



making**themostof**discussions

Blackboard Learn 9.1

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1.0 Workshop Overview

Research supports the relationship between interpersonal interaction in the online environment and the learning that takes place. One study¹ of over 6,000 college students found that their course satisfaction and learning were related to their interactions with each other. Students who rated instructors highly on teaching presence behaviors, such as facilitating effective discourse, also reported high levels of satisfaction and learning in the course.

The Discussion Board offers an important vehicle for interpersonal interaction. Discussions can serve a range of purposes, such as:

- An online meeting place for social interaction among peers
- A medium to pose questions about homework assignments, readings, and course content
- A graded activity that demonstrates understanding or application of course material

In this workshop, the first section presents the Discussion Board from the student point of view. Next, you take on the instructor role and learn how to use the tool throughout the lifecycle of discussions—from creating forums and threads to moderating, managing, and grading.

¹Shea, P. J., Pickett, A. M., and Pelz, W. E. "A Follow-Up Investigation of 'Teaching Presence' in the SUNY Learning Network." JALN 7.2 (2003): 73-74. Web. 11 Jan. 2006.

Roadmap



2.0 Student Experience

Navigate messages

Learn to access forums and threads.

Post messages

Learn to reply to posts and create threads.

Rate, collect, and search messages

Use Peer Review to rate posts. Collect posts for printing and review. Use the Search function to locate posts.

3.0 Creating Discussions

Create forums and threads

Create discussion forums and threads, choosing forum settings based on learning goals.

Set thread options

During forum creation, set grading options and email subscriptions.

Organize discussions

Explain ways to organize your Discussion Board.

4.0 Moderating Discussions

Assign forum roles

Assign users to forum roles.

Use the Moderation Queue

Return or approve posts.

Set thread display

Change thread status or lock threads.

5.0 Managing Discussions

Edit forum settings

Change forum availability and settings.

Copy forums

Use the Copy function to save time when creating forums.

Organize forums and threads

Keep discussions organized by reordering forums, deleting forums and threads, and adding tags.

6.0 Grading Discussions

The grading process

Learn the discussions grading process.

Grade discussions

Learn how to assign grades to forums and threads, and how to edit or delete grades.

Email while grading

Use the Email tool in conjunction with the grading of discussion posts.

Add forums to course areas

Learn how to add forums to Content Areas, Learning Modules, Lesson Plans, or folders.

2.0 Student Experience

In this section, you will use the Discussion Board as a student. You will explore common functions, such as navigating forums and threads, reading and replying to posts, and collecting and printing posts. The information will also provide some context for the decisions you make as an instructor.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

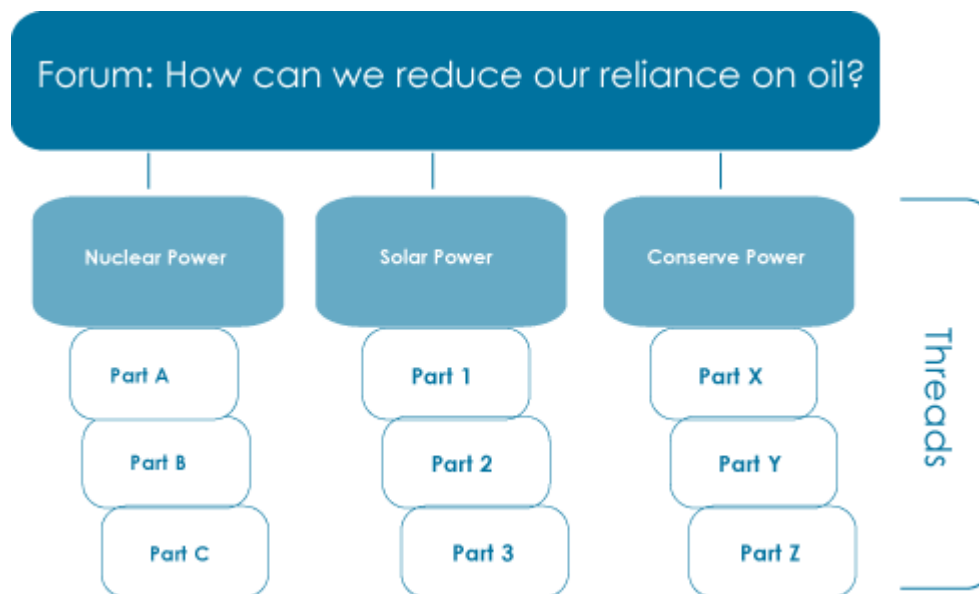
- Navigate discussion forums and threads
- Change the forum view
- Select which type of threads to display
- Create threads and reply to posts
- Rate posts
- Collect posts for sorting, filtering, and printing
- Use the Search function to locate specific threads
- Use appropriate discussion etiquette

The Discussion Board

Depending on how the course has been set up, access the Discussion Board from either the Course Menu or a course area, such as a Content Area, Learning Module, Lesson Plan, or folder.

Each Discussion Board contains one or more forums. A **forum** is an area where a topic or a group of related topics are discussed. Within each forum, there can be multiple threads.

- A **thread** includes the initial post and any replies to it.
- A **post** is a message within the thread.



In addition, special Discussion Boards can be set up for smaller groups of students by using the Groups tool. Group Discussion Boards are available only to users who are members of the Group. If a Group Discussion Board has been set up, access it from the **Groups** link in the Course Menu or in the **My Groups** area following the Course Menu.

Student Experience: The Discussion Board

In our example, the Discussion Board is accessed from the Course Menu.

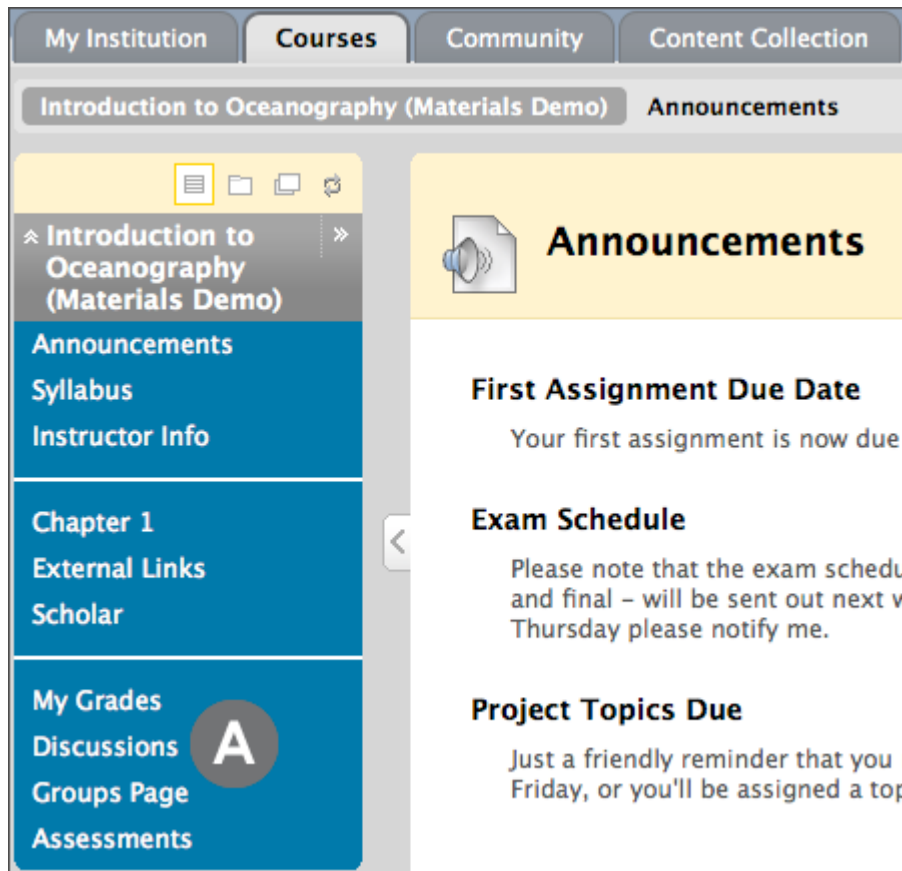


Figure 1.1

► Take Note

- A. The instructor can rename the link.

Student Experience: The Discussion Board

The main Discussion Board page displays a list of available forums. For each forum, the page displays the total number of posts, the number of unread posts, and the number of users who have participated in the forum.

Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
Oceans in the News	Each week please post a link to a relevant news article related to oceanography or marine biology. Add the week number to your title.	6	3	6
Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves	This forum will hold our discussions on wave terminology, relevant websites, and questions.	10	7	1
Wave Assignment: Energy from Waves and Tides	Explore harnessing energy from waves and tides. Please narrow topic to a specific aspect such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how could the energy be extracted?• how big is this resource?	4	0	4

Figure 1.2

► Take Note

- Click the forum title to view the messages. Forums containing unread posts appear in bold.
- View data on the number of posts and participants.
- The **Unread Posts** column provides one-click access to the forum's unread messages.

Within a Forum

Within a forum, a list of threads appears. The following information is included for each thread:

- **Date:** when the thread was created.
- **Author:** the person who created the thread.
- **Status:** indicates whether the thread is published, locked, hidden, or a draft.
- **Unread Posts:** the number of posts not yet accessed.
- **Total Posts:** includes both read and unread posts.

Materials Discussion Board > Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves

Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves

Create Thread Search Display Tags

Thread Actions Collect

<input type="checkbox"/>	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:05 AM	Terminology	Cathy Chu	Published		6	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:20 AM	Relevant Websites	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:22 AM	Questions?	Cathy Chu	Published		2	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/22/08 12:42 PM	Opinion Paper	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/18/08 10:44 AM	FAQs about this unit	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1

Thread Actions Collect

Displaying 1 to 5 of 5 items Edit Paging...

Figure 2.1

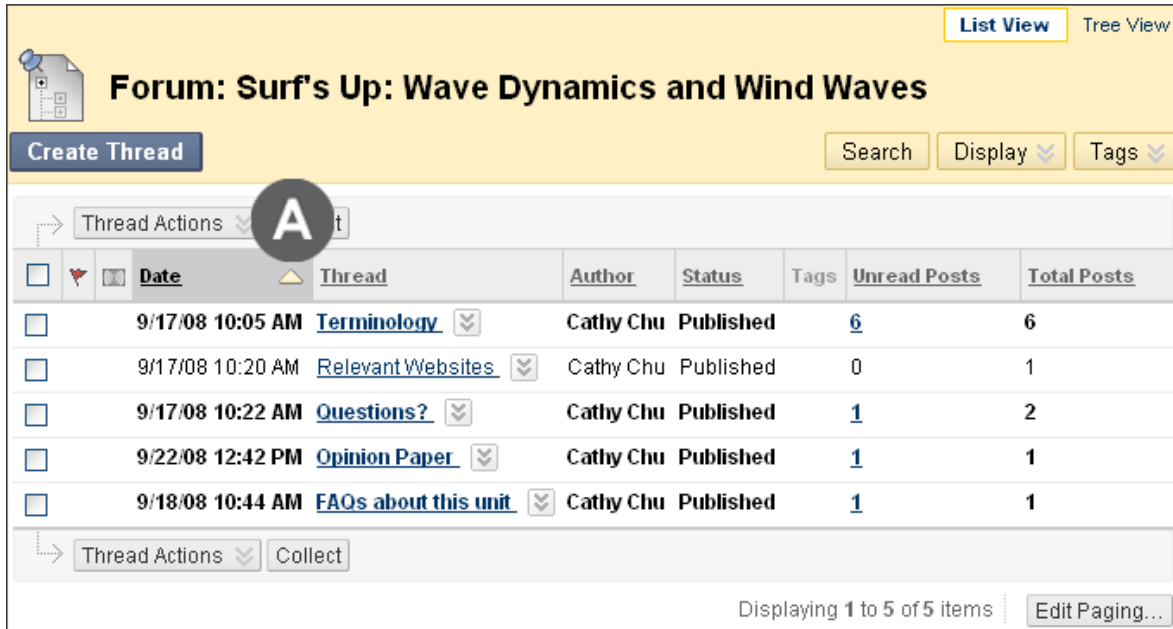
► Take Note

- Use the breadcrumbs to navigate to a previous page.
- Check box allows for individual thread selection. Select the box in the header row to select all threads.
- Click the thread title to read the posts.
- Search field hidden by default to save screen space.
- View threads in either **List View** or **Tree View**.
- Edit Paging** allows you to determine the number of items to view per page.

List View and Tree View

After clicking a forum title, a page loads displaying all forum threads. The page can be viewed in either **List View** or **Tree View**. This choice remains in effect until the student changes it; it can be changed at any time.

In **List View**, threads are presented in table format. Threads containing any unread posts appear in bold type.



Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves

Create Thread Search Display Tags

Thread Actions	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:05 AM	Terminology	Cathy Chu	Published		6	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:20 AM	Relevant Websites	Cathy Chu	Published		0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:22 AM	Questions?	Cathy Chu	Published		1	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/22/08 12:42 PM	Opinion Paper	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/18/08 10:44 AM	FAQs about this unit	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1

Thread Actions Collect

Displaying 1 to 5 of 5 items Edit Paging...

Figure 2.2

► Take Note

- A. Threads can be sorted by clicking the column heading title or caret at the top of each column.

Student Experience: Within a Forum

Using the **Thread Actions** drop-down list, students can flag important posts and delete the flags.

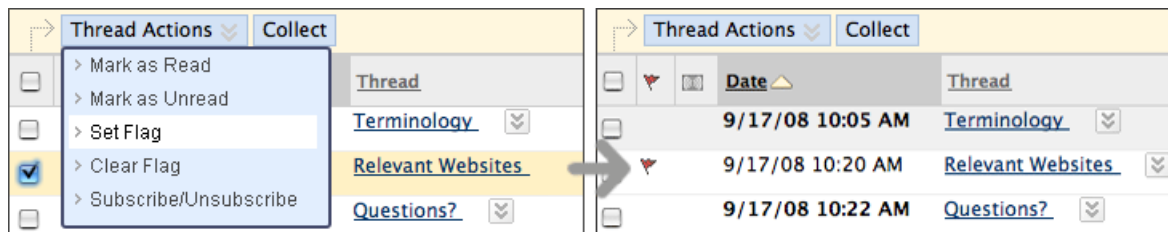


Figure 2.3

Tree View shows the thread starter messages and their replies. Students can expand and collapse threads by using the plus and minus icons next to the titles. Any unread posts appear in bold type.

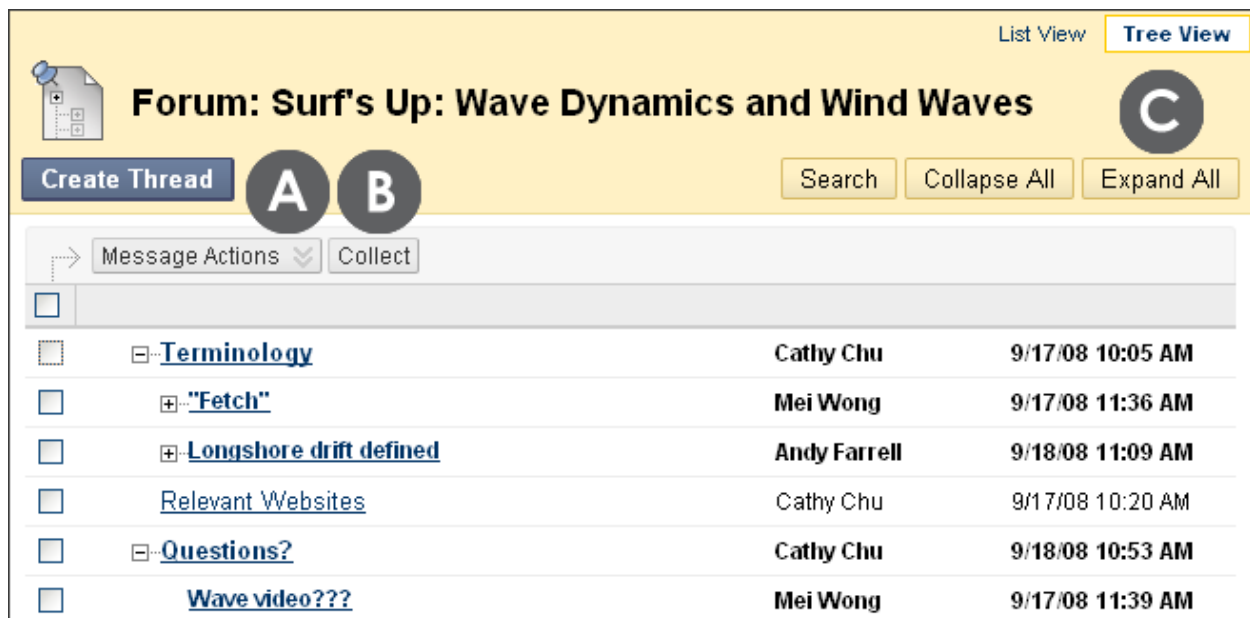


Figure 2.4

► Take Note

- Select the check box for a post and use the **Message Actions** drop-down list to flag a post or mark it read or unread.
- The **Collect** function is used to gather posts onto one page where they can be sorted, filtered, or printed.
- Click **Expand All** to see all posts included in all threads.

Changing the Displayed Threads

The instructor sets the thread status—published, hidden, or draft—but students choose which type of threads will appear. By default, published threads appear.

► QUICK STEPS: changing the displayed threads

1. Access the forum.
2. Select **List View**.
3. On the Action Bar, point to **Display** to access the thread status options.
4. From the drop-down list, select the type of threads to view in the forum.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard forum titled "Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves". The interface includes a "Create Thread" button, a "Search" field, and a "Display" dropdown menu. The "Display" menu is open, showing options: "Show All", "Published Only", "Hidden Only", and "Drafts Only". The forum is currently in "List View" mode. Below the menu, there is a table of threads with columns for "Date", "Thread", "Author", "Status", "Tags", and "Unread Posts".

Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts
9/17/08 10:05 AM	Terminology	Cathy Chu	Published	6	6
9/17/08 10:20 AM	Relevant Websites	Cathy Chu	Published	1	1
9/17/08 10:22 AM	Questions?	Cathy Chu	Locked	2	2

Figure 3

Student Experience: Changing the Displayed Threads

Thread Status

The following table describes the status settings for threads.

Thread Status	Definition
Published	A post with a Published status is available to users.
Locked Thread	A Locked thread is a type of Published thread. Users may read the thread, but no longer edit or add posts. Locking a thread allows grades to be assigned without posts being changed or updated. Unlocking a thread changes its status to Published, allowing users to edit and add to the thread again.
Draft Thread	A Draft thread is saved to Blackboard Learn™ by the author for future editing, but is not submitted for publication. It becomes available to other users when it is published.
Hidden Thread	A thread that is locked and not visible by default. Students may choose to display Hidden threads in List View. Hidden threads cannot be edited, even if editing has been enabled for the thread. Hiding threads helps users find relevant content, as unneeded content is hidden from view.

Within a Thread

When a user clicks a thread, the **Thread Detail** page appears. The page is divided into three parts:

Section 1:


The Action Bar contains functions that allow users to select, flag, mark, or collect posts.

Section 2:

The Message List contains a list of all the posts in the thread, beginning with the initial post. The selected post is highlighted.

Section 3:




The Current Post contains the text of the selected post.




Thread Detail

[Subscribe](#)
[Search](#)
[Refresh](#)

[Terminology](#) > [Reply](#)

Total Posts: 6 **Unread Posts:** [5](#)


[Message Actions](#)

[Collect](#)

1

☐

☐

Terminology

2

Fetch

RE: "Fetch"

Longshore drift??

Longshore drift defined

RE: Longshore drift defined

Cathy Chu

Mei Wong

Cathy Chu

Dwight Paul

Andy Farrell

Mina Akbar

9/17/08 10:05 AM


9/17/08 11:36 AM

9/17/08 2:53 PM

9/17/08 2:54 PM

9/18/08 11:09 AM

9/18/08 11:12 AM


[Message Actions](#)

[Collect](#)

[Terminology](#) >

[Reply](#)
[Quote](#)
[Set Flag](#)

Author:
[Cathy Chu](#)

Posted Date:
 Wednesday, September 17, 2008 10:05:31 AM EDT

Edited Date:
 Wednesday, September 17, 2008 10:05:31 AM EDT

Total views:
 91 (Your views: 8)

Overall Rating:
 ★★★★★

Your Rating:
 ★★★★★

3

Understanding ocean waves has a lingo all its own. Some concepts are easier to understand than others. We usually have some good conversations about specific terms as we help each other fully comprehend

Figure 4.1

Thread Detail

[Subscribe](#) **A** [Search](#) [Refresh](#)

[Terminology](#) > [Reply](#) **C** [Icons]

Total Posts: 6 **Unread Posts:** 5

Message Actions [v] [Collect](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Terminology	Cathy Chu	9/17/08 10:05 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	"Fetch"	Mei Wong	9/17/08 11:36 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	RE: "Fetch"	Cathy Chu	9/17/08 2:53 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longshore drift??	Dwight Paul	9/17/08 2:54 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longshore drift defined	Andy Farrell	9/18/08 11:09 AM

Message Actions [v] [Collect](#)

< RE: "Fetch" > **B** [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author: [Cathy Chu](#) **Total views:** 25 (Your views: 8)
Posted Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2008 2:53:09 PM EDT **Overall Rating:** ★★★★★
Edited Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2008 2:53:09 PM EDT **Your Rating:** ★★★★★

[Parent Post](#) **D**

Our book doesn't mince words does it!!

In plain English: **Fetch**, often called the **fetch length**, is a term for the length of water over which a given

Figure 4.2 Functions on the Thread Detail page

► Take Note

- A. **Subscribe or Unsubscribe:** When subscribed to a thread, the user receives an email alert when a post is updated or a reply is posted. The instructor must enable this function when creating the forum.
- B. **Previous Message or Next Message** arrows for navigating between messages in the thread.
- C. **Arrange View** functions:
 - **Swap Up or Down:** Moves the selected message up or down on the page.
 - **Hide or Restore:** Collapses or displays the list of messages.
 - **Maximize or Minimize:** Displays the entire list of messages or the just the top few.
- D. **Parent Post:** Click the link to display or hide the parent message in the thread.

Replying to Posts

You can reply to posts, if the thread status is published. You cannot reply to posts in locked or hidden threads.

► QUICK STEPS: replying to posts

1. Access the forum and select the thread.
2. On the **Thread Detail** page, select a post.
3. Click **Reply**.
4. On the **Reply to Post** page, edit the **Subject**, if you want.
5. Type the reply in the **Message** text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
6. Under **Attachments**, browse for a file to attach to your message. Alternatively, use the Text Editor **Attach File** function.
7. Click **Save Draft** to store a draft of the message or click **Submit**.

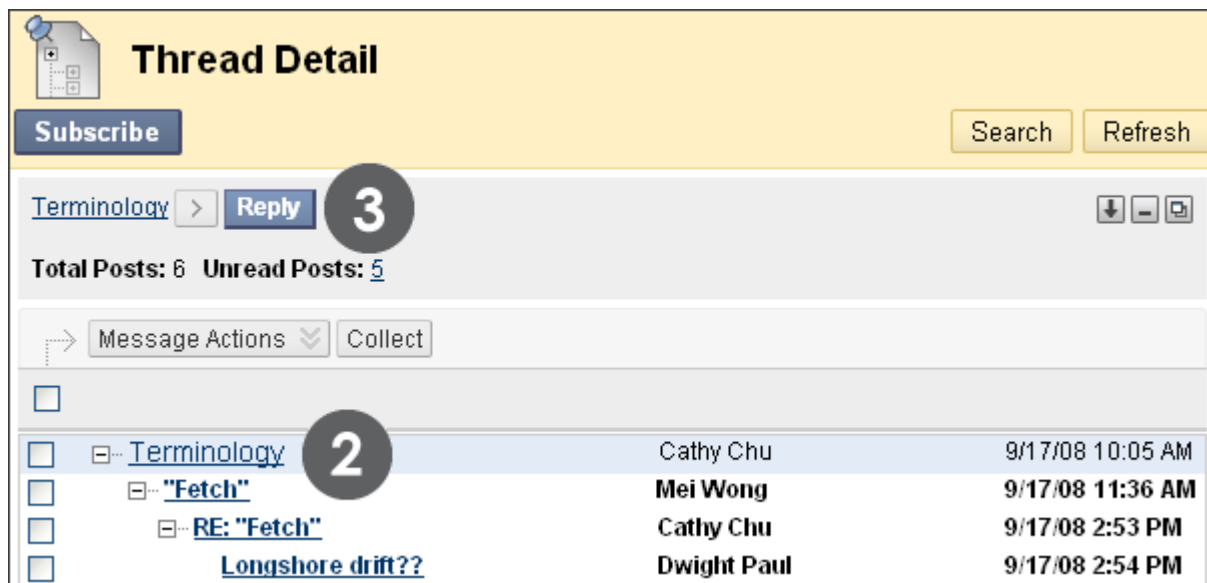


Figure 5.1

Reply to Post

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Save Draft Submit

1. Message

Close Original Post

Author: Cathy Chu
Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2008 10:05:31 AM EDT
Subject: Terminology

Understanding ocean waves has a lingo all its own. Some concepts are easier to understand than others. We usually have some good conversations about specific terms as we help each other fully comprehend their meanings.

* Subject: RE: Terminology

Message

Visual Editor: ON

Normal 3 Arial B I U abc x₂ x² [List Icons]

[Rich Text Editor Icons]

I have been following the discussion on longshore dunes and it has helped me understand the concept. I especially found the images helpful.

Path: body

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2. Attachments

Attach File Browse My Computer Browse Content Collection

Figure 5.2 – You will see the Browse Content Collection function, if your school has licensed the content management capability. Otherwise, you will see Browse Course Files.

On the Action Bar, click **View Original Post** to include the original message on the page while replying. Click **Close Original Post** to hide the original post from view.

TIP: Posts can include a variety of content, such as QuickTime™ movies, audio files, and Mashups. Use the functions in the Text Editor to add multimedia. Click the Mashups icon and choose from adding photos, slide presentations, and YouTube™ videos.

Rating Posts

The Discussion Board is well suited for peer review. Students start threads and include their work in their initial posts. Other users review the work, assign a rating to the initial post, and may include comments in a response.

Rating posts also allows users to focus on messages considered especially informative or useful by others. Depending on the forum settings, posts can be assigned a rating using a five star system. The instructor can also rate posts.

► QUICK STEPS: rating posts

1. Access the forum and select the thread.
2. On the **Thread Detail** page, select the post to rate.
3. For **Your Rating**, select one to five stars.

The screenshot shows the 'Thread Detail' page for a forum thread titled 'Week 1: Wave Power'. The page has a yellow header with a 'Subscribe' button and 'Search' and 'Refresh' buttons. Below the header, there are navigation links for 'Week 1: Wave Power' and a 'Reply' button. A summary bar indicates 'Total Posts: 2' and 'Unread Posts: 1'. A 'Message Actions' dropdown menu is visible, with a 'Collect' button. The main content area lists two posts. The first post, by Tony Brown, is titled 'Week 1: Wave Power' and has a rating of 3 stars. The second post, by Monica Gonzales, is titled 'RE: Week 1: Wave Power' and has a rating of 4 stars. A large black circle with the number '2' is overlaid on the first post, indicating the step to select the post to rate. Below the post list, there is another 'Message Actions' dropdown menu with a 'Collect' button. The post details for the first post are shown, including the author 'Tony Brown', the posted date 'Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT', and the edited date 'Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT'. The post content is 'I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha!' followed by a link to 'http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/'. A large black circle with the number '3' is overlaid on the 'Your Rating' section, which shows a 3-star rating. The 'Total views' are 15, and 'Your views' are 7. At the bottom of the post details, there are buttons for 'Reply', 'Quote', and 'Set Flag'.

Thread Detail

Subscribe **Search** **Refresh**

< **Week 1: Wave Power** > **Reply**

Total Posts: 2 **Unread Posts: 1**

Message Actions Collect

<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 1: Wave Power	Tony Brown	9/19/08 10:18 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	RE: Week 1: Wave Power	Monica Gonzales	9/24/08 10:15 AM

Message Actions Collect

Week 1: Wave Power **Reply** **Quote** **Set Flag**

Author: [Tony Brown](#) **Total views:** 15 (Your views: 7)

Posted Date: Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT **Overall Rating:** ★★★★★

Edited Date: Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT **Your Rating:** ★★★★★

I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha!

<http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/>

< **Week 1: Wave Power** > **Reply** **Quote** **Set Flag**

Figure 6.1

Student Experience: Rating Posts

The rating is now included in the **Overall Rating**, which is the combined rating of all users. The individual rating appears in **Your Rating**. More stars can be added at any time, but stars cannot be deleted.

Week 1: Wave Power >

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

Author:	Tony Brown	Total views:	18 (Your views: 2)
Posted Date:	Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT	Overall Rating:	★★★★☆
Edited Date:	Friday, September 19, 2008 10:18:05 AM EDT	Your Rating:	★★★★☆

I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha!

<http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/>

Figure 6.2

Creating Threads

Depending on which forum settings the instructor has selected, students may be allowed to create new threads.

► QUICK STEPS: creating threads

1. Access the forum.
2. On the Action Bar, click **Create Thread**.
3. On the **Create Thread** page, type a **Subject**.
4. Type the reply in the **Message** text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
5. Under **Attachments**, browse for a file to attach to your message. Alternatively, use the Text Editor **Attach File** function.
6. Click **Save Draft** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit** to create a thread.

Forum: Wave Assignment: Energy from Waves and Tides

[List View](#) [Tree View](#)

[Create Thread](#) **2**

Thread Actions

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:13 AM	Assignment: Extracting Energy	Monica Gonzales	Published		1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:19 AM	Wave Assignment: Wave Energy Trials Underway in New Zealand	Tony Brown	Published		1	1

Figure 7.1

Create Thread

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Save Draft Submit

1. Message

* Subject: **3** Tidal Power: For, Against, and the Cost

Message

Visual Editor: **ON**

4

Tidal power, or tidal energy, is a form of hydro power that exploits the tidal movements of the ocean as water flows back and forth. Tidal power can be harnessed in a couple of ways: kinetic energy that powers turbines as the water moves between full and ebb tide, and; potential energy in which barrages are used to exploit the difference between high and low tide.

When there's a substantial amount of water that rushes in and out of some rivers and inlets it's possible to harness the energy created to drive generators to produce electricity. To tap this energy a barrage is built across the mouth of the river. Water turbines sit in the barrage wall and as the water rushes through, the turbines generate electricity.

Path: [body](#) » [p](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2. Attachments

5

Attach File Browse My Computer Browse Content Collection

Figure 7.2

The new message is the first post in the thread.

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:13 AM	Assignment: Extracting Energy	Monica Gonzales	Published		<u>1</u>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:19 PM	Wave Assignment: Wave Energy Trials Underway in New Zealand	Tony Brown	Published		<u>1</u>	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/18/08 10:20 AM	Tidal Power: For, Against, and the Cost	Sarah Spooner	Published		<u>1</u>	1

Figure 7.3

Collecting Posts

From the **Thread Detail** page, only one post can be read at a time. Use the **Collect** function to read multiple posts from the same page. Once posts are collected, they can be filtered, sorted, and printed.

For example, a student posts a question to request help and seven classmates reply. The initial post and the replies can be collected on one page and printed.

► QUICK STEPS: collecting posts

1. Access the forum and select the thread.
2. On the **Thread Detail** page, select the check boxes of the posts to collect.
3. On the Action Bar, click **Collect**.
4. On the **Collection** page, filter, sort, or print the posts.

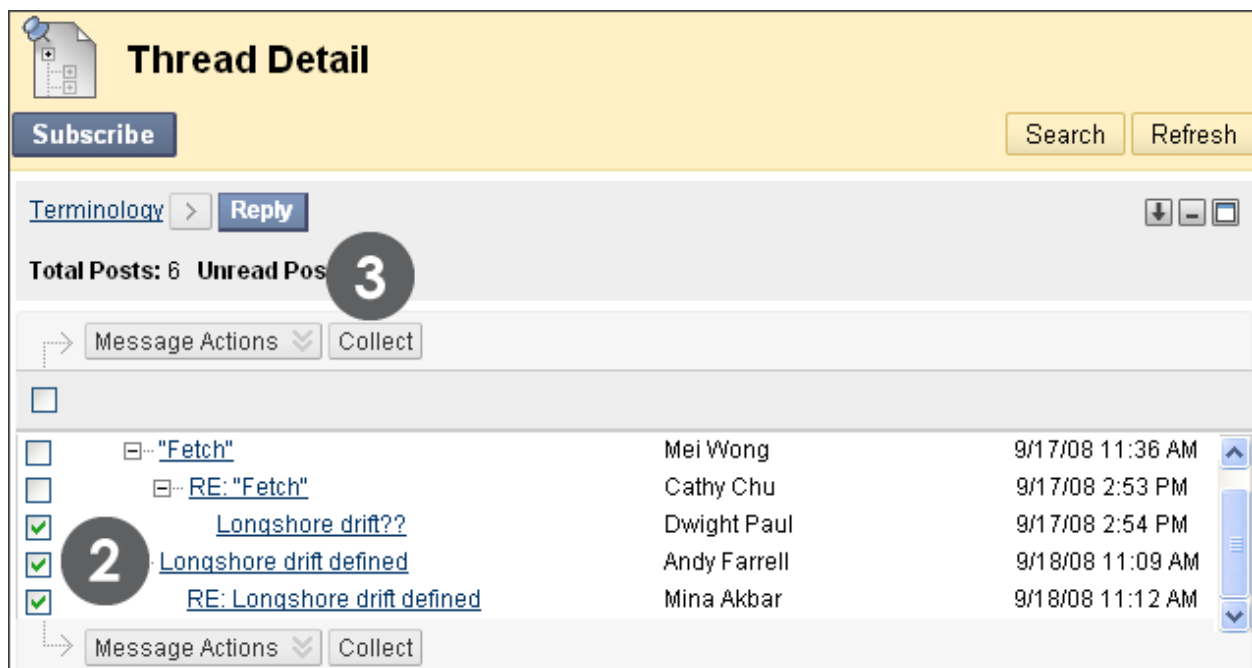



Figure 8.1

TIP: The **Collect** function is also available from the forum page, where it is used to gather all the postings made to different threads. Once collected, sort the messages to further organize them.

Student Experience: Collecting Posts

 **Collection** 4

[Print Preview](#) [Filter](#)

Sort by [Subject](#) Order [▲](#)
Ascending

[Mark](#)

☐

☐ **Thread:** Terminology
Post: [Longshore drift??](#)
Author: Dwight Paul
Posted Date: September 17, 2008 2:54 PM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Tags: None [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

☐ **Thread:** Terminology
Post: [Longshore drift defined](#)
Author: Andy Farrell
Posted Date: September 18, 2008 11:09 AM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
In simple terms, at least this is how I think about it because I used to live on the Gulf coast, longshore drift is just the waves moving the sand.
Tags: None [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

☐ **Thread:** Terminology
Post: [RE: Longshore drift defined](#)
Author: Mina Akbar
Posted Date: September 18, 2008 11:12 AM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Longshore currents and longshore drift are generally considered to be constructive processes. Unlike storm waves, they are not normally regarded as significant in coastal erosion, though the sedimentary particles have to come from somewhere.
Tags: None [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

Figure 8.2

Sort options for messages include the following:

- Author's Last Name
- Author's First Name
- Subject
- Date of Last Post
- Thread Order
- Overall Rating, if the forum settings include rating posts

Filtering Collected Posts

You can filter collected posts to further organize messages based on selected criteria.

► QUICK STEPS: filtering collected posts

1. On the Action Bar, click **Filter**. The **Filter** field expands.
2. Select one or more **Filter** options from the drop-down lists.
3. Click **Go**.

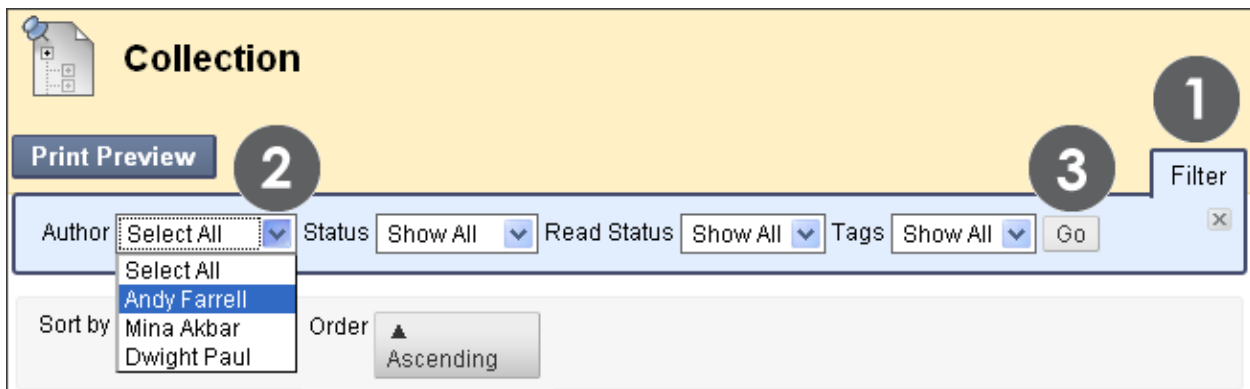


Figure 9

Tags can be selected if the instructor has enabled post tagging for the forum. Tags, which are text labels that act like bookmarks, are discussed in the **Managing Discussions** section of this manual.

Searching Posts

Students can search for specific text—a phrase, word, or part of a word—in the Discussion Board.

► QUICK STEPS: searching posts

1. On the Action Bar, click **Search**. The **Search** field expands.
2. Type a search criterion in the **Search** text box.
3. From the drop-down list, select an area to search.
4. Optionally, select the date and time check boxes and type the dates and times to further narrow the search results. You can also click the **Date Selection Calendar** and **Time Selection Menu** icons to select dates and times.
5. Click **Go**.

<input type="checkbox"/> Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<input type="checkbox"/> Oceans in the News ▼	Each week please post a link to a relevant news article related to oceanography or marine biology. Add the week number to your title.	6	6	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves ▼	This forum will hold our discussions on wave terminology, relevant websites, and questions.	9	3	5

2 Search <input type="text" value="tidal"/>		3 in <input type="text" value="Current Discussion Board"/> ▼	4 <input type="checkbox"/> After <input type="text" value="08/24/2009"/> <input type="text" value="12:00 AM"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Before <input type="text" value="08/25/2009"/> <input type="text" value="12:00 AM"/>	5 Go
--	--	---	---	---	-------------

Figure 10

A **Search Results** page will appear which you can sort using the **Sort by** drop-down list. This page can also be filtered and printed using the functions on the Action Bar.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Student Course.

Icebreaker Forum:

- Create a new thread with your name as the title. In the message, introduce yourself. Include one or two details about your life to share with the class.
- Navigate through other threads.
- Reply to a post.

Scavenger Hunt Forum:

- Navigate through the posts.
- Collect some interesting posts and use the **Sort** and **Filter** features.

Ellis Island Forum:

- Navigate through the posts and rate them.

Best Practice: Set Etiquette Guidelines

At the beginning of an online course, it is a good idea to establish guidelines for discussion etiquette. As you complete the hands-on activities, keep these guidelines in mind. Later, during development of your online course, consider sharing these guidelines with your students.

Be thoughtful

- Include something new in your reply. For example, include more than “I do not agree” or “Good point.”
- State why you agree or disagree. Be considerate of the points made by others.

Be concise

- Keep posts short. Include Web addresses or attachments where necessary.

Stay on the topic

- Make sure your message fits within the general topic of the forum. If it does not, look for a suitable forum.

Include a descriptive subject

- Make threads easy to follow by using accurate and descriptive subject lines.

Create new threads as needed

- If your message will take the current thread’s topic in a new direction, start a new thread.

Use plain English

- Use simple, conversational, uncomplicated language. Remember, your audience is reading on-screen and may have several messages to read. Also, English may not be the first language of all participants.

3.0 Creating Discussions

In this section, we will turn to the instructor role and learn to create discussion forums and threads. Forums and threads are created to organize discussions into units or topics relevant to the course.

Forum settings are selected based on the pedagogical goals for a course:

- Evaluate student performance by grading forums and threads.
- Use the **Moderation Queue** and **Peer Review** features to ensure quality postings and to assist with the workload.
- Allow anonymous posting and thread editing to encourage forthright discourse and increase student participation.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the difference between the student and instructor views of the Discussion Board
- Create discussion forums and threads, selecting forum settings based on pedagogical goals
- Set grading options for forums and threads
- Explain ways to organize the Discussion Board
- Enable email subscriptions to forums and threads
- Add a forum to a course area
- Describe techniques for crafting effective questions and encouraging participation

The Discussion Board

Instructors have the same Discussion Board functions as students, with these additional functions:

- Create forums
- Edit forum settings
- Grade forums
- Manage forum roles
- Copy forums
- Delete forums

Discussion Board

Create Forum **A** Search Discover Content ↑↓

Delete

	<input type="checkbox"/> Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
↑↓	<input type="checkbox"/> Oceans in the News	Each week please post a link to a relevant news article related to oceanography or marine biology. Add the week number to your title.	6	6	6
↑↓	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves	This forum will hold our discussions on wave terminology, relevant websites, and questions.	9	9	5
↑↓	<input type="checkbox"/> Wave As a Renewable Energy Source and Tides	Long energy from waves and tides. Please narrow your aspect such as: the energy be extracted? this resource? viable "model" be made and relied upon? safety? research is out there? working energy projects	5	5	4

B

C

- > Open
- > Edit
- > Manage
- > Copy
- > Delete

Figure 1

► Take Note

- A. Create Forum – click to create a new forum and select settings.
- B. Action Link – click to access the contextual menu for an item.
- C. Contextual menu – select an option for the item.

Creating Forums

Forum settings allow you to use the Discussion Board in different ways. For example, to control the forum, the instructor creates all threads, and moderates and grades the posts. For a student-led discussion, allow students to create new threads with the option of posting anonymously.

► QUICK STEPS: creating forums

1. On the main **Discussion Board** page, on the Action Bar, click **Create Forum**.
2. On the **Create Forum** page, type a **Name**. Users click this name to access the forum.
3. Optionally, type instructions or a description in the **Description** text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want. The **Description** appears below the forum name.
4. Under **Forum Availability**, select the **Yes** option.
5. Select **Forum Settings**.
6. Click **Submit**.

Figure 2.1

TIP: Create forums ahead of time and set the availability to **No** until the discussion is ready to start.

3 Forum Settings

☐ Allow Anonymous Posts

☐ Allow Author to Delete Own Posts

☐ All posts

☐ Only posts with no replies

☒ Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts

☐ Allow Post Tagging

☒ Allow Users to Reply with Quote

☒ Allow File Attachments

☒ Allow Members to Create New Threads

Subscribe

☒ Do not allow subscriptions

☐ Allow members to subscribe to threads

☐ Allow members to subscribe to forum

☐ Include body of post in the email

☐ Include link to post

☒ Allow Members to Rate Posts

☐ Force Moderation of Posts

Grade

☒ No Grading in Forum

☐ Grade Forum: Points possible:

☐ Grade Threads

4 Submit

Cancel Submit

Figure 2.2

Forum Settings

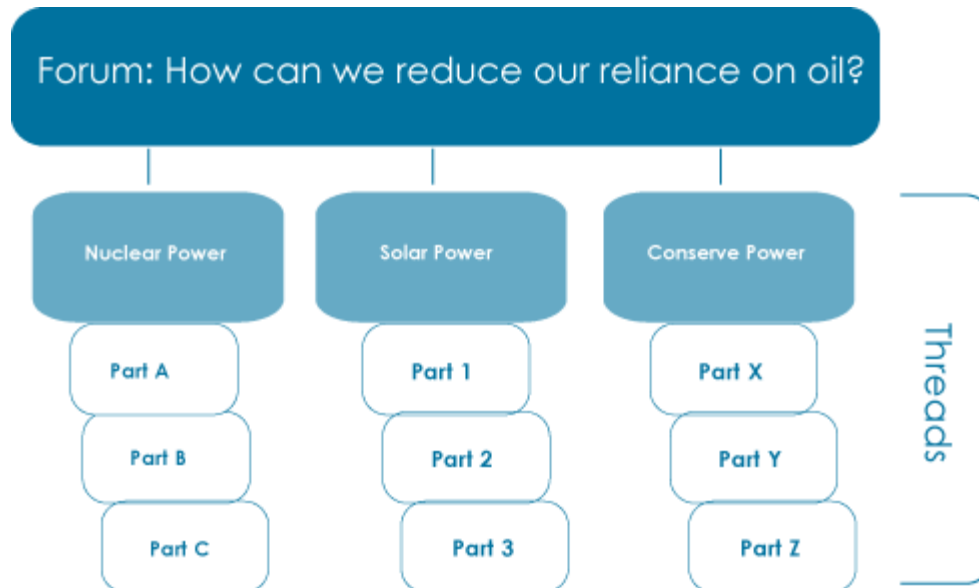
- Choose whether to allow anonymous posts, file attachments, thread creation, subscription, and member rating of posts.
- Choose whether to grade discussion posts. Once grading has been enabled, a Grade Center item is created.
- Select the **Grade Forum** option and type a point value to evaluate students on performance throughout the forum.
- Select the **Grade Threads** option to evaluate students on performance in each thread chosen.

Students cannot create new threads or respond anonymously if the **Grade Threads** option is selected for the forum.

The grading process will be explained in the **Grading Discussions** section of the manual.

Suggestions for Organizing Discussions

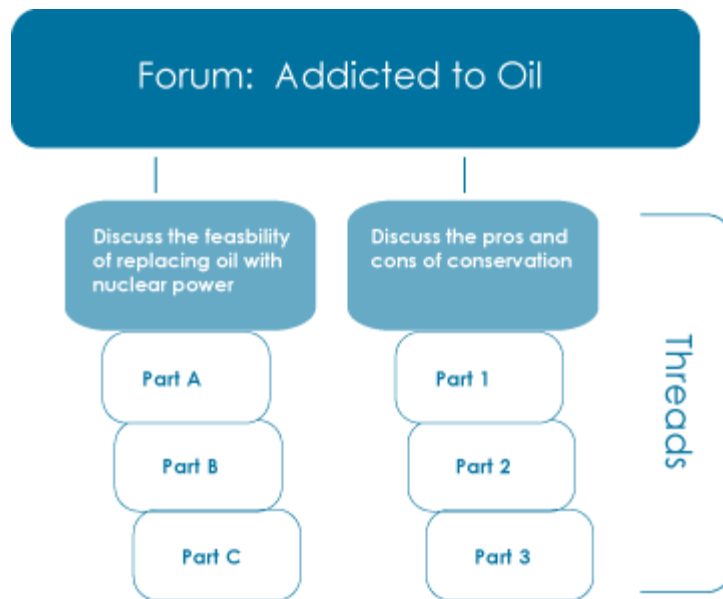
The most common approach for organizing discussions is to type your discussion topic in the forum title and add details in the forum description.



- Type a subject or a discussion question in the forum title and provide instructions or details in the description.
- Allow students to create threads. In the preceding example, each thread represents a student's solution to the problem of oil addiction.
- Users can post to existing threads to comment on given answers or create new threads to present new solutions.

Creating Discussions: Creating Forums

Another approach is to pose the discussion question or topic in a thread. This can be an efficient way to organize related topics.



- Type the general subject in the forum title.
- Create threads containing the specific issues to be discussed.
- In this case, consider disallowing thread creation, ensuring that students can only post to existing threads.

Suggestions for Settings

The following table offers some suggested settings for various types of forums.

▼ If you want to	▼ Select settings
Create effective social forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow anonymous posts• No grading in forum
Create forums where users have control of the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow author to delete own posts• Allow author to edit own published posts• Allow members to create new threads• Allow members to rate posts
Have a tightly controlled forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Force moderation of posts• Grade by forum or grade by thread• Do not allow members to create new threads so they focus on existing threads

If you allow authors to edit their published posts, consider locking the forum so posts cannot be changed after they are graded.

Some settings cannot be selected in combination. For example, if you are grading forums or threads, anonymous posts are not allowed. Also, members cannot create new threads, if thread grading is enabled.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C answers a question about encouraging discussion participation.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
What can I do to encourage participation?	<p>Here are two ways to encourage participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow students to edit and delete their own posts. Especially in graded forums or threads, students appreciate the option of being able to edit their contributions.• Allow anonymous posts. This is especially important at the beginning of the course when students are still becoming comfortable with discussions. If quality is a concern, assign a Moderator to review each post before it is made public.

Creating Threads

Once in a forum, threads can be created. Users can create new threads, if the forum is set to allow users to add new threads and threads are not graded. Creating a thread as an instructor is the same as creating a thread as a student, with the option of grading the thread.

In the following example, a graded thread is created.

► QUICK STEPS: creating threads

1. Access the forum.
2. On the Action Bar, click **Create Thread**.
3. On the **Create Thread** page, type a **Subject**.
4. Type the reply in the **Message** text box. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
5. Under **Attachments**, browse for a file to attach to your message. Use the Text Editor **Attach File** function to attach multiple files.
6. To add a grade column to the **Grade Center**, select the **Grade Thread** check box and type **Points possible**.
7. Click **Save Draft** to store a draft of the post or click **Submit**.

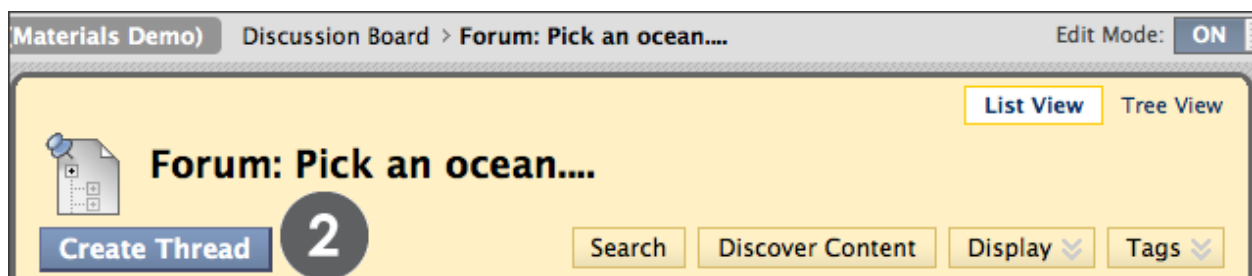



Figure 3.1



Create Thread

★ Indicates a required field.

Cancel

Save Draft

Submit

1. Message

★ Subject:

Message

Visual Editor: ☒

Normal

3

Arial

B

I

U

abc

x_2

x^2

abc

Respond to this post with an ocean or ocean aspect of your choice for your research paper/presentation. If you have chosen a partner, list his or her name, but your partner must also respond to this post to receive a grade.

This is a required assignment **worth 10 points**.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2. Attachments

Attach File

Browse My Computer

Browse Course Files

3. Grading

☒ **Grade Thread**

Points possible:

4. Submit

Cancel

Save Draft

Submit

Figure 3.2 – The Create Thread page

If the forum is set to grade by thread, decide on a thread-by-thread basis whether to grade the thread.

Creating Discussions: Creating Threads

The new thread appears in the forum.

Forum: Pick an ocean....

Create Thread Search Discover Content Display Tags

Thread Actions Collect Delete

<input type="checkbox"/>	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	8/26/09 3:02 PM	Post Internet sources	Tom Stenson	Published		0	1	Grade B
<input type="checkbox"/>	8/26/09 3:03 PM	Your Ocean	Tom Stenson	Published		0	1	A Grade Thread

Figure 3.3

► Take Note

In the **Grade** column:

- A. **Grade Thread** allows you to evaluate the posts.
- B. **Grade** allows you to enable grading for a thread and type a value.

Allowing Email Subscriptions

Students can be allowed to either subscribe to an entire forum or to specific threads within a forum.

When email subscription is enabled, Blackboard Learn™ sends out email alerts if there are new posts or replies. The instructor decides whether the subscription email contains the entire message or a link to the message.

Subscriptions to forums or threads can be enabled when the forum is first created or when the forum settings are edited.

► QUICK STEPS: allowing email subscriptions

1. Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select Edit.
3. On the **Edit Forum** page, under **Forum Settings**, select the **Subscribe** options.
4. Click Submit.

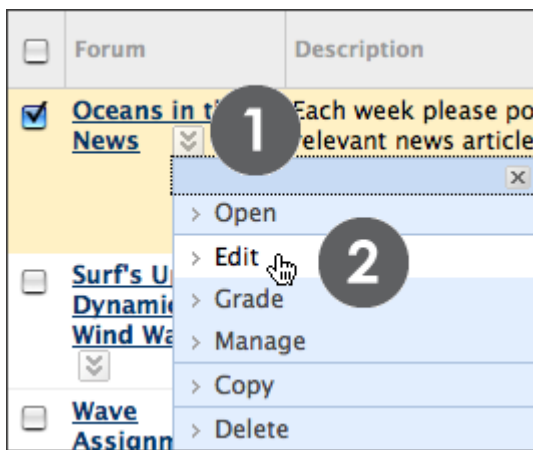
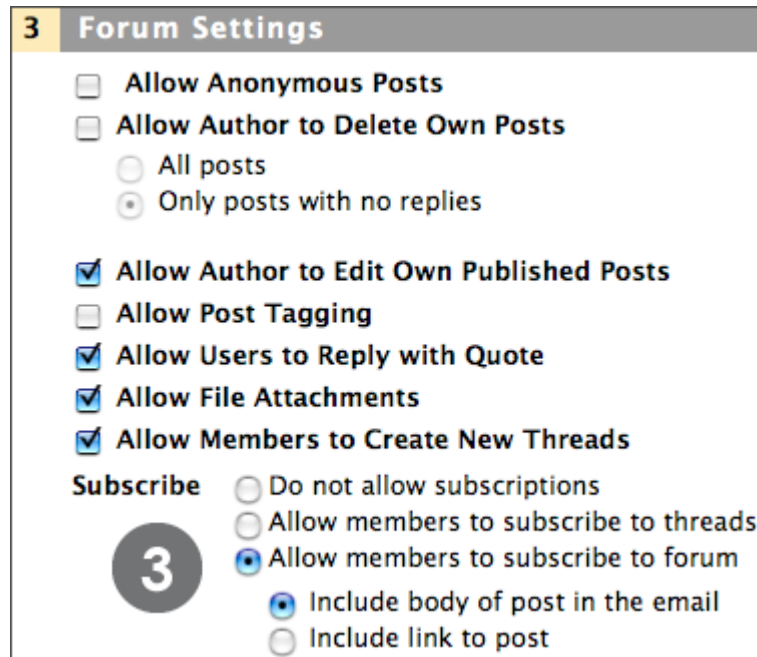


Figure 4.1



3 Forum Settings

☐ Allow Anonymous Posts

☐ Allow Author to Delete Own Posts

☐ All posts

☒ Only posts with no replies

☒ Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts

☐ Allow Post Tagging

☒ Allow Users to Reply with Quote

☒ Allow File Attachments

☒ Allow Members to Create New Threads

Subscribe

☐ Do not allow subscriptions

☐ Allow members to subscribe to threads

☒ Allow members to subscribe to forum

☒ Include body of post in the email

☐ Include link to post

Figure 4.2

Subscribe Options

- Allow members to subscribe to threads restricts subscription to specific threads within the forum.
- Allow members to subscribe to forum allows subscription to all threads within the forum.
- Include body of post in the email includes the message text and a link to reply to the message in the email notification.
- Include link to post inserts a link to the message in the email notification.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

Create discussion forums for the following scenarios:

Scenario 1:

- Create a forum titled **Introductions** where students can share details about themselves—where they are from, their field of study, their favorite movie, and so on.
- Instruct students to create their own threads with their names as the titles. Encourage students to post replies.

Scenario 2:

- Create a forum for discussing current issues in your subject area. Decide whether you want to grade by forum or by thread, and select forum settings accordingly. Allow students to edit, but not delete, their own posts.
- Within the forum, create several threads for specific subjects.

Adding a Forum to a Course Area

Discussion forums can be incorporated into course areas to immerse the user in the learning experience. For example, links to discussion forums can be placed in any Content Area, Learning Module, Lesson Plan, or folder. A forum may appear following lecture notes on the same topic or after an assignment to gather students' perceptions on how they did. Adaptive Release or date availability restrictions can be used to limit access to users so content is accessed in a specified order, such as reading assigned chapters before adding posts to the Discussion Board.

NOTE: Forums need to be created first and then they can be linked in the course.

► QUICK STEPS: add a discussion forum to a course area

1. Access the Content Area, Learning Module, Lesson Plan, or folder where the forum will be linked.
2. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.
3. Point to **Add Interactive Tool** on the Action Bar.
4. Select **Discussion Board**.
5. On the **Create Link: Discussion Board** page, select **Link to Discussion Board Page** to link to the main page or select **Select a Discussion Board Forum** and select a forum from the list.
6. Click **Next**.
7. On the next **Create Link: Discussion Board** page, type a **Link Name**. Students click the Name to access the forum.
8. Optionally, add instructions or a description in the **Text** box. Use the Text Editor functions to format the text.
9. Select **Yes** for the **Available** option. Set other options as needed.
10. Click **Submit**.

Creating Discussions: Adding a Forum to a Course Area

3

4

6

1. Create Link: Discussion Board

☐ Link to Discussion Board Page

☒ Select a Discussion Board Forum

Select a Discussion Board Forum

Glacier Melt Could Signal Faster Rise in Ocean Levels

Oceanography Group #1 - Let's divide the work

Oceans in the News

Oil Discovery in our Oceans and the Potential of Polluting our Waters Further

Pick an ocean....

Create New Forum

Create New Forum

Cancel Next

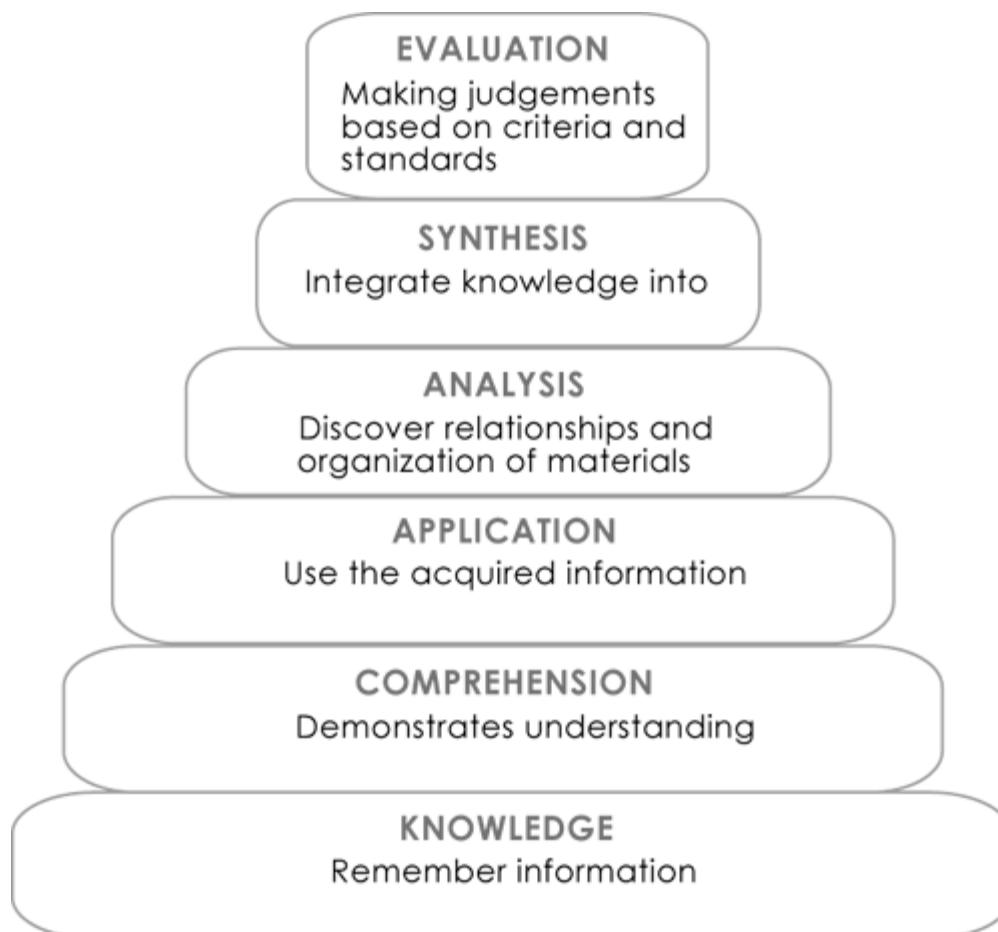
Figure 5

Best Practice: Crafting Effective Questions

As research indicates, the quality of the first post in a thread influences the thought level of subsequent postings.² A carefully worded discussion question is perhaps the most important factor in using discussions to satisfy your learning objectives.

Using Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy can be useful in determining what type of question to develop, as well as how to word it. In this classification system, the least complex level, information recall, resides at the bottom of the pyramid as a knowledge base. At the top, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis require the most complex and abstract thinking. Discussions, along with creative assignments and group work, are for higher order thinking.



² Meyer, K. A. "The Ebb and Flow of Online Discussions: What Bloom Can Tell Us About Our Students' Conversations." JALN 9.1(2005) Web. 2 Feb. 2006.

Essential and Guiding Questions

Essential and guiding questions may also draw out higher order thinking.

- Essential questions require skills, such as analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating. Answers to essential questions cannot be readily found on the Internet and copied; they must have personal meaning and insight constructed by the student.³
- Guiding questions help students answer the essential question. These questions are subcategories of the main topic and may tap into lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Ideas for Guiding Questions

Guiding questions can be developed and used in a number of ways:

- Students can work in small groups to develop their own guiding questions to help them answer the essential question.
- The instructor can start with guiding questions and lead up to the essential question through the course of the discussion.
- The instructor can include them with the initial post to help students get started.
- The instructor can interject guiding questions when a lull occurs.

Example

Essential Question: How would you design the perfect online instructor?

Guiding Questions:

- What assumptions do you hold about teaching effectiveness?
- How would you assess an instructor's performance?
- Identify a list of traits that describe the qualification of perfect. Think about your own experiences as a student.
- List traits you would avoid in designing the perfect instructor.

³ McKenzie, J. "Framing Essential Questions." Technology Connection 6.1 (1996). Web. 19 Jan. 2006.

4.0 Moderating Discussions

In this section, we will examine the art and science of moderating discussions to maintain discussion activity throughout the term. Without vigilance on the instructor's part, even discussions starting out with ample excitement can dwindle as the term progresses.

The **art of moderating** involves finding the right balance between guiding the conversation and standing back to allow students to discover new ideas.

The **science of moderating** involves using the Discussion Board functions to keep students focused on relevant discussions and to determine a student's level of access.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Describe techniques for moderating discussions
- List steps to developing successful online discussions
- Describe the forum roles and assign users to roles
- Use the Moderation Queue to monitor discussion posts and distribute the workload
- Describe thread status options and identify situations when it is appropriate to change the status

The Art of Moderating

As an online instructor, your role is to facilitate the conversation and exchange of ideas on the Discussion Board. You need to ensure that students feel comfortable to share, while also monitoring responses and keeping everyone focused and on track. At the same time, you want to be careful not to dominate or impede the flow of the discussion.

Here are some suggestions for finding the right balance between guiding the conversation and leading it:

- Ask probing questions that lead to other perspectives or ask for clarification.
- Do not respond to every student post or rush to fill silences. If given the opportunity, students will contribute rather than depend on the instructor for answers. However, engage students when lulls occur.
- Redirect tangents to the appropriate topic.
- Reinforce authors whose posts meet expectations.
- Acknowledge efforts by those taking brave steps outside of their comfort zones.
- Reply privately when dealing with individual issues or online behavior.

Four Steps to Developing Successful Online Discussions

The following table lists four steps and examples for developing successful online discussions.

▼ Steps	▼ Examples
Define participation requirements	Students need to be aware of your expectations. Create a forum where students can read about etiquette and grading rubrics.
Craft an effective question	Avoid phrasing the question so it can be answered with a yes or no. Instead, phrase the question so it provokes thought and research. Use the Mashups feature to add images, videos, and slide presentations to the question. Students can also add Mashups to their replies.
Encourage new ideas	If discussion postings contain too much agreement and not enough questioning of ideas, try assigning students with the last names A–M to support one side and N–Z to support the other.
Moderate	Establish your presence by asking for clarification, resources, or input from silent participants.

Assigning Forum Roles

Each user in the forum has a forum role and can only have one role per forum. Course instructors automatically have the role of Manager and students have the role of Participant.

Forum roles can be assigned to limit access to a forum or to help with forum administration.

► QUICK STEPS: assigning forum roles

1. Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Manage**. A list of users appears.
3. On the **Manage Forum Users** page, click the user's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
4. Select a new forum role. The new role appears in the **Forum Role** column for the user.

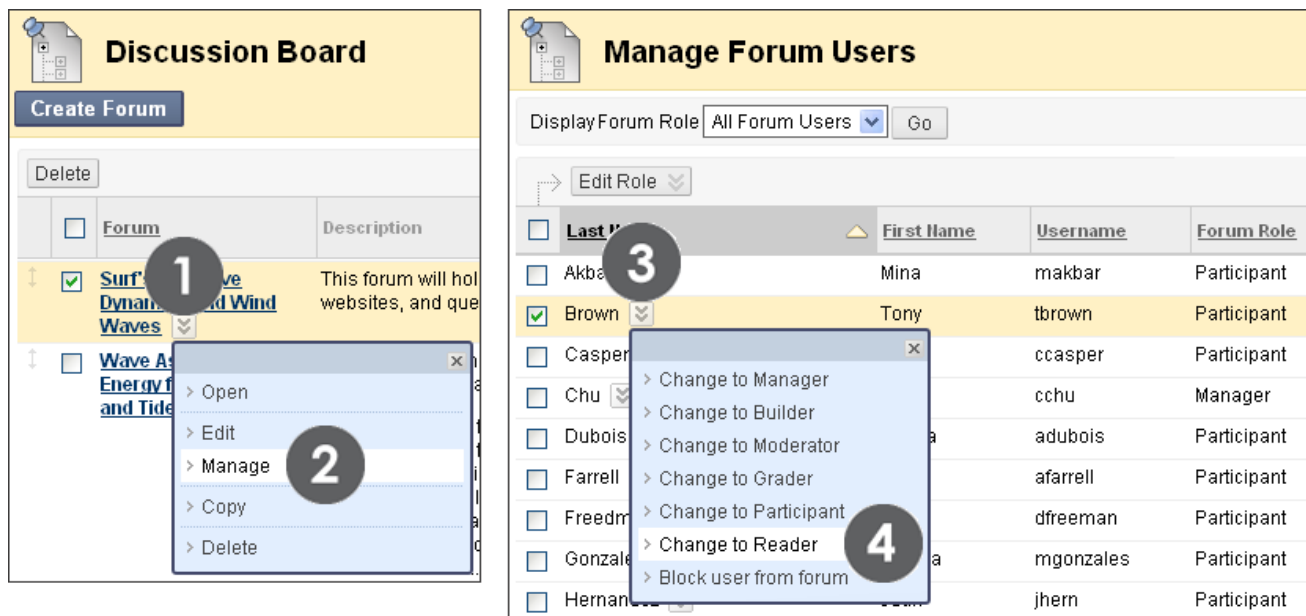


Figure 1

Moderating Discussions: Assigning Forum Roles

To limit a user's access to a forum, assign the **Reader** or **Block user from forum** role. The roles and their permissions are listed in the following table.

▼ Role	▼ Permissions
Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants can read and reply to posts.• Users with a course role of Student are granted this role by default.
Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers can read the contents of a forum, but cannot post responses or add threads.
Blocked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A blocked user cannot access the forum.

Moderating Discussions: Assigning Forum Roles

To assist with forum administration, assign users any of the following roles listed in the following table.

▼ Role	▼ Permissions
Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Moderator can delete, edit, and lock all posts in any forum, even if the forum does not use the Moderation Queue.• If a Moderation Queue is used, the Moderator may approve or reject posts in the queue before they are made available to all users.
Grader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graders can read and reply to posts.• Graders can review posts and add grades.• Users with a course role of Grader are granted this forum role by default. Graders cannot view their own work.
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Manager has full control over the forum and can change the forum settings, moderate posts, and assign roles and grades.• Users with a course role of Instructor or Teaching Assistant are granted this role by default.
Builder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Builders can edit, copy, and delete forums, but not grade or manage forums. Inside a forum, the Builder can perform the same actions on posts as the instructor, with the exception of grading threads.• Course Builders can create new threads in a forum.• Course Builders can enable grading for a thread and type a value.• Users with a course role of Course Builder are granted this forum role by default.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses the Moderator role.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
What are the benefits of assigning a moderator?	<p>A moderator can benefit discussion activities in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A moderator can ensure that postings are high quality and adhere to established etiquette guidelines.• A moderator can give students private feedback on their posts, ask for clarification, correct any confusion, or redirect a student's focus.
Who can I use as the moderator?	<p>The instructor or a teaching assistant can be the moderator. Or, save time and get students involved by assigning the moderator role to a student. For example, ask students to sign up to moderate a topic of their choice, or use the moderation role as an extra credit opportunity.</p>

Moderating Posts

When a moderated forum is created, all posts to the forum are added to a Moderation Queue. The Moderator reviews each post and does one of following:

- Publishes the post
- Returns the post to the sender without a message
- Returns the post to the sender with a message

You choose to moderate a forum when creating it, or by editing an existing forum. Only posts added after enabling the forum moderation are available for review in the Moderation Queue.

When choosing a moderated forum, do not allow students to edit or delete posts. This ensures that the post approved is the one viewed by users.

► QUICK STEPS: allowing moderation of posts

1. Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Edit**.
3. On the **Edit Forum** page, under **Forum Settings**, select the **Force Moderation of Posts** check box and click **Submit**.
4. After posts have been submitted, access the forum.
5. On the Action Bar, click **Moderate Forum**.
6. On the **Moderation Queue** page, click **Moderate** next to the post.
7. Read posts and publish or return them by selecting the appropriate option. Optionally, type feedback in the text box and **Submit**.

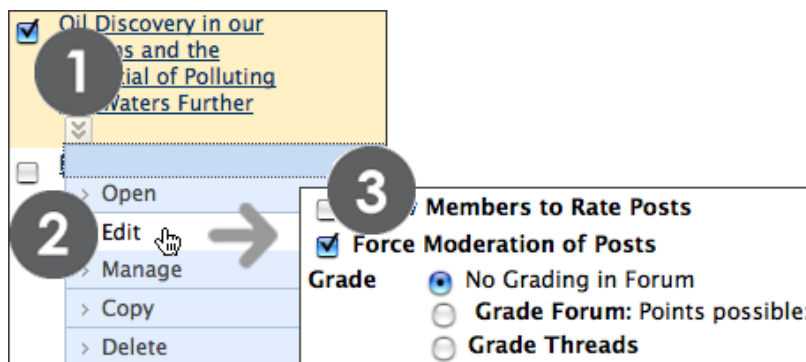
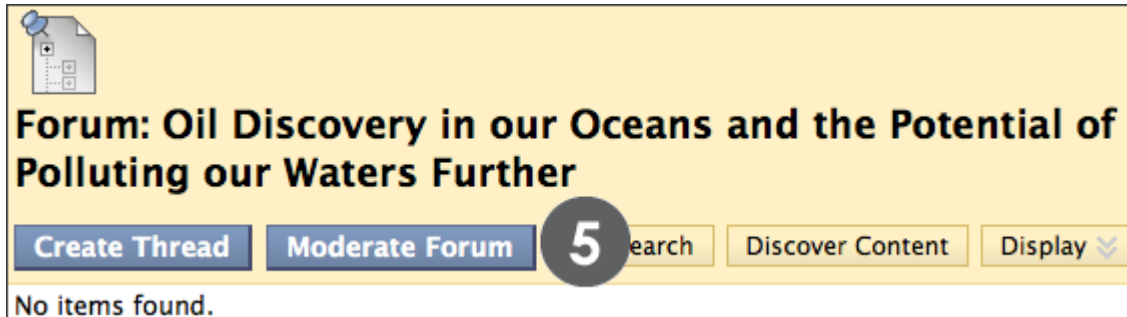


Figure 2.1

Moderating Discussions: Moderating Posts

In the Moderator view, no items are found because the messages are waiting approval. In the student view, the post shows in Tree View with a reminder it is in the Moderation Queue.



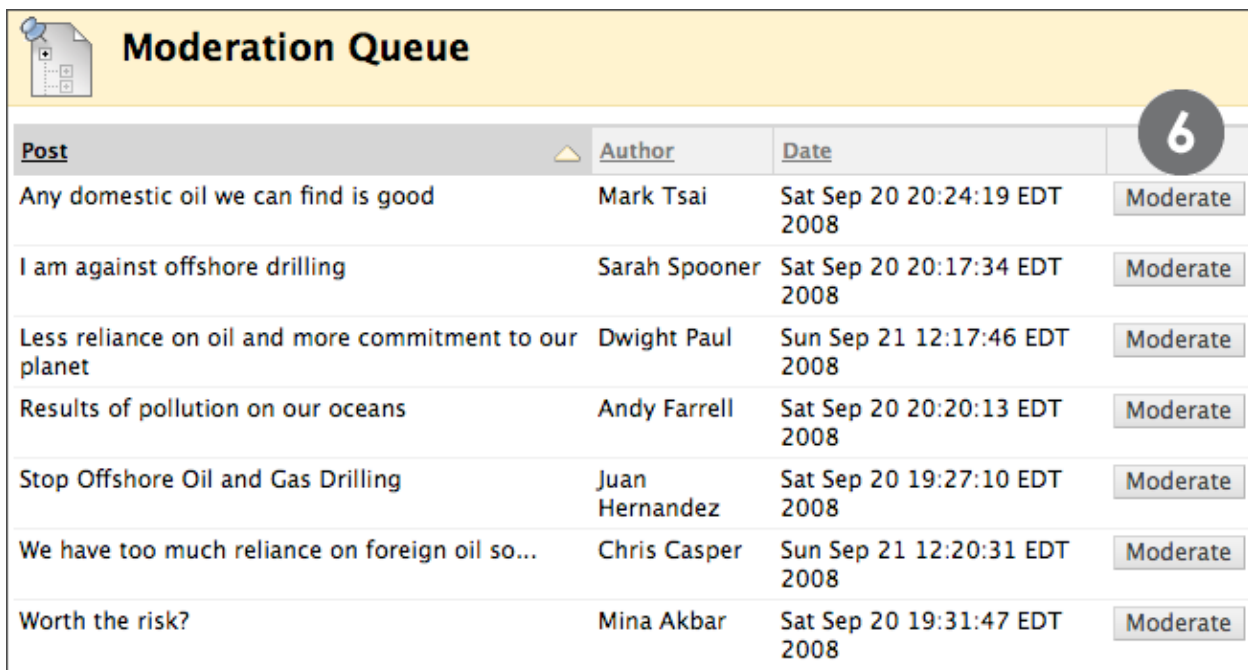
Forum: Oil Discovery in our Oceans and the Potential of Polluting our Waters Further

Create Thread Moderate Forum 5 Search Discover Content Display ▾

No items found.

Figure 2.2 – Moderator view


Once you have chosen to moderate the forum, the Moderation Queue page appears.



Post	Author	Date	
Any domestic oil we can find is good	Mark Tsai	Sat Sep 20 20:24:19 EDT 2008	Moderate
I am against offshore drilling	Sarah Spooner	Sat Sep 20 20:17:34 EDT 2008	Moderate
Less reliance on oil and more commitment to our planet	Dwight Paul	Sun Sep 21 12:17:46 EDT 2008	Moderate
Results of pollution on our oceans	Andy Farrell	Sat Sep 20 20:20:13 EDT 2008	Moderate
Stop Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling	Juan Hernandez	Sat Sep 20 19:27:10 EDT 2008	Moderate
We have too much reliance on foreign oil so...	Chris Casper	Sun Sep 21 12:20:31 EDT 2008	Moderate
Worth the risk?	Mina Akbar	Sat Sep 20 19:31:47 EDT 2008	Moderate

Figure 2.3

The Moderation Queue default order is alphabetically by title. Click the column title or caret at the top of a column to reorder by post title, author, or date.



Moderate Post

Cancel
Submit

1 Post Contents

Date Submitted	Sat Oct 18 20:16:50 EDT 2008
Author	Chris Casper
Subject	We have too much reliance on foreign oil so...
Message	I think we need to stage a one day boycott. If we banded together and did not buy gas, we would send a message.

2 Post Moderation

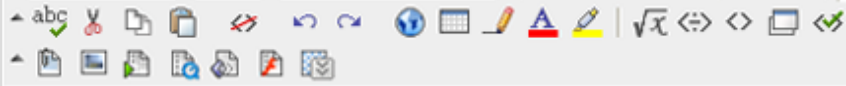
Set Status

7

☐ Publish
☒ Return

Visual Editor: ☒ ON

Normal
3
Arial
B I U abc x₂ x²

abc


As you can see from the published posts in this forum, each student is giving a more substantial answer and I would like you to do so also. I would like you to consider if your initial answer is indeed answering the question of potential pollution. Please resubmit.

Figure 2.4

Though feedback is optional, this is an opportunity to provide guidance, ask questions, or redirect a student's focus. Type a comment in the text box explaining why the post was returned. Returned posts no longer appear in the Moderation Queue.

Students will see their returned posts with an explanation and they will be able to create new threads as needed.

Changing Thread Status

When a thread is created, it is automatically assigned **Published** status. The thread status can be changed or locked to keep students focused on relevant discussions. Thread status is shown and changed in **List View**.

► QUICK STEPS: changing thread status

1. Access the forum.
2. In **List View**, select the check box next to each thread requiring a change of status.
3. From the **Thread Actions** drop-down list, select a new status for the selected thread or threads.

The screenshot displays the 'Forum: Oceans in the News' interface in 'List View'. At the top, there are buttons for 'Create Thread', 'Grade Forum', 'Search', 'Discover Content', and 'Display'. Below these are 'Thread Actions', 'Collect', and 'Delete' buttons. A table lists three threads, each with a checkbox, date, time, thread title, author, and status. The first two threads are selected with checkboxes. A large black circle with the number '2' is placed over the first thread's checkbox. A dropdown menu for 'Thread Actions' is open, showing options like 'Mark as Read', 'Mark as Unread', 'Set Flag', 'Clear Flag', 'Publish', 'Hide', 'Make Unavailable', 'Lock', 'Unlock', and 'Subscribe/Unsubscribe'. A large black circle with the number '3' is placed over the 'Lock' option. The status of all threads is 'Published'. The text 'Displaying 1 to 3' is visible at the bottom right of the table area.

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:28 AM	Week 1: Great Global Warming/Ocean Effect/Role website	Mei Wong	Published	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 9:22 AM	Week 1: Longshore Drift	Chris Casper	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 10:18 AM	Week 1: Wave Power	Tony Brown	Published	Wave Power

Figure 3

Moderating Discussions: Changing Thread Status

The following table describes which thread status to select to accomplish various objectives.

▼ Goal for thread	▼ Status
Make thread available to all users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish
Allow users to read the thread, but not edit or add to it. Locking a thread allows grades to be assigned without users updating or changing posts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lock
Hide the thread from immediate view, but still allow users the option of reading the threads. Students may not reply to or edit hidden threads. Users can view hidden threads using the Display drop-down list on the Action Bar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hide
Hide thread from view of all users except forum Managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make Unavailable

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course and access the Discussion Board.

Moderate Discussions

- Because of some inappropriate postings in the previous unit, you do not want **Chris Casper** to post to the **Unit 3** forum. Change his privileges so he can only read postings in the forum.
- Lock a thread in the **Unit 2** forum so students cannot add posts. **NOTE:** Depending on settings made at the system admin level, you may not see **Lock** in the **Thread Actions** drop-down list. If so, select another option for the thread.
- For the **Unit 4** forum, delegate some of the workload by assigning the **Moderator** role to your teaching assistant, **Monica Gonzales** before students begin posting.

5.0 Managing Discussions

In this section, techniques are presented for managing both the Discussion Board itself and the content within forums and threads. For example, to keep students focused as the term progresses, edit forum settings or organize forums and threads to attract attention once again.

Learning Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Change forum availability
- Edit descriptive information for the forum
- Edit forum settings as the discussion progresses
- Copy discussion forums
- Organize forums and threads
- Add tags to threads

Editing Forums

As the discussion progresses, editing forum settings can resolve discussion issues. For example, if students are posting to the wrong topic, fine-tune the forum name or description to clarify the forum's purpose. If all forums were created at the beginning of the term and made unavailable, any forum can be edited to make it available.

► QUICK STEPS: editing forums

1. Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Edit**.
3. On the **Edit Forum** page, edit the forum **Name** and **Description**.
4. Edit the **Forum Availability** information.
5. Edit the **Forum Settings**.
6. Click **Submit**.

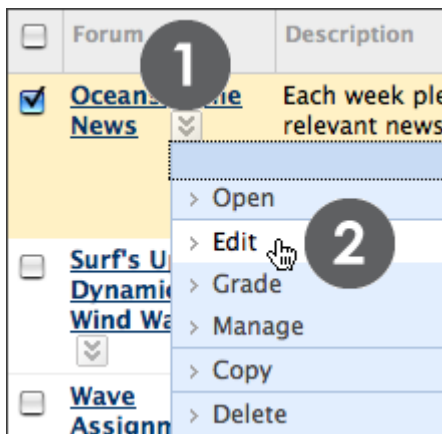


Figure 1.1

1 Forum Information

★ Name

3 Oceans in the News

Description

Visual Editor: ON

Normal 3 Times New Roman B I U abc x₂ x²

Each week please post a link to a relevant news article related to oceanography or marine biology. Add the week number to your title.

Path: body

Save as Reusable Object

2 Forum Availability

Available ☒ Yes ☐ No 4

Enter Date and Time Restrictions

☐ Display After

☐ Display Until

3 Forum Settings

☐ Allow Anonymous Posts
 ☒ Allow Author to Delete Own Posts

☐ All posts
 ☒ Only posts with no replies

☒ Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts
 ☒ Allow Post Tagging
 ☒ Allow Users to Reply with Quote 5
 ☒ Allow File Attachments
 ☒ Allow Members to Create New Threads

Subscribe

☐ Do not allow subscriptions
 ☐ Allow members to subscribe to threads
 ☒ Allow members to subscribe to forum

☒ Include body of post in the email
 ☐ Include link to post

☒ Allow Members to Rate Posts
 ☐ Force Moderation of Posts

Grade

☐ No Grading in Forum
 ☒ Grade Forum: Points possible: 25.0
 ☐ Grade Threads

4 Submit

6

Cancel

Submit

Figure 1.2 – The Edit Forum page

Copying Forums

Discussion forums can be copied and added to the current Discussion Board or to a Group Discussion Board in the same course. To copy a Discussion Board to another course, use the Course Copy utility.

► QUICK STEPS: copying forums

- Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
- Select **Copy**.
- On the **Copy Forum** page, type a **Name**.
- Select the option to copy: **Entire forum** or **Forum settings only**.
- Select the **Location** from the list.
- Click **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the 'Copy Forum' form with the following elements:

- Header:** 'Copy Forum' with a document icon.
- Legend:** '* Indicates a required field.'
- Buttons:** 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons at the top and bottom right.
- Section 1: Forum Information**
 - Name:** A text field containing 'Oceans in the News, Part Two' (Step 3).
 - Copy:** Radio buttons for 'Entire forum' (selected, Step 4) and 'Forum settings only'.
 - Location:** A dropdown menu showing 'Oceanography Group #1', 'Oceanography Group #2', 'Oceanography Group #3', and 'Oceanography' (selected, Step 5).
- Section 2: Submit** (Step 6)

Figure 2

NOTE: Discussion forums copied to a Group Discussion Board only include messages authored by the Group's members.

Example: Copy forum settings only

Copy the settings of a forum with research paper instructions because a new forum is needed for another activity with identical settings.

Example: Copy the entire forum

If two distinct topics emerge during a discussion, it is possible to create separate forums for these topics. Copy the forum and then delete the off-topic postings from each forum.

When content is copied, all threads and replies appear in the new location, along with any file attachments.

Organizing Forums and Threads

As the term progresses, you can keep forums organized by changing the order of forums or deleting unneeded forums and threads.

Changing the Order of Forums

Change the order of forums on the Discussion Board to keep the current discussions at the beginning of the list.

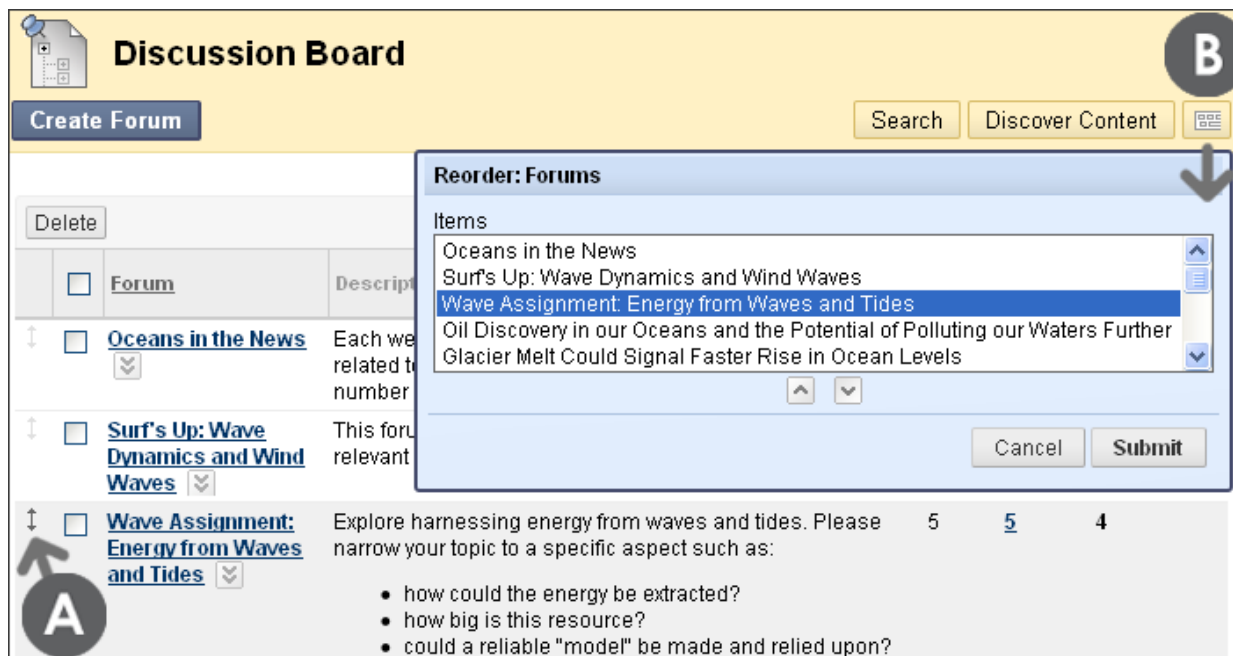


Figure 3.1

► Take Note

- A. Use the drag-and-drop function to move the forum by pressing the move icon, a double-tipped arrow or handle, and dragging the item into the new location.
- B. Alternatively, click the Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar. From the **Items** box, select the forum title. Use the up and down arrows below the **Items** box to adjust the order and Submit.

Deleting Forums and Threads

You can delete forums and threads which are no longer used. When a forum or thread is removed, all content and grades are permanently deleted. For example, delete an ungraded forum that was used to discuss a completed assignment.

NOTE: Do not delete graded forums or threads unless the grades are no longer needed in the Grade Center.

► QUICK STEPS: deleting forums and threads

1. Select the check box next to the item or items to delete.
2. On the Action Bar, click **Delete**.

Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves

Create Thread Search Discover Content Display Tags

Thread Actions Collect Delete

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:05 AM	Terminology	Cathy Chu	Published		5	6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 10:20 AM	Relevant Websites	Cathy Chu	Published		0	1

Figure 3.2

On the **Thread Detail** page, you can delete individual messages when viewing a post within a thread.

< RE: Longshore drift defined Reply Quote Edit Set Flag Delete

Author: [Mina Akbar](#) **Total views:** 32 (Your views: 3)

Posted Date: Thursday, September 18, 2008 11:12:50 AM EDT **Overall Rating:** ★★★★★

Edited Date: Thursday, September 18, 2008 11:12:50 AM EDT **Your Rating:** ★★★★★

Parent Post

Longshore currents and longshore drift are generally considered to be constructive processes. Unlike storm waves, they are not normally regarded as significant in coastal erosion, though the sedimentary particles have to come from somewhere.

Figure 3.3

Tagging Threads

Tags are text labels that act like bookmarks. The instructor can attach tags in order to group similar messages together. For example, if the subject of scientific notation is discussed often, tag each of the posts on this topic. Students can read, filter, and search messages using these tags. Students cannot create tags.

Tagging must be enabled in the forum settings for tags to be created.

TIP: For faster Discussion Board loading, disable tagging during the times forum usage will be heavy. Turning tagging on again will restore all previously entered tags.

► QUICK STEPS: tagging threads

1. Click the forum containing the threads to tag.
2. In **List View**, select the check boxes for the thread or threads to tag.
3. On the Action Bar, click **Collect**.
4. On the **Collection** page, type a tag name in the **Tag Text** box.
5. Select the check boxes of the displayed messages to which you want to assign the tag name.
6. Click **Add** next to the **Tag Text** box.
7. Optionally, assign another tag for the selected messages by following the same steps.

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:28 AM	Week 1: Great Global Warming/Ocean Effect/Role website	Mei Wong	Published		0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 9:22 AM	Week 1: Longshore Drift	Chris Casper	Published		0	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 10:18 AM	Week 1: Wave Power	Tony Brown	Published		0	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9/22/08 6:02 PM	Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland	Juan Hernandez	Published		0	1

Figure 4.1

Collection

Print Preview **Filter**

Sort by Date of Last Post Order ▲ Ascending 4

Mark ▼ Tag Text: wave Add 6

☐

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5	Thread: Week 1: Wave Power Post: Week 1: Wave Power Author: Tony Brown Posted Date: September 19, 2008 10:18 AM Status: Published Overall Rating: ★★★★★
I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha! http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/ Tags: None Add Reply Quote Mark as Unread 	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thread: Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland Post: Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland Author: Juan Hernandez Posted Date: September 22, 2008 6:02 PM Status: Published Overall Rating: ★★★☆☆
http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/wave-power-scotland/ Tags: None Add Reply Quote Mark as Unread 	

Figure 4.2

From the Action Bar, narrow your selection by using the **Filter** function, or use the **Sort by** drop-down list to display messages by Author, Subject, Date of Last Post, Thread Order, or Overall Rating.

Note: Allowing members to rate posts has to be enabled to sort threads by Overall Rating.

Managing Discussions: Tagging Threads

The screenshot displays two discussion threads. The first thread, titled 'Week 1: Wave Power' by Tony Brown, has a tag 'wave' assigned, indicated by a red 'X' and a circled 'A'. Below the tag is an 'Add' button, circled with a 'B'. The second thread, titled 'Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland' by Juan Hernandez, also has a 'wave' tag. Both threads include a 'Reply' button, a 'Quote' button, and a 'Mark as Unread' button. The threads also show the posted date, status, and overall rating (stars).

Thread 1:
Thread: Week 1: Wave Power
Post: [Week 1: Wave Power](#)
Author: Tony Brown
Posted Date: September 19, 2008 10:18 AM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Content: I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha!
<http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/>
Tags: wave [X] Add [B]
Buttons: Reply, Quote, Mark as Unread

Thread 2:
Thread: Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland
Post: [Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland](#)
Author: Juan Hernandez
Posted Date: September 22, 2008 6:02 PM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★☆☆
Content: <http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/wave-power-scotland/>
Tags: wave [X] Add
Buttons: Reply, Quote, Mark as Unread

Figure 4.3

► Take Note

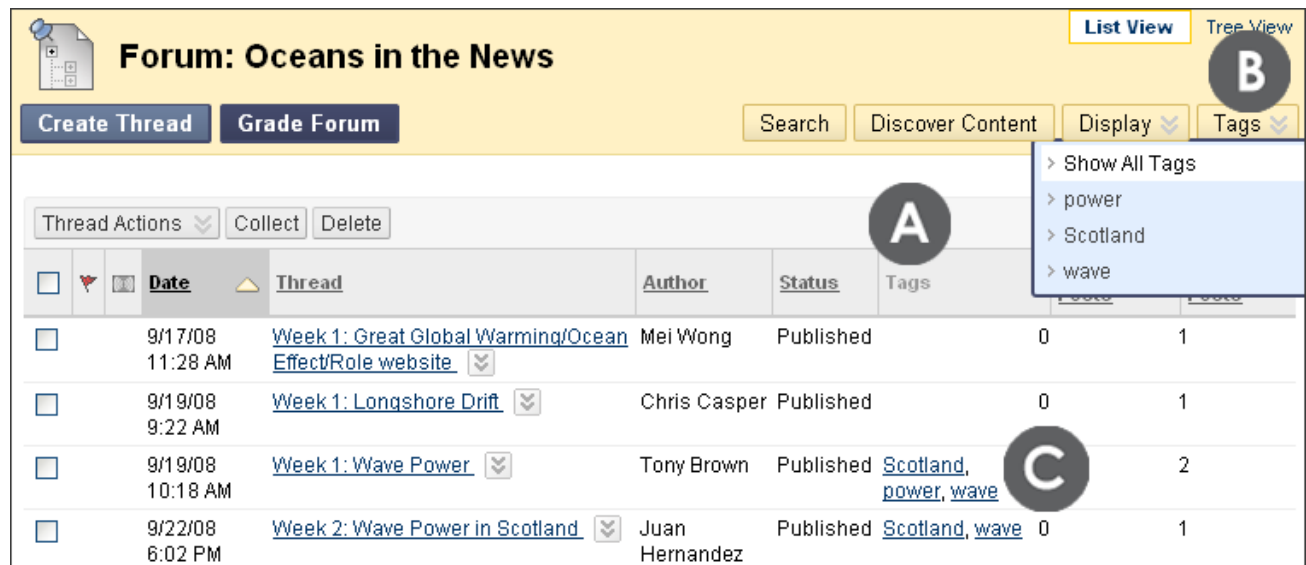
- A. The assigned tag shows below each post.
- B. Alternatively, add a tag to an individual post with the **Add** function below each post. Delete a tag by clicking the red X next to it.

The screenshot shows the first thread from Figure 4.3 with the 'Add Tag' dialog box open. The dialog box has a text input field containing 'Scotland, global warming, power, wave' and an 'OK' button. Below the input field is a 'Choose from Existing' button. The thread details are visible in the background.

Thread 1:
Thread: Week 1: Wave Power
Post: [Week 1: Wave Power](#)
Author: Tony Brown
Posted Date: September 19, 2008 10:18 AM
Status: Published
Overall Rating: ★★★★★
Content: I was excited to find a website that even I could understand!!! Ha!
<http://www.alternative-energy-news.info/technology/hydro/wave-power/>
Tags: power [X] wave [X]
Buttons: Add Tag, OK, Choose from Existing
Dialog Box: Scotland, global warming, power, wave

Figure 4.4

Type the tag in the **Add Tag** box and click **OK** or click **Choose from Existing** to choose a tag from a list of tags that occur on this Collection page.



Forum: Oceans in the News

[List View](#) [Tree View](#)

[Create Thread](#) [Grade Forum](#) [Search](#) [Discover Content](#) [Display](#) [Tags](#)

Thread Actions [Collect](#) [Delete](#)

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Replies	Views
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/17/08 11:28 AM	Week 1: Great Global Warming/Ocean Effect/Role website	Mei Wong	Published		0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 9:22 AM	Week 1: Longshore Drift	Chris Casper	Published		0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/19/08 10:18 AM	Week 1: Wave Power	Tony Brown	Published	Scotland, power, wave	2	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/22/08 6:02 PM	Week 2: Wave Power in Scotland	Juan Hernandez	Published	Scotland, wave	0	1

Tags dropdown menu options:

- > Show All Tags
- > power
- > Scotland
- > wave

Figure 4.5

► Take Note

- The new tags are added to the **Tags** column on the thread listing page. The Tags column is visible in List View only.
- Use the **Tags** drop-down list to display messages with a selected tag or All Tags on the thread listing page.
- Select from the **Tags** column to sort messages by tag. The posts with that tag appear on a Collection page.

Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C answers questions about successfully managing your Discussion Board.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
A discussion forum has been available for two weeks with few contributions. What changes can I make to the forum to encourage participation?	<p>Here are a couple of changes you can make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the topic is potentially controversial, allow anonymous posts.• If threads are not graded, allow students to create new threads. This flexibility may encourage students to post their ideas and questions.
By the end of the semester, the Discussion Board contains dozens of forums. What can I do to provide better organization and flow?	<p>To keep your Discussion Board organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change the order of the forums, placing the most current forums at the top of the list.• Delete ungraded forums that were not used or contain few postings.

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course and access the Discussion Board.

Managing discussions

- Reorder the forums on the Discussion Board.
- Access the **NASA Funding** forum and view the posts. This forum has been inactive for several weeks. Edit the forum settings to encourage participation.
- Access the **Pluto Controversy** forum and view the posts in the **Pluto Opinion** thread. Search for posts that are incomplete, inappropriate, or have been added to the wrong forum. Delete posts as needed.

6.0 Grading Discussions

In this section, we will look at how to assign grades to students' contributions to the Discussion Board. As you learned when creating discussion forums, grades can be assigned to either a forum or its threads.

Learning Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the grading process
- Grade discussion forums and threads
- Disable grading
- Change and delete grades
- Use the Email tool when assigning grades
- Define discussion grading criteria

The Grading Process

The discussion grading process consists of four main steps.

 instructor activity  student activity

1

CREATE

When a graded forum or thread is created, a column is automatically created in the Grade Center. The name of the forum or thread is used as the column title. The title can be edited in the Grade Center.

2

PARTICIPATE

Students participate in the discussion. As the discussion progresses, the instructor can participate and provide feedback by replying to, rating, and moderating posts.

3

GRADE

Review student posts and type a numeric grade. Threads can be locked after they are graded.

4

VIEW GRADES

The grades are saved in the Discussion Board and added to the Grade Center. Students can view their grades from the **My Grades** tool.


 My Grades					
Item Name	Details	Due Date	Last Submitted, Edited, or Graded	Grade	Points Possible
Running Total	Details			168	419
Week 1 Assignment	Details			-	50
Essay #1	Details		Oct 21, 2008 12:42 PM	88	100
Chapter 2 Assignment	Details		Oct 21, 2008 11:04 PM		10

Figure 1 – Student view of My Grades

Assigning Forum Grades

Discussion grades can be assigned within the forum or thread. Students can be graded on their participation in a discussion, on the quality of their postings, or a combination of the two. Rubrics can be created and used to grade forums and threads, but the rubrics must be created and added to the appropriate Grade Center columns in advance. First, we will look at grading forums.

Reminder: Grading options are enabled when the forum is created or by editing the forum. Once grading has been enabled, a Grade Center column is created.

► QUICK STEPS: assigning forum grades

1. Click the forum's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
2. Select **Grade**.
3. On the **Grade Forum Users** page, click **Grade** from a user's row.
4. The **Grade Forum** page for the user appears with a collection of the user's posts and a side panel containing three sections:
 - **Forum Statistics:** Includes information about the user's posts, such as **Date of Last Post**, **Average Post Length**, and **Average Post Position**.
 - **Forum Grade:** Grade, Feedback, and Grading Notes are added in this section. The Grade Date appears here also.
 - **Contributors:** Users, who have submitted one or more posts, appear with exclamation marks, the needs grading icon. Use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade or click a user's name in the list. Click **Show All** to see all users in the course; users who have not posted to the graded forum are included in this list. Click **Show with Posts Only** to return to the list of users who have posts needing a grade.
5. In the content frame, evaluate the currently selected user's posts and click **Edit Grade** in the **Forum Grade** section.
6. Type a point total in the **Current Grade Value** text box. **Note:** If a Rubric has been created for this graded forum, click **View Rubric**.
7. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes**, which appear to the forum Manager or Grader only. Optionally, use the **Spell Check** function in the bottom of each text box.

Grading Discussions: Assigning Forum Grades

- Click **Save Grade** to add the Feedback, Grade, and Grading Notes to the **Forum Grade** section and to the Grade Center.
- The Grade or Feedback can be edited by clicking the **Edit Grade** function again at any time. The changes appear in the **Forum Grade** section and in the Grade Center. The changes are documented in the Grade Center in the **Grade History** tab on the user's **Grade Details** page.
- When grading is complete, click **OK** to return to the **Grade Forum Users** page or use the breadcrumbs to return to the Discussion Board.

Note: Only users with a role of Manager or Grader can add grades for posts. A Grader cannot view his or her own work.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface with a forum post titled "Unit 1: Astronomy Overview". A context menu is open over the post, with the "Grade" option selected and highlighted by a red circle labeled "2". Overlaid on this is the "Grade Forum Users" dialog box. The dialog box has a yellow header and a table with columns: Last Name, First Name, Username, Posts, Grade, and a "Grade" button. The table lists two users: Brown, Tony (tbrown, 3 posts, 10.00 grade) and Casper, Chris (ccasper, 0 posts, -- grade). The "Grade" button is highlighted with a red circle labeled "3".

<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Username</u>	<u>Posts</u>	<u>Grade</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	tbrown	3	10.00	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	0	--	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>

Figure 2.1

Grading Discussions: Assigning Forum Grades

Since a forum grade can be based on multiple posts within multiple threads, all messages posted by the student are included for review. You can also view information about the posts, such as the number of posts the student contributed and the average post length. Filter, sort, and print the posts using the functions on the Action Bar.

Grade Forum: Tony Brown 4

Print Preview Filter View Rubric

Sort by Date of Last Post Order ▲ Ascending

Mark Select: All None

Thread:	Post:	Posted Date:	Status:
I got a few good shots	I got a few good shots	March 16, 2010 8:32 PM	Published
Author:	Tony Brown		
<p>Well, I finally tried and got a few good shots of the moon and one good shot of Saturn.</p> <p>I used a 4.5" zhumell eclipse telescope with a 20mm and 9mm lense and a SONY Cybershot digital camera just put up to the lense.</p> <p>The best moon shot was with a wide angle (20mm) and a zoomed in (9mm). The only good shot of Saturn was with the 9mm.</p>			
Reply Quote Mark as Read			
help with equipment	RE: help with equipment	March 16, 2010 8:33 PM	Published
Author:	Tony Brown		
<p>I don't think you can go wrong with that Nikon. I'd like to hear what others say about the rest.</p>			
Reply Quote Mark as Read			
Saturn	RE: Saturn	March 17, 2010 3:21 PM	Published
Author:	Tony Brown		
<p>Hey, my uncle owns a photography place and he said when he does a prime focus, he just hooks the DSLR to the scope with a T-ring with EP projection. Then, hook the camera with a 3" extension with the EP inserted. He said you'll understand!</p>			

Forum Statistics

Statistics for: Tony Brown

Total Posts: 3

Date of Last Post: Mar 17, 2010 3:21:57 PM

Average Post Length: 241

Minimum Post Length: 96

Maximum Post Length: 381

Average Post Position: 3

Forum Grade

Grade for: Tony Brown

Grade: -- out of 10.0

Grade Date: --

Feedback: --

Grading Notes: --

Edit Grade 5

Contributors

Show All

- [Ashby Cooper](#) (2) !
- [Henry Wagner](#) (1) !
- [Javier Perez](#) (1) !
- [Linda Herrera](#) (3) !
- [Mark Tsai](#) (2) !
- [Ryan Johnson](#) (2) !
- Tony Brown** (3) ! ←

Figure 2.2

Grading Discussions: Assigning Forum Grades

Forum Grade 6

Current Grade Value
10 out of 10.0 View Rubric

Feedback:
Thank you for your easy to follow description and for helping others. 7

Grading Notes:
Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader. 8

Cancel Save Grade

Forum Grade

Grade for: Tony Brown
Grade: 10.0 out of 10.0
Grade Date: 5/4/10 1:24 PM
Feedback: Thank you for your easy to follow description and for helping others.
Grading Notes: --

Edit Grade 9

Figure 2.3

The grade is added to the Discussion Board's **Grade** column on the **Grade Forum Users** page, as well as to the Grade Center.

Grade Forum Users

Email

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	tbrown	3	10.00	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	0	--	Grade

Figure 2.4

Assigning Thread Grades

If **Grade Threads** was enabled during forum creation, grades can be assigned for threads within that forum.

NOTE: Students cannot create new threads in a forum where threads are graded.

► QUICK STEPS: assigning thread grades

1. Click the forum containing the thread you want to grade.
2. In **List View**, on the thread listing page, click **Grade Thread** in the thread's row.
3. On the **Grade Thread Users** page, click **Grade** from a user's row.
4. The **Thread Grade** page for the user appears with a collection of the user's posts and a side panel containing three sections:
 - **Thread Statistics:** Includes information about the user's posts, such as **Date of Last Post**, **Average Post Length**, and **Average Post Position**.
 - **Thread Grade:** Grade, Feedback, and Grading Notes are added in this section. The Grade Date appears here also.
 - **Contributors:** Users, who have submitted one or more posts, appear with exclamation marks, the needs grading icon. Use the **Previous User** and **Next User** arrows in this section to navigate among users to grade or click a user's name in the list. Click **Show All** to see all users in the course; users who have not posted to the graded thread are included in this list. Click **Show with Posts Only** to return to the list of users who have posts needing a grade.
5. In the content frame, evaluate the currently selected user's posts and click **Edit Grade** in the **Thread Grade** section.
6. Type a point total in the **Current Grade Value** text box. **Note:** If a Rubric has been created for this graded thread, click **View Rubric**.
7. Optionally, type **Feedback** for the user and **Grading Notes**, which appear to the Discussion Board Manager or Grader only. Optionally, use the **Spell Check** function in the bottom of each text box.
8. Click **Save Grade** to add the Feedback, Grade, and Grading Notes to the **Thread Grade** section and to the Grade Center.
9. The Grade or Feedback can be edited by clicking the **Edit Grade** function again at any time. The changes appear in the **Thread Grade** section and in the Grade

Grading Discussions: Assigning Thread Grades

Center. The changes are documented in the Grade Center in the **Grade History** tab on the user's **Grade Details** page.

- When grading is complete, click **OK** to return to the **Grade Thread Users** page or use the breadcrumbs to return to the Discussion Board.

Note: Only users with a role of Manager or Grader can add grades for posts. A Grader cannot view his or her own work.

Forum: Pluto Controversy List View Tree View

Create Thread Search Discover Content Display ⌵

Thread Actions ⌵ Collect Delete

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a>Date	<a>Thread	<a>Author	<a>Status	<a>Unread Posts	<a>Total Posts	<a>Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	3/17/10 3:09 PM	<a>Pluto Opinion: Before ⌵	Cathy Chu	Published	7	7	Grade Thread

Grade Thread Users

Email

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a>Last Name	<a>First Name	<a>Username	<a>Posts	<a>Grade	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Tony	tbrown	1	8.00	<a>Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	1	--	<a>Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooper	Ashby	acooper	0	--	<a>Grade

Figure 3.1

Grading Discussions: Assigning Thread Grades

When **Grade** is selected in the user's row, the student's post or posts made to the individual thread appear. Just as with forum grading, review and add the grade in the side panel. After a grade has been assigned, it is saved in the Discussion Board and the Grade Center.

Forum: Pluto Controversy > Thread Grade: Chris Casper Edit Mode is: ON

Thread Grade: Chris Casper 4

Print Preview Filter View Rubric

Sort by Date of Last Post Order ▲ Ascending

Mark Select: All None

Thread:	Pluto Opinion: Before	Posted Date:	March 22, 2010 10:50 AM
Post:	I have to vote no	Status:	Published
Author:	Chris Casper		

Alas, Pluto, which is small and icy and orbits just beyond Neptune and has an eccentric orbit that is tipped out of the plane of the solar system, is none other than a Kuiper belt object—a leftover comet from the solar system's formation. If Pluto's orbit were ever altered so that it journeyed as close to the Sun as Earth, Pluto would grow a tail and look like a jumbo comet. No other planet can make this (possibly embarrassing) claim.

Source: http://www.planetary.org/explore/topics/topten/tyson_pluto_is_not.html

Reply Quote Mark as Read

Select: All None Mark

Thread Statistics

Statistics for: Chris Casper

Total Posts: 1

Date of Last Post: Mar 22, 2010 10:50:44 AM

Average Post Length: 562

Minimum Post Length: 562

Maximum Post Length: 562

Average Post Position: 2

Thread Grade

Grade for: Chris Casper

Grade: -- out of 10.0

Grade Date: --

Feedback: --

Grading Notes: --

Edit Grade 5

Contributors

Show All

Chris Casper (1) !

Henry Wagner (1)

Javier Perez (1) !

Linda Herrera (1)

Ryan Johnson (1) !

Tony Brown (1)

Figure 3.2

Grading Discussions: Assigning Thread Grades

Thread Grade

Current Grade Value: 10 out of 10.0 [View Rubric](#)

Feedback: Interesting article. New to me. Thanks for sharing.

Grading Notes: Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

[Cancel](#) [Save Grade](#)

Thread Grade

Grade for: Chris Casper

Grade: 10.0 out of 10.0

Grade Date: 3/22/10 10:51 AM


Feedback: Interesting article. New to me. Thanks for sharing.

Grading Notes: Any notes added here can only be seen by the instructor or Grader.

[Edit Grade](#)

Figure 3.3

NOTE: When you create a thread in a forum where you have enabled thread grading, you can select the **Grade Thread** option and add points possible. At a later time, if you did NOT select the **Grade Thread** option when creating the thread, you can still grade the thread by clicking **Grade** in the thread's **Grade** column on the thread listing page. Because you enabled the grading of threads for the entire forum, you can decide on a thread-by-thread basis to grade a thread at any time. The following image shows the **Grade** column and the **Grade** and **Grade Thread** functions.



Forum: Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves

Create Thread

Search

Discover Content

Display ▾

Tags

→

Thread Actions ▾

Collect

Delete


<input type="checkbox"/>	 	Date	 Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>		9/17/08 10:05 AM	Terminology ▾	Cathy Chu	Published		7	7	Grade Thread
<input type="checkbox"/>		9/17/08 10:20 AM	Relevant Websites ▾	Cathy Chu	Published		1	1	Grade Thread
<input type="checkbox"/>		9/17/08 10:22 AM	Questions? ▾	Cathy Chu	Published		2	2	Grade

Figure 3.4

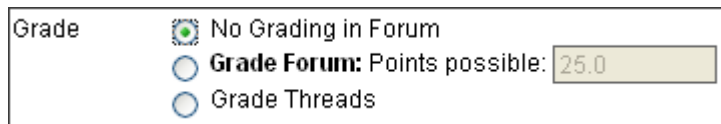
Disabling Grading

Grading can be disabled for graded forums and threads, even if grades exist.

► QUICK STEPS: disabling grading

1. Select **Edit** from the graded forum's contextual menu.
2. On the **Edit Forum** page, under **Forum Settings**, change the grading option to **No Grading in Forum**.
3. Click **Submit**. If grades have already been assigned for the forum or its threads, a warning message appears indicating that changing the setting will delete the associated Grade Center items.
4. Click **OK** to continue or click **Cancel** to preserve the Grade Center items.

The number in the **Points possible** text box will appear grayed out as you make the decision to disable grading for the forum.



Grade

☒ No Grading in Forum

☐ **Grade Forum:** Points possible: 25.0

☐ Grade Threads

Figure 4

Emailing Students When Assigning Grades

While assigning grades, you can use the Email tool in the Discussion Board to quickly contact students. For example, send a student a question prior to assigning a grade or send feedback after assigning a grade.

► QUICK STEPS: emailing students when assigning grades

1. Navigate to the forum or thread to assign a grade.
2. On the **Grade Thread Users** page or the **Grade Forum Users** page, select the check box for the user you want to email.
3. On the Action Bar, click **Email**.
4. On the **Email Forum User** page, edit the **Subject**, if you want. Type a question or feedback in the **Message** text box.
5. Click **Submit**.

Grade Thread Users

→ Email 3 << < Page 1 of 2 >

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Akbar	Mina	makbar	0	--	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	own	Tony	tbrown	0	--	Grade
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Casper	Chris	ccasper	1	--	Grade

Email Forum User 5

Cancel Submit

1 Email Information

To Chris Casper
From cchu@myschool.edu
Subject Your ocean is.... 4
Message
Hi Chris,
Do you think you need to narrow your topic in any way? Let me know if I can help you.

Figure 5

Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course and access the Discussion Board.

Grade Discussions

- In the **Unit 2: Astrophotography/Imaging** forum, review and add a grade for **Ryan Johnson's** postings. If grading is not enabled for the forum, edit the forum settings.
- In the **Unit 3: Mass Objects** forum, assign a grade to **Ryan Johnson** for his posting to the **Discovery of Trans-Neptunian Object** thread. If grading is not enabled for the thread, edit the forum settings.
- In the **Pluto Controversy** forum, select the **Pluto Opinion** thread and change the grade assigned to **Linda Herrera**. Send her an email explaining the grade change.

Best Practice: Define Grading Criteria

When grading discussions, it is important to have reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished. Due to the asynchronous nature of an online discussion, it may take more time for well-articulated points to emerge than in a face-to-face classroom.

Tell students specifically what is expected, both in terms of quantity and quality of postings, and consider sharing some exemplary postings.

When evaluating student postings, keep the following questions in mind:

Did student participation in the discussion meet the objectives you set?

- Did students participate regularly?
- Did students reply to postings?
- Did students post new threads?
- Did students use the Peer Review feature?

Did the quality of the contributions meet the objectives you set?

- Were replies or postings on topic?
- Did they add value to the discussion?
- Did they introduce new ideas?
- How did peers rate their postings?

Consider compiling your grading criteria into a rubric. By using a rubric to grade discussions, clear performance requirements are provided to students and consistent grading criteria to graders.

7.0 Workshop Wrap Up

This section provides the opportunity to reflect on what has been learned by focusing your attention on the key concepts presented in the workshop. Also, the next page includes a worksheet for brainstorming some ideas about the use of Discussions in your online course.

In this workshop, you learned how to do the following:

- Navigate the Discussion Board as a student and an instructor
- Create forums and threads, and change the status of threads
- Reply to and rate posts
- Collect and tag posts
- Assign forum roles
- Moderate posts
- Edit, copy, and organize forums
- Assign forum and thread grades
- Email students during the grading process
- Add forums to course areas
- Set etiquette guidelines
- Craft effective questions
- Define grading criteria

Spotlight on YOUR Course

Do you have some ideas on how you will use Discussions in your course? Use the following worksheet to record ideas.

What types of forums will you create?

- What type of forums will you create?
- Will you allow students to create new threads within forums?
- Will you get students involved in feedback and quality control by allowing them to rate posts?
- Will you allow anonymous posting?

Will you grade discussions?

- Will you grade forums or threads?
- Will you set grading requirements for posting quality or quantity?

How will you organize the Discussion Board?

- How many discussion forums will you make available at one time?
- How will you use the availability and status options?
- How will you order the forums on the Discussion Board?

How will you moderate discussions?

- How involved will you be in discussions?
- What methods will you use to provide feedback and instructions to participants?
- Will you involve students as moderators?