

Instructions for Instructors

Blackboard Discussion Board Activity

Tell students:

This assignment is aimed at the program learning outcomes stated in the syllabus.

They should read the whole assignment carefully – not just the scenario.

They must make their first post on the date you specify - normally a few days after you give the assignment. The 12 days of discussion start from that day.

They should create their posts using the following steps: 1) use Microsoft Word, 2) copy to Notepad, and 3) copy to Blackboard. This avoids the formatting problems caused by copying from Word to Blackboard.

They must post every second to third day. Tell them to do five to six posts and you will give them marks for their best four.

They should write about 200 words or so.

They must acknowledge each other by name to develop a team relationship.

They must acknowledge/comment (critically) on the posts of each other.

They must read around the topic to better understand it and get any current information.

They do not need proper referencing (like APA) – just provide sufficient information so that their colleagues can find the source if needed e.g. web link

They should look to see the quality of any sources in their colleagues' posts – are they reliable, are they biased?

They must gather and state facts – not rumour, hearsay, or opinion

They can give opinion towards the end of the period but the opinion must be reasoned and based on their knowledge of the facts.

To Do:

During the first round:

In the first class spend about 20 minutes explaining the whole activity and the reasons for it and what they will learn from it. Explain that the issue is complex and that there is no clear solution and that ultimately they are just going to suggest next steps.

Spend about 10 minutes or so in each class coaching them and explaining the questions.

Look at what they are posting to see that they are on track and doing it correctly and tell them how to improve. There is no need to get involved in the discussion itself.

At the end of the first round spend about 20 to 30 minutes doing a post mortem. Present examples of their good, average and weak posts (anonymous). Discuss how they can improve for the second round.

During the second round:

Try not to get too involved.

Spend a few minutes in each class explaining to them and checking with them that they understand the requirements and what they should be doing.

Grading:

You could split the marks for the assignment as 1/3 for the first round and 2/3 for the second round. After the first round if the students have not done well, you could tell the students that you will give all the marks for the second round if they would prefer that – just a suggestion!

I suggest that you mark as follows.

In Blackboard display the discussion transcript with dates on each post. You do this by using the “Collect” option at the Thread level to display the transcript.

Read through the posts recording the name and date as you go. Give a score out of 10 for each post. The score incorporates teamwork, quality and communication. There are a number of aspects to quality (refer to the assignment). You can also record a comment. Add up the best four scores for each student, but exclude posts that are not in line with our timing criteria - that means posts that are late at the start, posts that are just a day apart (posts that are a day apart are counted as one post.)

I have found it is easiest to manually record on a sheet of paper as shown below.

Mariam	2 Feb	4 Feb	7 Feb	9 Feb	12 Feb	15 Feb		Total/40
	8	9	7	7	9	8		34
	comment	comment	comment	comment	comment	comment		
Nadia	2 Feb	5 Feb	8 Feb	11 Feb	14 Feb			
	6	7	8	7	8			30
	comment	comment	comment	comment	comment			
Fatima	2 Feb	4 Feb	6 Feb	9 Feb	12 Feb	15 Feb		
	7	9	8	8	9	9		35
	comment	comment	comment	comment	comment	comment		

To comply with university requirements to have a rubric with assignments then the marks need to be transferred from the manual marking sheet to a simple online rubric.

To comply with the university requirement to have evidence for each student then the following can be done. Here the steps are given to upload the students' posts under their name. This is done by the students. Give these instructions to the students. (You need do this for the second round of the activity only).

1. Go to your groups discussion board and open it as if you're going to make a post
2. Select ALL posts (from top of screen)
3. From Message Actions (at top of screen), select Collection
4. Sort by Authors First Name, order Ascending
5. Highlight all the posts you made, and copy these to a Word document
6. Save this Word document using the following naming convention: e.g. Group3_Afra.doc
7. Submit this word document to BB for assessment
 - a. There is an assessment link in the Discussion board Tab (at the top of the screen)