## Writing a Discussion Post

### CONTEXT

Discussions play an important role in the online learning experience. Discussion posts and replies are opportunities for you to communicate your thoughts with your instructor and peers. Ideally the posts you write should highlight and expand upon what is being taught in the course. Below you will find tips on how to create strong discussion posts.

### BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR POST

- Read the discussion post directions carefully.
  - Make sure you fully understand what is being asked of you before you begin writing.
- Complete the required course work.
  - Review lecture materials, do the readings, complete assignments, conduct research, etc. so you fully understand what you will be discussing.
- Organize your thoughts.
  - It is important that everyone reading your post understands what you are saying so make sure your comments are well articulated and easy to read.

### INITIAL POST

- Your title should capture your reader’s attention and hint at what your post will be about.
- Your post should allow your peers and instructor the opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion with you. Some ways to solicit feedback:
  - Ask a thought provoking question at the end of your post.
  - Take a controversial stand on a topic.
  - Incorporate current events or your own personal experiences.
- If there are several questions to be answered or items to be discussed, be sure to address all of these.
- Your post, at minimum, should be more than 1-3 sentences.
- Avoid spelling and grammatical errors.
  - You do not want anything to detract from all the hard work you put into writing your post.
  - Make use of the spell check feature within the discussion post box to check for errors.
  - You can also type the text of your post in MS Word, run a spelling and grammar check as well as proofread/read through your work; then copy & past into the discussion post box.
RESPONSE POST

- Follow the discussion post rules.
  - If you are supposed to respond to several posts a week, make sure you do so.
  - Give substantial information in your response posts.
  - Your response posts should never consist of just “I agree” or “Nice idea;” instead they should be thorough and thoughtful. Try adding something different or new to the conversation to keep the discussion going.
- Respond to posts that contradict or support your own ideas.
  - Responding to posts that interest you will make your post easier to write since it is a topic that is

FOLLOW UP

- Participate frequently in the discussion room.
  - It takes some time for a good discussion to build momentum so it is important that you keep track of the progress. Even after you have already written your initial post and response posts, you may find that you have more to add to the conversation.
- Do not disappear after you have written your posts.

MODEL APA CITATIONS FOR CLASS MATERIALS

Class handouts:

Matching in-text citation: (Woodworth, 2006)

Lecture notes posted in the online course:

Matching in-text citation: (Cioe, 2006)

PowerPoint presentation posted in the online course:

Matching in-text citation: (Cioe, 2006)
DISCUSSION POST LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING

- This is a general guideline for things to consider for your Discussion Posts. Which level do your posts represent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimal Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Basic Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exemplary Understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The instructor cannot really tell what you know and what you have learned.</td>
<td>- You have included specific details from the readings and lecture in your posts.</td>
<td>- You have included details and specific examples, and the information added supports or illustrates your points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- You have done the bare minimum to get the assignment done.</td>
<td>- The basic assignment criteria have been met.</td>
<td>- The instructor can tell that you have read the text, understand it, and can apply what you have learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggestions to Improve</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggestions to Improve</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggestions to Improve</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make sure you have addressed all aspects of the original discussion question or questions.</td>
<td>- Try using concepts, terms, and examples from other classes to show that you can relate knowledge from different disciplines.</td>
<td>- Ask questions of your peers to support their understanding as well as your own.</td>
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<td>- Review the reading and any lecture notes. Incorporate what you learned from those into your posts.</td>
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