the Discussion Board forum to grade
3. Click on **Grade Discussion Forum**
4. Determine the student you would like to grade, and click on the **Grade** button
5. After reading the student’s original post and comments on the page, click in the **Grade** box.
6. If a rubric has been used, click the **Rubric Title**
7. Grade according to level of accomplishment for each category. The total score will be automatically tabulated. Click **Save Rubric**
8. If appropriate, enter comments to the student under **Feedback**
9. If appropriate, enter notes under **Grading Notes** (notes can only be seen by the course instructor)
10. Click the **Submit** button

11. To grade the next contributor, either click on the forward/backward button at the top of the grading panel, or select the name of another contributor. Otherwise, click the **OK** button

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**Choosing from Blackboard’s Communication Tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Wiki</th>
<th>Journal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical Intent</strong></td>
<td>Promote a threaded conversation, enrolled users (students) reply to forum topic/question, post comments on others’ postings, discussion can continue</td>
<td>Share information, current thoughts and reflections. Students can post one comment at a time to a blog post (in course blogs, all students can contribute to the conversation)</td>
<td>Create a collaborative document. Students are expected to contribute and/or revise content</td>
<td>Post personal reflections on course topics/experiences. Only individual students can post entries, and only faculty can comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization / Display</strong></td>
<td>Threads and replies / Public within a Blackboard course</td>
<td>Posted entries are in reverse chronological order / Public within a Blackboard course</td>
<td>Single document, wiki page, can add new wiki pages, can link to other wiki pages / Public within a Blackboard course</td>
<td>Posted entries are in reverse chronological order / Private within a Blackboard course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grading (optional for all)</strong></td>
<td>Initial posts and all replies within a forum</td>
<td>Post(s) only - original thoughts, but not comments</td>
<td>Contributions over time to wiki pages: words modified and pages saved</td>
<td>Post(s) only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accessed from the course menu or any content area</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can be utilized within Groups</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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