

Rubric for Classroom Discussion*

Task Description: (Teacher may explain specific assignment in this space.)					
Criteria	weight	Exemplary	Effective	Minimal	Unsatisfactory
Level of Engagement	50%	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to class activities by offering quality ideas and asking appropriate questions on a regular basis <input type="checkbox"/> Actively engages others in class discussions by inviting their comments <input type="checkbox"/> Constructively challenges the accuracy and relevance of statements made <input type="checkbox"/> Effectively identifies and summarizes main points	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributes to class activities by offering ideas and asking questions on a regular basis <input type="checkbox"/> Often engages others in class discussions by inviting their comments <input type="checkbox"/> Challenges the accuracy and relevance of statements made <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies and summarizes main points	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally contributes to class activities by offering ideas and asking questions <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes engages others in class discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes has an understanding of main points <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies and summarizes some of the main points	<input type="checkbox"/> Fails to contribute to class activities <input type="checkbox"/> Fails to invite comment/opinions from other students <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates little understanding of main points <input type="checkbox"/> Does not identify or summarize main points
Preparedness	25%	<input type="checkbox"/> Always prepared for class with assignments and required materials <input type="checkbox"/> Accurately expresses foundational knowledge pertaining to issues raised during the discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually prepared with assignments and required materials <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses basic foundational knowledge pertaining to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom prepared with assignments and required materials <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses limited foundational knowledge pertaining to class discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently unprepared for class <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses no relevant foundational knowledge
Attitude	25%	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently positive, cooperative attitude during class <input type="checkbox"/> Always supportive of other students' ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually positive and cooperative with classroom projects and discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Often supportive of other students' ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Seldom actively participates in classroom projects and discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes supportive of other students' ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely if ever participates in classroom projects and discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional disruptive behavior

Assignment Score _____ + Beyond/Bonus _____ = Final Score _____

This rubric may be used for self-assessment and peer feedback.

Online Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Unsatisfactory = 0	Limited = 1	Proficient = 2	Exemplary = 3	Score
Critical Analysis (Understanding of Readings and Outside References)	<p>Discussion postings show little or no evidence that readings were completed or understood. Postings are largely personal opinions or feelings, or "I agree" or "Great idea," without supporting statements with concepts from the readings, outside resources, relevant research, or specific real-life application.</p>	<p>Discussion postings repeat and summarize basic, correct information, but do not link readings to outside references, relevant research or specific real-life application and do not consider alternative perspectives or connections between ideas. Sources are not cited.</p>	<p>Discussion postings display an understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts including correct use of terminology and proper citation.</p>	<p>Discussion postings display an excellent understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts including correct use of terminology. Postings integrate an outside resource, or relevant research, or specific real-life application (work experience, prior coursework, etc.) to support important points. Well-edited quotes are cited appropriately. No more than 10% of the posting is a direct quotation.</p>	
Participation in the Learning Community	<p>Discussion postings do not contribute to ongoing conversations or respond to peers' postings. There is no evidence of replies to questions.</p>	<p>Discussion postings sometimes contribute to ongoing conversations as evidenced by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — affirming statements or references to relevant research or, — asking related questions or, — making an oppositional statement supported by any personal experience or related research. 	<p>Discussion postings contribute to the class' ongoing conversations as evidenced by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — affirming statements or references to relevant research or, — asking related questions or, — making an oppositional statement supported by any personal experience or related research. 	<p>Discussion postings actively stimulate and sustain further discussion by building on peers' responses including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — building a focused argument around a specific issue or — asking a new related question or — making an oppositional statement supported by personal experience or 	

				related research.	
	Discussion postings are at midpoint or later in the module or contributions are only posted on the last day of the module.	Discussion postings respond to most postings of peers several days after the initial discussion.	Discussion postings respond to most postings of peers within a 48 hour period.	Discussion postings are distributed throughout the module (not posted all on one day or only at the beginning or only on the last day of the module).	
Etiquette in Dialogue with Peers	Written interactions on the discussion board show disrespect for the viewpoints of others.	Some of the written interactions on the discussion board show respect and interest in the viewpoints of others.	Written interactions on the discussion board show respect and interest in the viewpoints of others.	Written interactions on the discussion board show respect and sensitivity to peers' gender, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation, political and religious beliefs.	
Quality of Writing and Proofreading	Written responses contain numerous grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing does not facilitate effective communication.	Written responses include some grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors that distract the reader.	Written responses are largely free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing generally facilitates communication.	Written responses are free of grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing facilitates communication.	
TOTAL					/9

* Open class discussion is an important and significant part of an online course. While class discussion whether online or face to face, can be characterized by free flowing conversation, there are identifiable characteristics that distinguish exemplary contributions to class discussion from those of lesser quality. The criteria found on the rubric above will be used to assess the quality of your initial postings and responses to the postings and comments of peers during class discussion. Note: Initial postings are your comments based on the discussion prompt posted by the instructor. Responses to others are your replies to your peers' initial postings.

Helping Students Understand How to Participate in Discussions

The term *discussion* refers to many different types of interactions, ranging from informal to highly structured exchanges. One reason for ineffective or unproductive discussions is that students may not understand what form of discourse you expect them to produce.

Why not describe the types of interaction that constitute productive or effective discussions in your class? An example of this is the *Discussion Evaluation Form*. The shaded portion of the form indicates specific types of behavior that typify productive and counterproductive discussions. It conveys to students a simple model of what discussions should look like, and indicates what they should try to do and avoid doing. Students can use the form to monitor their own behavior and also evaluate the quality of discussion in a group.

Suggested ways to use a *Discussion Evaluation Form*:

- Ask students at the beginning of the course to identify what they believe are positive and negative features of discussions. Incorporate these into discussion guidelines for the class.
- Clarify the role of discussion in the course. How is discussion supposed to contribute to their learning? To what extent is discussion an important feature of the course, etc.
- Ask students to use the guidelines/form to monitor their own participation and/or the quality of group discussions.
- Do not overuse the form. Unless there is a good reason to use the form often, use it judiciously.
- Customize the guidelines/form to focus on what types of interactions are most important in your field and your class. For example, in your class you might ask students to analyze or evaluate ideas, concepts, theories, readings, etc. Your discussion guidelines could emphasize the important qualities of analysis and evaluation—in your field, related to the assigned work in your class, etc.

Example of a DISCUSSION EVALUATION FORM

[The form conveys to students the characteristics of effective discussion. It could be given to students before group discussion to help guide their participation, and used following discussion to evaluate the discussion.]

Name:

Date:

How much did you

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|
| learn from the group discussion | A. a lot | B. a little | C. nothing |
| participate in the discussion | A. a lot | B. a little | C. not at all |
| enjoy the discussion | A. a lot | B. a little | C. not at all |

How effective was the group in allocating time and getting work accomplished:

- A. very B. somewhat C. barely D. not at all

Incidence of Productive and Counterproductive Discussion Behavior- Check any you engaged in and circle any you observed in others.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked, gave information | <input type="checkbox"/> monopolized discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked, gave reactions | <input type="checkbox"/> called attention to self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked, answered questions | <input type="checkbox"/> chronic interruptions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> restated ideas/points in articles | <input type="checkbox"/> criticized others (put down) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> restated ideas/points of discussants | <input type="checkbox"/> changed subject often |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked for/gave examples | <input type="checkbox"/> frequent irrelevant comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked for/gave summary | <input type="checkbox"/> withdrawn, did not participate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asked for/gave evidence or support for ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> apologetic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> redirected group to return to task | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER-please specify: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> monitored time | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> encouraged, supported other ideas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> elaborated on others' ideas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER-please specify | |

As a learning experience I would evaluate the discussion as

- A. poor B. fair C. average D. good E. excellent

Give reasons for your rating. Be specific, give examples.

What, if any, aspects of your own behavior do you need to change to be a more effective group member?

What, if any, aspects of other group members' behavior need to change to enhance the group's learning?

What, if anything, did the instructor do that facilitated effective, whole-class discussion?

What, if anything, did the instructor do that inhibited effective, whole-class discussion?

What, if anything, should the instructor do or not do that would improve the quality of whole-class discussion?

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