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How to Create Excellent Discussions on Blackboard

Part of your Learning Task involves you facilitating a discussion on Blackboard for a given period of time, usually one or two weeks. Here are some tips on how to do that.

1. **Create concise, yet thought-provoking and open-ended questions.** For example, “What resonated with you most deeply about the reading for this week? Please give details.” is better than, “Did you like the reading?”
2. **Decide on how many questions you will ask.** Three to five questions is usually appropriate.
3. **Post one question per discussion board thread.** It can get confusing and overwhelming to have too many questions in one thread. Having one question per thread allows others to differentiate between your questions.
4. **Moderate often.** Check in regularly to see who has responded to the questions. Continue the conversation and acknowledge others’ efforts to contribute.
5. **Support and challenge.** There is a balance to be struck between offering supportive and encouraging feedback, while encouraging people to dig a little deeper. If someone posts a sweeping generalization, you can certainly ask them to provide concrete evidence to support their claim. You don’t need to douse others in empty compliments or relentlessly tear them down, but rather strike a balance between support and challenge that ultimately helps them grow.
6. **Expect excellence.** Michael Fullan (2006) says that leaders learning from each other raises the bar for all (p. 77). Set the bar high.
7. **Honour APA standards.** Set the example by including proper citations and references for you own postings.
8. **Enrich with resources.** Adding one or two additional and easily accessible resources to help illustrate your main points or ideas can enrich the conversation even further.
9. **Have fun.** This is your chance to shine and lead the class in a lively and interactive discussion.

Reference:

Fullan, M. (2006). *Turnaround leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.