

Creating Engaging Discussions

When designed effectively, discussions allow students to fully interact with course content and their peers. Quality discussions allow students to apply content and retain more information by becoming actively engaged with course material. Below are some examples of discussions that embody this ideal.

1. Save the Last Word for Me:

- a. Student posts a section from the reading (word for word) that resonated with him/her. Does not provide an explanation.
- b. Peers respond to the post offering their opinions/comments and possible interpretations.
- c. Student posts after peers explaining why the content was significant to her/him.

2. Muddiest Point:

- a. Instead of writing about what the student understands, the student writes about the “most confusing point” in the reading/content
- b. Peers offer responses to clarify the muddiest point

3. Switch it Up

- a. Student begins writing to the prompt
- b. Student stops (midway/before resolution/result)
- c. Peer writes the conclusion/ending
- d. Student can reflect after peer how s/he would have finished the posting

4. Visually Speaking

- a. Students responds to the discussion prompt with an image
- b. Peers respond by defining how the image represents/explains/aligns to the prompt
- c. Student explains his/her thinking about the image AFTER peers have responded.

5. Ten Important Words

- a. Students respond to the instructor’s prompt in the traditional manner
- b. Peer read’s student’s post
 - i. Selects 10 important words from the students post which are related to the topic

- ii. Reflects on significance of the 10 words as they relate to the instructor's prompt/content and writes a response to peer using all 10 words

6. Notable Quotes

- a. Student selects 1 or 2 significant quotations from the reading
- b. Student reads a peer's posting
 - i. Student researches/developes and posts one two opposing quotations to peers posting
- c. Student returns to her/his original posting and either:
 - i. Defends the original quotations
 - ii. Refutes the peer's opposing quotations

7. Found Poem (This activity has 2 options)

- a. Option 1
 - i. Use existing text
 - ii. Refashion
 - iii. Reorder
 - iv. Present as a poem
 - v. Student writes a reflection to expand on the significance
- b. Option 2
 - i. Student responds to prompt
 - ii. Student reads a peer's post and creates a "found poem" by:
 - 1. Refashion
 - 2. Reorder
 - 3. Present as a poem
 - 4. Reflects on significance

8. Deep Discussions

- a. Assign students to facilitate discussions
 - i. Students can develop the discussion topic
 - ii. Multiple discussions can run concurrently
 - iii. Instructor participates on student level