Creating Active Online Discussions

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What are the characteristics of an online learner?

- Maybe working
- Non-traditional
- Low tolerance for "busy work"
- Dislike online interaction
- Demand instructor presence

undergraduate

- Millennials
- Not used to "deeper" thinking
- Not intimidated by technology (but may be new to Canvas)
What are the characteristics of a online learner?

- Maybe working in the field
- Adult
- Non-traditional
- Used to “deeper” thinking
- Low tolerance for “busy work”
- Intimidated by technology
- Still... Dislike online interaction
  (may be new to Canvas)
- Demand instructor presence
  (more personalized)
Online Discussions

What are online discussions?

Assignment
- Faculty posts questions
- Students respond to initial question

Faculty-Led Discussion
- Faculty posts questions
- Students respond to initial question
- Students reply to one another
- Faculty moderates and responds

Student-Led Discussion
- Students posts questions
- Students respond to initial question
- Students reply to one another
- Students moderate
### Why use discussions?

#### Remember | Understand
- Define
- List
- Explain
- Summarize
- Select
- Identify which

#### Apply | Analyze
- Compare-Contrast
- Analyze
- Investigate
- Interpret
- Prove
- Organize

#### Create | Evaluate
- Develop / Develop
- Critique
- Improve
- Solve
- Propose
- Recommend
Davis (1993) lists a range of question types, including:

- **Exploratory questions**: probe facts and basic knowledge
- **Challenge questions**: interrogate assumptions, conclusions or interpretations
- **Relational questions**: ask for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues
- **Diagnostic questions**: probe motives or causes
- **Action questions**: call for a conclusion or action
- **Cause-and-effect questions**: ask for causal relationships between ideas, actions, or events
- **Extension questions**: expand the discussion
- **Hypothetical questions**: pose a change in the facts or issues
- **Importance questions**: seek to identify the most important issue(s)
- **Synthesis questions**: elicit deeper connections between concepts
Lifecycle of a Discussion

**Ideate**
- Write your discussion prompts well
- Define a purpose and need
- Align to objectives

**Post**
- Discussion Guide Format
- How should students respond?
- Sentence Starters
- Rubrics

**Interact**
- How much should you respond or interact?

**Assess**
- How will you evaluate students?

**Synthesize**
- How will they pull it all together?
## Lifecycle of a Discussion

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### Make Discussions Matter!
- Integrate in assessments
- Use in future activities