

Tips for Facilitating Online Threaded Discussions

- ❖ Avoid “dominating” online discussions. Keep your posts to 10-20% of the total.
- ❖ Clearly state your expectations for the online discussion in writing. Remind students of these expectations individually and as a group.
- ❖ Talk through the implications of no visual cues in online discussions.
- ❖ Encourage students to not only contribute statements, but also questions.
- ❖ Using a trendy technology doesn’t ensure that students will use it or be interested in it. Require student participation and state your expectations.
- ❖ Establish or collectively establish rules of etiquette for online discussions. If students are divided into groups, require each group to establish ground rules, roles, and expectations.
- ❖ Consider a class assignment or face to face activity that requires students to reflect upon and/or reference content and interactions from the online discussions.
- ❖ Refer to the previous comments of students, and encourage others to do the same. You can do this online and in the face to face portion of the class.
- ❖ Encourage students to address one another by name.
- ❖ Create a special online area for non-course related discussions.
- ❖ If a discussion is getting off topic, provide a refocus post, but also consider creating a new topic for students to continue the “off topic” discussion.
- ❖ Debrief online discussions in the face to face classroom.
- ❖ Ask student permission if you are going to read a portion of a student’s post to the face to face class.
- ❖ Take the time to teach the students how to use the technology. Take the time to learn how to use the technology yourself.
- ❖ Find a place to participate in a threaded discussion yourself.