

Discussion and Discussing Guidelines and Rubric to Assist your Professional Development



Comment: Discussion online is not a chance for you to wing it and sling some bull, or blather on knowing you did not prepare. In class when discussion is planned you should be ready to contribute not sit there and stare at me like I am an idiot. Review this document fully, study the requirements and please adjust your level of effort accordingly. I do not assign discussion to kill time.

Start with a **thorough** review of the Rubric:

Discussion Board Grading Rubric

Individuals will be able to...	Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting...				Score
	...a beginning level of performance	...development and movement toward mastery	...mastery of performance	...the highest level of performance	
	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	
...participate actively in the discussion	Single response posted late in the discussion	Two or more responses not evenly distributed or posted late in the discussion	Three or more responses generally posted early in the discussion but not regularly	Three or more responses posted at regular intervals throughout the discussion	
...extend and enhance the discussion	Expresses agreement or reiterates previous information that does not further the discussion	Responds to original post or previous responses, but offers little or no other information or questions to further the discussion	Builds upon responses from others and introduces limited examples, information, or questions to further discussion	Builds upon responses from others and provides examples, additional statements, information, or questions to further the discussion	
...distinguish personal thinking and opinion	Expresses little or no awareness of their own thinking in relationship to other information and cannot find the relevance of their action	Expresses an emerging awareness of their own thinking providing little explanation of how outside information will influence their actions	Expresses and awareness of their own thinking and relates it to other information that has influenced or could influence their actions	Expresses full awareness of their own thinking and how other information has enhanced their actions or influenced the action of others	
...interpret and use the reading, case and lectures	Provides description or reiterations of previous information often resulting in misinterpretation and egocentric expression of ideas	Provides information with awkward references to readings, prior experiences or other information resulting in undeveloped ideas	Provides information with limited references to readings, prior experience, or other information to clarify and refine ideas	Provides information in accurate and insightful was citing the readings, prior experiences, and information from others to clarify and refine ideas	
...analyze differing perspectives	Ignores explicit and implicit points of disagreement and without sufficiently considering alternate ideas or points of view	Defends personal, dominant, or general ideas or beliefs with some consideration for alternate ideas or points of view	Demonstrates an openness and willingness to consider alternate ideas and points of view	Explains reasoning behind differing points of view or alternate ideas objectively, impartially, and a willingness to further develop new ideas	
...construct support or refer to other information to support convictions	Maintain a personal reference or information from the past to express and defend ideas	Expresses or defends information requiring little or no support or refers to insufficient resources to support and defend ideas	Expresses and defends position articulating reasoning behind that position with limited support	Expresses and defends an appropriate position justifying that position with careful and reasoned qualification and support	

Next Think about the Discussion Board Guidelines:

- Participate in online discussion boards as you would in constructive, face-to-face discussions. There should be little to no repetition in the initial posts so it is important to get a sense of what is already being discussed before leaping into the discussion.
- Postings should continue a conversation and provide avenues for additional continuous dialogue. A good post

includes:

- What do you think?
- What would you do?
- What problem or challenge will follow the original question?
- Do not post "I agree," or similar, statements. Expand by bringing in related examples, concepts, and experiences.
- Stay on the topic of the DB thread - do not stray.
- Indicate the main thought of your post in the subject line.
- Do not just post a link to another document/source. Provide a synopsis/highlight of the linked reference. Incorporate quotations and include the reference and page numbers, etc.
- Weave into your posting related prior personal knowledge gained from experience, prior coursework, discussions, or readings.
- Do not post just to post. Do not repeat what has already been stated. Be sure your post addresses a new opinion or thought not yet discussed.
- Characteristics of quality online discussion postings (adapted from):
 - Substantial - posts should relate to the topic and provide information, opinions, or questions
 - Concise - messages should be clear. Lengthy messages do not get many replies
 - Provocative - prompts others to reply or object
 - Explanatory - explore, explain or expand on a concept or connection
 - Timely - Participate/read the DB regularly and reply in a timely fashion. Posting initial responses by the middle of the week gives other students time to respond.
 - Logical - contain a clearly stated conclusion supported by premises, reason, evidence
 - Grammatical - good, clear, concise post free of typos and fragments (similar to the tone and manner you would use within a professional environment). Do not use all caps.
- Online communication lacks verbal cues. Respond carefully, be clear, and keep your sentences and posts brief.

Scoring

Three discussion scores for a particular discussion will be relatively common. Four-point discussion scores, however, will be more difficult because of the type and amount of messages required; most of which will require deeper, more critical thought about the content. Also, please understand that this is not an exact science. We will have to make some judgment calls, and the lines between these categories will seem pretty thin at times. The examples that follow will help clarify the categories. The examples are actual posted comments from previous courses and semester

Examples of non-substantive messages: They may indicate agreement or disagreement with a prior message, but they are too general to help move the discussion forward.

Example 1 - *"Good idea for assessing whether people know what to do."*

Example 1 is a **"non-substantive"** message because it's simply a compliment to the student that posted the original message. It doesn't move the discussion forward or add anything substantial to the discussion.

Example 2 - *"I have to agree. Having a SME or experienced designer look at the work is of tremendous help. It is so easy to assume things, and leave out steps here and there. It is certainly not as easy as it looks, and I can see where this process makes for a much better learning experience for the participants."*

Example 2 is a **"non-substantive"** message because the student is simply agreeing with a statement made by another student. This message does little to move the discussion forward.

Example 3 - *"I disagree with your definition of soft technology. Can you please tell me how you came to that conclusion?"*

Example 3 is a **"non-substantive"** message because, although the student disagrees, he doesn't expand on his question by saying why he disagrees.

Examples of "moderate" messages: These messages add to the discussion by clarifying information or showing how it can be applied in a particular situation, but they don't break down individual thoughts and ideas to create something new or criticize an idea based on new thoughts.

Example 4 - *"As far as having used behavioral objectives, I've used them to advertise the training and again at the beginning of training in order to explain to employees what they're going to learn. For instance, an example of a behavioral objective in training for managers would be: 'At the end of the class, participants will be able to define the steps in the disciplinary process.' In describing the behavior, I agree that using action verbs such as define, rather than a verb like understand lets the employee know that he/she will actually be able to do something at the end of the training."*

Example 4 is a **"moderate"** message because the student displays knowledge of behavioral objectives and she gives an example.

Example 5 - *"As an example, I work with someone who is an instructional designer, yet he's one of the slowest in adapting new elements and methods to our work. My point is that although his background is in the training field, he just couldn't seem to transition and apply that to Web-based training. Perhaps his individual capacity just isn't tailored to developing this type of training application."*

Example 5 is a **"moderate"** message because this student shows comprehension of the definition of the term "capacity," as it's used in Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model, and is applying that definition to an example at her work.

Example 6 - *"Perhaps the next important thing to consider is: Does the measurement we make (or invent) have meaning? Can it be applied in a useful manner or is it just more information? Can this measurement be used to produce or improve results?"*

Example 6 is a **"moderate"** message because the student is asking questions to move the discussion forward.

Notice that the questions in this message are more specific than the question in Example

3. If this student had attempted to answer her own questions by providing some solutions on how to ensure measurement was useful, the posting may have been considered substantial.

Examples of "significant" messages. These messages add to the discussion by identifying important relationships, putting ideas together in some unique way, or offering a critique as a point of discussion.

Example 7 - *"I believe that learning is more effective if we allow learners to create their own behavioral objectives. Like Driscoll, I believe that 'Learners are not empty vessels waiting to be filled, but rather active organisms seeking meaning.' Bearing in mind that we are all products of our own experiences; be it socioeconomic, gender specific, cultural and/or family related, I firmly believe that the learning needs of learners should always be the force which guides the instructional development process and the crafting of meaningful behavioral objectives. Therefore, differentiated instruction is of paramount importance if we are to provide meaningful learning environments, which emulate challenge, variety, creativity and innovation. Consequently, a synergistic blend between Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences must be found if learning is to be truly effective."*

Example 7 is a **"significant"** message because the student is combining ideas learned from various resources into a new thought.

Example 8 - *"I agree with the statement "learning is generally less effective when only the learners create the objectives", However, I would not wish to lump ALL learners into this category, whether they are intellectually gifted or not. I believe that in much instruction the student is an integral part of defining the objective, especially in skills training, or efficiency of operations. If a company has been producing X product in the same manner for an extended time, it is reasonable to believe that new employees have been trained in that "tried and proven" method of production. However, as times and markets change, production techniques must also change. The student (employee) who is being taught the same "old" method would invariably attempt to modify the technique to increase efficiency of the production. If the student is stifled by being held only to the objectives stated in the training, no improvement will be made and the company will ultimately suffer."*

Example 8 is a **"significant"** message because the student is disagreeing and making a contrary argument, based on an evaluation of the idea expressed in a previous message.

Example 9 - *"I'm a Thomas Gilbert fan and I saw a parallel here with Gilbert's Behavioral Engineering Model and what Rossett is calling barriers. Barriers, of course, could include anything, including supervisor resistance (data and incentives), lack of alignment between training and actual work (knowledge), lack of tools (information), lack of information (data)."*

Example 9 is a **"significant"** message because the student is identifying relationships between ideas presented by Gilbert and Rossett. Another thing to notice here is that messages don't have to be long to be "significant", but they do have to show a level of analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of the material.

A final guideline for postings, make sure your posted comments are CRISP:

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| Considerate | You may have strong views and will want to express those views. That's great. But remember that others may have equally strong views that are the polar opposite of your views. Feel free to question, challenge, or disagree with anything in the discussion, but do so in a respectful, considerate way. |
| Reflective | An asynchronous discussion may lack the spontaneity of a live discussion. But this can be an advantage. There is more time to think before responding. Take the time to think about the ideas that have been expressed (in the readings and the discussion) from the perspective of your own experience. Then add your own comments and insights. |
| Interactive | Remember that you're a participant in a discussion and talk with one another. Cut and paste parts of previous messages into your message. The idea is to be interactive , not just active. |
| Succinct | Get to the point. Short, focused messages are usually more effective than long comments. |
| Pertinent | Comments and questions should be related to the discussion topic. There will be times when you want to talk with someone about something unrelated to the topic. That's fine, but this is not the place to do that. When you enter into a weekly discussion, please remember that you're in a classroom, not a chat room. |