

**Discussion Practices provide important opportunities for the construction of knowledge among students. Faculty facilitation plays an important role in encouraging the exploration of ideas and exchanges. The rubrics which follow provide support and definition of observable practices. Additional remarks and resources can also be viewed here:**

<http://www.cconline.org/FacultySC/TeachingResources/InsPractices.htm>

**Threaded Discussion Quality Assurance Rubric for Instructor Facilitated Discussions**

Criteria	Best	Good	Needs Improvement	Why	Coaching
Set-up	Instructor-led discussions included in more than 75% of units.	Instructor-led discussions included in 50% to 75% of units.	Instructor-led discussions in fewer than 50% of units.	Human interaction as a community is important for learner retention. The instructor's interaction matters.	Discussions in the online classroom <b>ARE</b> the classroom, the place where students interact with each other and with the instructor.
	1-2 Instructor-led discussion topics open at the same time.	3-4 Instructor-led discussion topics open at the same time.	More than 4 topics requiring learner response open at same time.	Too many options scatter the learner's attention and weaken the potential for community construction of knowledge.	There can be different <i>types</i> of discussions open at one time. Ex: 1 Instructor-led, 1 Question-Answer, 1 Private Journal or 1 Small Group Discussion. All these types of discussions serve different purposes.
	Discussion topics open for scheduled times.	Discussion topics open for scheduled times.	Missed dates and times.	Our courses are on semester timeline and we want to keep the class moving ahead.	Use the "Locked" feature of Discussions to open/close discussions at particular dates.
	Instructor provides initial post for each topic before the opening date of the topic.	Instructor provides initial post for each topic before the opening date of the topic.	No initial post.	The initial post welcomes and directs the learners to the given topic.	Set up the Discussion board topics before class starts. Enter initial posts for each topic before the opening date of each topic. In an open topic, use the drop down list on the right side of the screen to "Select a Topic". Choose "All" and then use the Compile command at the bottom of the screen. Save this file and make notes for future classes about the success of each discussion.

<p><b>Timeliness</b></p>	<p>Instructor posts 4-5 days each week; all learner posts are responded to within 48 hours.</p>	<p>Instructor posts 3 days each week; the majority of learner posts are responded to within 48 hours.</p>	<p>Instructor input all on the same day or only a few responses.</p>	<p>Response to a learner's question or remark near the time it is posted is important to the teachable moment.</p>	<p>Drop into the course every day during the week (or even more than once a day) to respond to discussion posts, student mail, assignments etc. That way there won't be such a large amount of discussion postings to read at one time.</p> <p>Use a staggered schedule for discussion due dates. Perhaps the initial student comment would be due on Wednesday and remaining student comments could be due by Friday. This causes students to enter their postings over several days.</p>
<p><b>Response Rate – Introduction / Welcome thread</b></p>	<p>Instructor responds to 100% of initial learner posts in the Introduction/welcome thread.</p>	<p>Instructor responds to more than 90% of initial learner posts in the introduction/welcome thread.</p>	<p>Instructor responds to fewer than 90% of initial learner posts in the introduction/welcome thread.</p>	<p>Welcoming all learners makes all the difference as the learner enters the experience. You are communicating that the presence of each member of this class matters.</p>	<p>Respond to each student in the Introduction topic area with a personalized response. Use information from the student introduction and connect it to your experience. Example: A student comments that she lives in Charleston, SC. Instructor might respond that she has visited SC and loved old town Charleston.</p>
<p><b>Quality of Interaction</b></p>	<p>Instructor regularly interacts with all learners in a class, both on as individual and group basis.</p>	<p>Instructor interaction does not consistently include all class participants and their concerns.</p>	<p>Instructor responds to only a select few individuals; may not answer all learner questions.</p>	<p>The contributions of all learners matter in the class. The instructor's inclusion both of individuals and of the class helps learners benefit and build on the contributions of others.</p>	<p>Use the "group" posting to respond to several students with one post. For example, if three students commented about a topic, address one post to all three students. Use their name in the Subject line to capture attention. Add a redirecting or clarifying question to keep the discussion moving.</p>
	<p>Instructor posts acknowledges the learner's content</p>	<p>Instructor posts acknowledges the learner's content</p>	<p>No acknowledgment of learner understanding of content</p>	<p>The instructor's role is to motivate, encourage, guide, and challenge the learners to higher thinking /learning.</p>	<p>Restate the student's comments in another way acknowledging that they understood the concept/content.</p>

	Instructor's posts re-engage the learner through additional questions at the same or higher level plus pulls the rest of the class into the discussion.	Instructor's posts re-engage the learner through additional questions at the same or higher level.	No or limited re-engagement of learners.	The course room provides the opportunity for group construction of knowledge. One-to-one address only, doesn't.	Try a "scaffolding" technique. Start the discussion with a "lower level" type question to begin building the concept and encourage students to construct a base for their knowledge structure. Begin by asking knowledge-based questions like, "what did the book have to say about X", or "How would you define this term?" Perhaps provide a definition or two to get the class discussion going. Then move to "higher level" questioning using application, analysis, evaluation or synthesis type questions.
	Instructor posts add clarifying or additional information, directing or re-directing the discussion.	Instructor posts add clarifying or additional information, directing or re-directing the discussion.	Instructor post does not either further the discussion or appropriately close it.	The "guide on the side" adds expertise, corrects misconceptions in a timely fashion.	Monitor the discussion for misinformation and direct the students to web references or text references for correct information. Bring in "guest discussants" to provide content expertise.
	Instructor posts help learners apply the content to their own lives.	Instructor sometimes helps the learners apply the content to their own lives.	No attempt.	Applying knowledge to life contexts is appealing to adults. It also "cements" the learning to a larger context.	Offer website references or other resources to expand on the topic and connect it to the students' personal experiences and instructor's experiences.
	Instructor or assigned learner posts the discussion summary.	Instructor announces the closure of the discussion.	No closing remarks or summary.	Providing synthesis or additional resources is valuable to the course experience, and summary skills are valuable in many contexts. Having learner s summarize provides them practice with this skill also.	Add a closing post which summarizes the important points from the discussion.

**Discussion types other than Instructor-led:**

CCOnline does not currently require the use of discussion types other than Instructor-led. However, their use is encouraged if appropriate for your subject matter.

The following guidelines apply if you choose to use Small Group Discussions or Peer-to-Peer Discussions

Criteria	Best	Good	Needs Improvement	Why	Coaching
Set-up	Opening statement from faculty sets expectations for both learners and faculty.	Opening statement from faculty sets expectations for both learners and faculty.	No opening remarks or attempt to set expectations.	Providing learners with opening directions moves them to the task at hand more quickly. Instructions also provide the big picture for the process which learners are about to enter.	Prepare students for the small group by providing explicit instructions and expectations. Set the goal for the small group experience. Provide ample time to accomplish that goal. Identify the grading rubric for the small group project. Provide time for the students to debrief their experience.  Participate in the Building Community Workshop for more information on small groups.
	Faculty periodically enters discussion to confirm or re-direct the group process.	Faculty periodically enters discussion to confirm or re-direct the group process.	No evidence faculty is present in the discussion.	If participants are off course, re-direction does matter.	Instructor does not need to dominate these types of discussions. Enter a comment or two to show presence and redirect or encourage students as necessary.
	Faculty provides summary or closing remarks.	Faculty announces the closure of the discussion.	No closing remarks or summary.	This is another teachable moment, especially if common errors are surfacing, ones which could be corrected before a final project is turned in, for example.	Post a summary of main points and redirect to further activity. i.e. note common strengths or errors, resources.

The following guidelines apply to Question and Answer discussions:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Best</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Coaching</b>
Set-up	Opening statement from faculty sets expectations for both learners and faculty.	Opening statement from faculty sets expectations for both learners and faculty.	No opening remarks or attempt to set expectations.	Providing learners with opening directions moves them to the task at hand more quickly. Instructions also provide the big picture for the process which learners are about to enter.	Post initial question or direction so that students understand the purpose of this discussion and how to enter their questions.  Encourage students to respond to classmates' questions.
	Instructor acknowledges every learner post and provides additional resources in their own response.	Instructor acknowledges every learner post.	Instructor responds to less than 100% of questions.	To invite questions only to ignore them is frustrating for learners.	Answer every question or acknowledge the correct answer if already posted by another student.