Magna 20 Minute Mentor

Supplemental Materials

How Do I Create Engaging Threaded Discussion Questions?

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MAGNA

Managing Online Discussion

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Discussion Questions to Avoid

Repeat-back questions

"What are the three parts of a business impact analysis?"

Cupcake questions with obvious answers

"Laptops don't need to be closely guarded. They are perfectly safe being left out in an empty office. Do you agree or disagree?"

Research Questions

"What are the three major interpretations of Hamlet's motivations?"

Personal Experiences

"Describe a time when you were faced with a decision like the one Tom Sawyer faced with Jim."

Complex questions

"What are the most important information security policies for an organization? How do you teach people these policies? What are some obstacles to getting people to follow information security policies?"

Discussion Questions to Use

Apply concepts learned in class

"What are some of the challenges to doing a Business Impact Analysis in the workplace?

Challenge the material

"Is that author right that a parent should always make medical decisions for a minor?"

Create controversy/debate

"Companies should instruct workers to take their laptops with them when they hear a fire alarm so that they can work elsewhere if they cannot return to work. Do you agree?"

Force students to think about the material

"Did Hamlet's odd behavior help or hurt his cause, and why?"

Lead discussion into general points
"What lessons was Mark Twain trying to teach with Tom Sawyer's decision about Jim?"

Managing Discussion

- Assign a moderator to jumpstart discussion

- Summarize main issues at the end

- Require students to post BOTH a response to the original question and AT LEAST one reply to another student's post.

- Require students to post their first response early so that others have time to reply.

- Only grade responses with CONTENT, not "I agree" posts.

- Don't take over discussion. Make sure that students are talking to one another.

- Allow discussion to branch out into different directions.

- Don't allow discussion groups larger than 15 students. Larger discussion groups give students the feeling that others have "used up" all of the good points and will start repeating one another. Some feel that discussion groups should be no larger than 5 students.

- Encourage students to create their own discussion questions and threads.

- Establish rules against personal attacks (flaming) and handle inappropriate behavior in private with the student.

- Establish a strict cut-off for discussion so that students are not posting to old topics.

- Discussion is best graded with a rubric.

Sample Discussion Rubric

20 Points Maximum

	A 18-20 points total	B 16-17 points total	C 14-15 points total	D/F 0 points	Points
Subject Knowledge and Integration of Research Materials	Excellent grasp and integration of course material; information from readings or outside sources integrated and cited appropriately in posts.	Sound grasp of material from assigned readings in initial statement. Some use of outside sources, appropriately cited.	Familiarity with most material and principles in the discussion. Lacks substantive use of outside sources. Incorrect or absent citations.	Poor grasp of material and principles in the discussion. Little to no use of outside sources.	
Critical Analysis of Topic	High level of analysis; adds new ideas to discussion or asks highly relevant questions.	Sound analysis of discussion issue and peripheral issues. Adds new ideas to discussion.	Missed some of the main issues. Analysis simplistic or sketchy. Little substantive	Little to no real analysis; undue reliance on unsubstantiat ed opinion and	

	Provides useful and substantive criticism to fellow group members.	Provides helpful feedback to group members.	feedback provided to group members.	anecdotes. No substantive feedback to group members.	
Effective Writing	Able to clearly organize and articulate thoughts, ideas and opinions; few or no errors in spelling/gram mar.	Writing is clear and easy to follow; some errors in spelling and grammar.	Overall writing in terms of structure, grammar and spelling barely acceptable.	Poor writing overall with awkward or confusing word usage. Many errors in grammar and spelling.	
Timely & Complete Participation	Timing, length and number of posts exceed minimum standards; quality of posts is high and contributes greatly to the overall substance of the discussion.	Timing, length and number of posts meet standards. Quality of posts adds to substance of the discussion.	Posts are late, too short or infrequent. Regardless of quality, they may add little to the discussion because of late submission.	Posts are infrequent and they appear too late in the week to enable other students to respond.	
Total Points Possible	4 – 3.6 each	3.4 – 3.2 each	3 – 2.8 each	0 each	

Total Points _____