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# **The Online Discussion Conference Grading Rubric**

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**Presented By:**  
**Professor Clifford A Wilke**

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**UMUC – Spring Semester 2012**

## **1. ABSTRACT:**

In the online classroom environment, the primary interaction and sharing of information and viewpoints between students is through the conference discussion. Students post responses to the topics of the respective week, and respond, interact and engage each other on the subject matter during the discussion week. At the end of the week, the student receives a grade from the instructor based on the grading rubric.

As conference discussion is used by nearly every university program that has an online presence, I researched and compiled discussion grading rubrics from other accredited universities and colleges to find best practices and build a sample conference discussion rubric.

## **2: METHODOLOGY:**

My research methodology included locating and capturing discussion grading rubrics from over 20 accredited university programs that offer facets of learning online. I compiled the various grading attributes of each online conference grading matrix rubrics as detailed in Appendix I.

After review of each respective conference rubric, I captured the attributes of each individual institution's grading methodologies as detailed on Table I contained at the end of Appendix I. Based on the matrix, I built a sample discussion grading rubric based on best practices derived from research.

Through this project, I was able to identify the qualities that are most effective for grading assignments in ways that appear fair to students, and links grading to the assignment objectives by comparing and contrasting rubrics from the surveyed accredited universities and colleges with online learning management systems (LMS) to get a wider perspective of the dimensions of correlating the online discussion to the grade that is awarded to the student.

## **3. FINDINGS**

I captured the key attributes of university grading methodologies and found the grading focused on the following major areas:

- Initial Discussion Posting
- Response to the Initial Posting
- Participation/ Interaction with classmates
- Quality of Communications/ Grammar

Some institutions also included APA formatting and references, while some focused on maintaining the interaction between students should be less formal and more connected to professional practice and personal experience.

Through this research, I was able to identify qualities that are most effective for grading assignments in ways that appear fair to students, and qualities that best link scoring to the assignment objectives by comparing and contrasting rubrics from several accredited universities and colleges with

online learning management systems (LMS) to get a wider perspective than just using two points of view.

The range of grading scales ranged from the traditional 1-100 grading matrix to a 1-2 grading scale.

Under the area of initial discussion postings, further grading attributes within this area included the initial postings responsiveness to the topic presented, the critical thinking and analysis of the initial posting, the uniqueness of the posting and new ideas presented, extending the conference discussion, organization of the initial posting, the quality of the posting and ideas presented, level of preparation, reflection and synthesis and conciseness of the initial posting and the initial postings correlation to the assigned class text readings.

In the area of the student's response to the initial posting, grading facets included the responses to classmate's postings, the length of the response and the relevance of the response.

In evaluating the level of participation and interaction with classmates, grading attributes included the level of participation, the number of postings and the timing of the postings through the discussion week.

When evaluating the quality of communications and grammar, the grading attributes included the quality of the discussion writing and the student's ability to articulate their postings and responses in a clear and concise manner. The grammatical quality and scholarly dialogue with classmates, and the quality of the interaction between students was a consistent grading perspective.

Appendix I details over 20 conference grading rubric examples that were collected during the research period. Appendix II details a sample rubric that captures the best practices of the rubrics surveyed.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

I plan to review the findings with my academic sponsor and provide additional feedback to link the conference grading rubric to assignment objectives. This will be followed with a conference call with selected UMUC peers that provided initial feedback and were engaged in the previous rubric discussion.

In addition, I have reached out to present my findings at the upcoming UMUC conference and Faculty Research Poster Session/ShareFair.

#### **5. SUMMARY**

I would like to thank the UMUC community for the opportunity to collect, evaluate and disseminate the research on the conference grading rubric. I plan on completing additional research in this area to improve the quality of the UMUC programs that will benefit future students in the UMUC programs.

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# **The Online Discussion Conference Grading Rubric**

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## **Appendix I Rubric Examples**

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## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion from UMUC - Pre 2011 Conference Rubric

Conference Participation Rubric	
<b>Outstanding Contributor: A</b>	
90-100 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Postings are consistently responsive to the conference assignments and significantly enhance the quality of the classroom discussion (i.e., illustrate a point with examples, suggest new perspectives on an issue, ask questions that help stimulate further discussion.).</li><li>Very clear that readings were understood and ideas were incorporated well into responses; postings continued the comments and insights of other students.</li><li>Three to four postings per topic; well distributed throughout the week, with first posting occurring early in the week</li><li>Ideas are persuasive, always expressed in a clear and coherent manner, without spelling or grammatical errors.</li></ul>
<b>Good Contributor: B</b>	
80-89 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Postings are responsive to the conference assignments and often enhance the quality of the classroom discussion (i.e., illustrate a point with examples, suggest new perspectives on an issue.).</li><li>Two to three postings per topic; postings distributed throughout the week, with first posting occurring midweek</li><li>Clear that readings were understood and that concepts and insights were incorporated into responses.</li><li>Ideas are usually persuasive, are expressed in a clear and coherent manner, with no or very minor grammatical and spelling errors.</li></ul>
<b>Unsatisfactory Contributor: C</b>	
70-79%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ideas provide few, if any, insights and do not offer a constructive direction for the class.</li><li>Responses to classmates are neither integrative nor substantive.</li><li>One or two postings per topic; first posting occurring on the weekend</li><li>Postings with questionable relationship to reading material or topic under discussion, with little or no evidence of understanding</li><li>Ideas are disorganized and/or contain grammatical and spelling errors.</li></ul>

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion from UMUC - 2011 Conference Rubric

Criteria	Outstanding Contributor: A (90+)	Good Contributor: B (80-89)	Unsatisfactory Contributor: C or less (below 80)
<b>Level of Participation (15%)</b>	Participation in the conference activity on four or more days during the week, plus more than three original postings, plus significantly more than two responses to classmates. The latter should include a topic for which the student did not post an original response.	Participation in the conference activity on three days during the week, plus three original postings and two responses to classmates. The latter should include a topic for which the student did not post an original response.	Participation in the conference activity on less than three days during the week and less than three original postings and/or less than two responses to classmates, and/or no postings for one of the topics.
<b>Timing of postings (10%)</b>	Postings are well distributed throughout the week, with all three original responses (i.e. first level responses) occurring on Wednesday or earlier.	Postings are distributed throughout the week, with at least one original posting (i.e. first level response) occurring on Wednesday or earlier.	Original postings (i.e. first level responses) occur after Wednesday.

<b>Quality of Answers for Topic Question (25%)</b>	<p>All answers are substantive, consistently responsive to the Topic Questions and demonstrate significant understanding of the subject (e.g., illustrate a point with examples, suggest alternative perspectives on an issue and seeks to draw a new or original conclusion). Uses citations in a way that reflects a complete understanding of course modules, of required readings, and/or other external scholarly sources.</p>	<p>Most answers are substantive, often responsive to the Topic Questions and demonstrate sufficient understanding of the subject (e.g., uses limited examples, takes a narrow perspectives on an issue) and reflect a reasonable understanding of course modules and required readings.</p>	<p>Answers are not substantive, are weakly responsive to the Topic Questions or provide few, if any, insights, understanding or perspectives, or reflect a limited understanding of course modules and required readings.</p>	
<b>Quality of Discussions (25%)</b>	<p>All discussions are substantive and consistently responsive to other students' postings, plus ideas provide excellent insights or perspectives, and significantly enhance the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion (i.e., illustrates a point with examples, suggest new perspectives on an issue, includes citations to support views, asks questions that help stimulate further discussion, responds to questions posed by classmates or the instructor).</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Most discussions are substantive and often responsive to other students' postings, plus ideas provide relatively good insights or perspectives, and generally enhance the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion (e.g., uses limited examples, takes a narrow perspective on an issue).</p>	<p>Discussions are not substantive, are weakly responsive to other students' postings or provide few, if any, good insights or perspectives. Has limited effect on the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion.</p>	

<b>Clarity and Coherence of answers and discussions (10%)</b>	Ideas are persuasive, always expressed in a clear and coherent manner, without spelling or grammatical errors.	Ideas are usually persuasive, are expressed in a clear and coherent manner, with no or very minor grammatical and spelling errors.	Ideas are disorganized and/or contain grammatical and spelling errors.
<b>Level of Preparation (10%)</b>	All answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials and a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) and no assertions are made without appropriate citation.	Most answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials and a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) and most assertions are made with appropriate citation.	Few answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials and a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) and few assertions are made with appropriate citation.
<b>APA Format (5%)</b>	In-line citations and summary reference lists properly reflect all sources used and are consistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.	In-line citations and summary reference lists properly reflect most sources used or are reasonably consistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.	In-line citations and summary reference lists are limited and reflect few sources used or are inconsistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.
<b>Your Grade:</b>			
<b>Additional Comments:</b>			

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion from Boston University

Discussion Grading Rubric					
Criteria	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	91 - 100
<b>Participation</b>	Very limited participation	Participation generally lacks frequency or relevance	Reasonably useful relevant participation during the discussion period	Frequently relevant and consistent participation throughout the discussion period	Continually relevant and consistent participation throughout the discussion period
<b>Community</b>	Mostly indifferent to discussion	Little effort to keep discussions going or provide help	Reasonable effort to respond thoughtfully, provide help, and/or keep discussions going	Often responds thoughtfully in a way frequently keeps discussions going and provides help	Continually responds thoughtfully in a way that consistently keeps discussions going and provides help
<b>Content</b>	No useful, on-topic, or interesting information, ideas or analysis	Hardly any useful, on-topic, or interesting information, ideas or analysis	Reasonably useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas and/or analysis	Frequently useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas and analysis	Exceptionally useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas and analysis
<b>Reflection and Synthesis</b>			No significant effort to clarify, summarize or synthesize topics raised in discussions	Contributes to group's effort to clarify, summarize or synthesize topics raised in discussions	Leads group's effort to clarify, summarize or synthesize topics raised in discussions

## Online Discussion Rubric from the University of Wisconsin - Stout

Criteria	Unsatisfactory - 0%	Limited - 80%	Proficient - 90%	Exemplary - 100%	Score
<b>Critical Analysis (Understanding of Readings and Outside References)</b>  Weight for this criterion: 40% of total score	<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 statement 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>	
<b>Participation in the Learning Community</b>  Weight for this criterion: 30% of total score	<p>Discussion postings do not contribute to ongoing conversations or respond to peers' postings. There is no evidence of replies to questions or comments or as new related questions or comments.</p> <p>Discussion postings are at midpoint or</p>	<p>Discussion postings sometimes contribute to ongoing conversations as evidenced by ...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> <p>Discussion postings respond to most postings of peers within a 48 hour</p>	<p>Discussion postings contribute to the class' ongoing conversations as evidenced by ...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>	<p>Discussion postings actively stimulate and sustain further discussion by building on peers' responses including ...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.</p> <p>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</p>	

	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.	period.	module.) Consistently responds to postings of peers within 24 hours.	
<b>Connections to Professional Practice</b>  Weight for this criterion: 10% of total score	Discussion postings provide little or no evidence of reflective thought pertaining to personal perspectives and professional development.	Discussion postings provide some evidence of reflective thought pertaining to personal perspectives and professional development.	Discussion postings provide evidence of some reflective thought pertaining to personal perspectives and professional development.	Discussion postings provide evidence of strong reflective thought pertaining to personal perspectives and how the module's learning objectives relate to professional development.	
<b>Etiquette in Dialogue with Peers</b>  Weight for this criterion: 5% of total score	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, political and religious beliefs.	
<b>Quality of Writing and Proofreading</b>  Weight for this criterion: 5% of total score	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.	
<b>TOTAL</b>					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.

Original rubric developed by: Lynn E. Nielsen, Professor of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls IA

Used with permission and adapted by Joan Vandervelde

# Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - California State University- Long Beach

Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion			
Score	Level of Participation During One Week		
0 points	Minimum number of postings not met		
7 points	Minimums met; all discussion on Level I		
8 points	Minimums met; at least one example of discussion above Level I		
9 points	Minimums met; at least one example of discussion above Level I with at least one above Level II		
10 points	Minimums met; at least two examples of discussion above Level I with at least one above Level III		
Evaluation of Levels of Thinking in Weekly Threaded Discussions			
<b>Critical thinking</b>	Level I	Elementary clarification	Introduce a problem; pose a question; pass on information without elaboration.
	Level II	In-depth clarification	Analyze a problem; identify assumptions.
	Level III	Inference	Make conclusions based on evidence from prior statements; generalizing.
	Level IV	Judgment	Express an opinion about a conclusion or the relevance of an argument, theory, or solution.
	Level V	Strategy	Propose a solution; outline requirements for its implementation.
<b>Information processing</b>	Level I	Surface	Repeat information; make a statement without justification; suggest a solution without explanation.
	Level II	In-depth	Bring in new information; show links, propose a solution with explanation; show evidence of justification; present a wider view.

<b>Skills</b>	Level I	Evaluation	Question your ideas or approach to a task; for example, "I don't understand."
	Level II	Planning	Show evidence of organizing steps needed and prediction of what is likely to happen; for example, "I think I should..."
	Level III	Regulation	Show evidence of implementing a strategy and assessing progress; for example, "I have done...."
	Level IV	Self-awareness	For example, "I believe...." or "I have found...."

# Online Discussion Grading Rubric from Boise State University

## Grading Rubric

### Discussion Participation

#### About the Minimum Requirement

I have an absolute minimum requirement of three messages per week. If you post less than three messages a week, then you cannot get better than a D for discussion. I don't even bother to evaluate the messages. Once you have met the minimum requirement, only then do all the considerations below kick into effect.

#### *What's a Week?*

If you're fretting over this, you're fretting over the wrong stuff. My class weeks run Monday through Sunday, for no particular reason, but you should *not* be planning to do all your posting on Sunday night, or some such. While I understand time constraints and the demands of work and family (I went through all that myself), I have found that students who post only once a week don't get a good grade. This is not a judgment on my part, but an observation made from over ten years of teaching in this medium. Once-a-week posters are like the student in a live class who comes only once a week. You can get by, no doubt. But you won't learn much and only the exceptional student will be able to pull an A doing that. It's your call; I'm telling you how things look from my vantage point. If you read the student advice in the Study Guide, you'll hear the same message there.

Sometimes, things happen, and you wind up posting two messages in a week. This *never* happens to students who participate at a high rate. It tends to happen to the student who posts the minimum three and rarely or never more. You walk a tightrope, sometimes you fall off. If it should happen, don't worry about your grade. I look at the pattern of your participation over the course of the semester, and a week or two just doesn't mean much. Do worry, however, if it happens early in the semester and then happens again, because it may turn into a habit. You could easily find yourself eight weeks into the course in which you failed to meet the minimum for half those weeks. This is a problem because you cannot make up the work. I'm not actually interested in volume, I'm interested in *participation*. You cannot go back and make up a week of participation any more than you can go back in time and make up attending a live class. You miss it, the damage is done. So, don't fret over minimums and don't fret over which messages "count" for which week. Do worry about being fully engaged in the course, and the rest will take care of itself.

#### Evaluation

Enough of minimums, which are necessary but not uplifting. On to how I evaluate your discussion participation.

All evaluation of your discussion is subjective. I give this rubric not so you can "figure out" your discussion grade, because you cannot. Only I can.

Still less do I provide this as a template by which you can aim for a particular grade. This is not a checklist. Learning is not a guaranteed process and it doesn't happen the same way for every person.

I *do* provide the rubric as one tool to help you understand that discussion plays a crucial role in my course, and that there are ways to judge the quality of the participation. I hope that you can use this rubric as a way to improve the quality of your discussion, not only in this course but in others as well.

Note that in the descriptions I am indicating *tendencies* rather than absolute rules. For example, it's perfectly all right to post a message that says "gee, I didn't know that" or "I agree" or "here's something that just struck me as interesting". Those are normal parts of the conversation. But when a student who posts fifty messages over the semester has forty that are these sort of comments, that's not engaging in historical discussion. That's just talking about the past. There's a difference, and that difference will be reflected in the grade. On the other hand, the student who posts fifty messages and forty are substantive clearly *is* taking part in scholarly dialogue, and again this will be reflected in the grade.

Finally, remember that you will receive two progress reports in which I will let you know specifically how you are doing in discussion. This will allow you to make adjustments.

	<b>Superior</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Analysis / Interpretation	The message uses historical sources, including outside as well as required reading. In addition, it demonstrates that the student has gained new understanding of the topic.	Some messages do analysis or interpretation well, but a significant number do not. This might either be because the analysis was not done well, or because it was not attempted (that is, was simply opinion or hearsay).	Messages generally show little evidence of historical analysis, consisting instead of opinion and feelings and impressions.
Scholarly Dialogue	All sources are cited. Argumentation is from the evidence. No <i>ad hominem</i> arguments.	Citations are sometimes missing, are incorrect, or are from a poor source (e.g., a K12 internet site or an encyclopedia).	Messages regularly lack any sort of citation. Arguments are from opinion, not from evidence.
Writing Skill	Sentences are clear and wording is unambiguous. Correct word choice, correct spelling, correct grammar. Writing style can still be conversational rather than formal. The writing does not have to be flawless, but it will be better than average writing.	Ordinary, good writing. Lapses are regular and patterned, but do not undermine the communication or the persuasiveness of the argument.	Grammar, spelling, and/or word choice errors are frequent enough that the sense of the message is lost or muddled.
Participation	Messages contribute to ongoing conversations, as replies to questions or	Some messages contribute to ongoing conversations, but others are disconnected. If the student starts a new thread, sometimes	Messages are unconnected with what others are saying, as if there is no conversation. No

	<p>comments, or as new questions or comments. Messages that originate a thread usually generate responses. Student does not start a topic or pose a question and then abandon it.</p>	<p>there is follow-up but sometimes there isn't. Student tries to further the class discussion but is not successful a significant number of times. Or, student posts a significant (though still a minority) number of messages that are off-the-cuff and do not contribute substantively.</p>	<p>replies to other messages. Student never answers someone else's question. When student asks a question, there's no acknowledgment to any responses.</p>
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Doing nothing, or nearly nothing (usually the student who simply stops participating at some point) is an F. Doing less than the minimum (and doing so consistently over the semester) is a D.

## Sample Online Discussion Grading Rubric from Mercy College - New York

INTERPRETATION		GRADING CRITERIA
4		The comment is accurate, original, relevant, teaches us something new, and is well written. Four pt. comments add substantial learning presence to the course and stimulate additional thought about the issue under discussion.
3	Above Average (B)	The comment lacks at least one of the above qualities, but is above average in quality. A 3 pt. comment makes significant contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed.
2	Average (C)	The comment lacks 2 or 3 of the required qualities. Comments which are based upon personal opinion or personal experience often fall within this category.
1	Minimal (D)	The comment presents little or no new information. However, 1 pt. comments may provide important social presence and contribute to a collegial atmosphere.
0	Unacceptable (F)	The comment adds no value to the discussion.

### 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF A QUALITY ONLINE DISCUSSION POSTING

1. **SUBSTANTIAL:** Messages should relate to the subject matter and provide information, opinions or questions about that subject matter. They may relate the subject matter to something personal, but they should remain academic in their focus.
2. **CONCISE:** Studies have shown that messages that are several screens long do not get many replies. To write an effective message, attempt to use a single screen if possible. Try to get the point and focus of your message across so that it is clear what you are saying.
3. **PROVOCATIVE:** The discussion board is an interactive medium. The more interaction there is between students the better. A good message

is one that prompts others to reply or object. A focused and pointed message that produces replies from other learners in that class in moving the discussion forward is having an impact on the learning environment.

4. **HERMENEUTICAL**: The discussion board is a place where ideas are interpreted and language is explored. To be hermeneutical is to interpret. A good message should explore, explain, or expand on a concept or connection. The message should not simply state something, but rather expand upon an idea.

5. **TIMELY**: A good message appears in the context of similar messages in the message log. If you get on irregularly, your message will appeal late and out of context with what is currently happening on the board. Log on regularly and reply to messages in a timely fashion.

6. **LOGICAL**: A good message that is not a question should contain a logical argument. This means it should contain a clearly stated conclusion of thesis supported by premises, reason, evidence or grounds of belief.

7. **GRAMMATICAL**: A good, clear, concise message should be well-written and free of typos and sentence fragments.

### **BENCHMARKS OF A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE COURSE**

1. No later than the first day of the second week of a sixteen week semester, all students should be online and leaving messages. An online semester **BEGINS** the same week that an onsite semester begins. TBA in the RS6000 system of class listings is a computer code that refers to the space of a classroom, versus the date of when a course will start or be announced to start.
2. Every online student should log into an online course no less than four times per week to read instructor and student postings and produce no less than three messages per week in Discussion during a sixteen week semester (double that number in an eight week semester).
3. At least 70% of the messages in a discussion board should be from learner to learner. It is required that students comment and expand upon the ideas of their virtual classroom peers. This interaction and participation is a huge part of what transpires in the virtual learning environment. Instructors are encouraged to engage themselves more as discussion guides and monitors of discussions and less as lecturers in online classes

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 1

Class participation is an important expectation of this course. Students are expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question that have been posed for each module as well as to classmate postings. Students are expected to actively participate in EACH module's discussion **EACH week** throughout the semester. The faculty role is as an observer and facilitator. I will be reading all messages and I will participate in the discussion as appropriate. Students may work ahead on the discussion boards but posting on past week's boards will not allow for stimulating discussions with your classmates.

### **Evaluation of Assignment:**

Postings will be evaluated on the quality of the postings and the degree that the postings promote discussion with classmates. Participation on 15 boards is required (13 modules, Breaking the Ice and Web Sites) and postings will be evaluated per board on the below scale. Students can earn the 5 additional points by showing good effort to engage classmates in discussion comparing activities done on other graded assignments. The discussion assignment will be worth a total of 50 points.

1 Point	2 points	3 points
Minimal response to the module question	Posting responds to the question but does not stimulate further class discussion.	Posting fully addresses the module question and stimulates at least one substantial follow-up posting

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 2

### Discussion Board Rubric

The following points are what is looked for in your original postings to the Discussion Board and your replies to others postings (Total of 10 points for each Discussion Board assignment).

#### Original Posting (7 points):

1. Mentions at least **2 specific points** from the article or reading. (1 point)
2. Relation of **new information** to **old information** learned in the course to date. (1 point)
3. Relation of information in article or reading to **personal experience**. (1 point)
4. Discussion at a **critical level**, not just recitation of facts from the article. (3 points)
5. Length of posting approximately **1 word processing page**. (1 point)

Note: Discussion at a critical level means discussing things such as your **opinion** of the point mentioned, **why you hold that opinion**, what you **see wrong** with the point mentioned, how you see the point **consistent/inconsistent with what you have learned** so far, **implications** for the future, **consistencies/inconsistencies within the article or reading** itself, and so forth. In other words, critiquing an article means **analyzing the good and/or bad aspects** of the article and **justifying** your analysis. *Do not just tell me what the article or reading states...I already know this.*

#### Reply to Others' Postings (3 points):

1. Discuss one point you like/agree with, and one point you dislike/disagree with, and why.  
(2 points)
2. Length should be about 1/2 page in length (approximately 100 words).

# **Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 3**

## **Discussion Rubric**

Discussion postings that meet all criteria for a grade level will receive the highest points possible at that level. Postings that meet mixed levels of criteria will receive a score within the point range of the appropriate levels.

Participation in discussion activities can only be measured by the date on the discussion posting. For example, participating 3 times during the week is measured by postings on 3 different days; there may actually be 5-6 postings, but participation only occurred 3 times during the week.

### **A Discussion (90-100): Distinguished/Outstanding**

Students earning an “A” for discussion activities have participated 3 or more times during the week and have posted outstanding information.

#### **“A” discussion postings**

- are made in time for others to read and respond
- deliver information that is full of thought, insight, and analysis
- make connections to previous or current content or to real-life situations
- contain rich and fully developed new ideas, connections, or applications

### **B Discussion (80-89): Proficient**

Students earning a “B” for discussion activities have participated at least 2 times during the week and have posted proficient information.

#### **“B” discussion postings**

- are made in time for others to read and respond
- deliver information that shows that thought, insight, and analysis have taken place
- make connections to previous or current content or to real-life situations, but the connections are not really clear or are too obvious
- contain new ideas, connections, or applications, but they may lack depth and/or detail

### **C Discussion (70-79): Basic**

Students earning a “C” for discussion activities have participated at least 1 time during the week and have posted basic information.

#### **“C” discussion postings**

- may not all be made in time for others to read and respond
- are generally competent, but the actual information they deliver seems thin and commonplace

- make limited, if any, connections, and those are often cast in the form of vague generalities
- contain few, if any, new ideas or applications; often are a rehashing or summary of other comments

### **D-F Discussion (10-69): Below Expectations**

Students earning a “D-F” for discussion activities have participated at least 1 time during the week and have posted information that was below expectations.

“D-F” discussion postings

- may not all be made in time for others to read and respond
- are rudimentary and superficial; there is no evidence of insight or analysis
- contribute no new ideas, connections, or applications
- may be completely off topic

**No participation in a discussion board activity will result in a zero for that activity.**

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 4

### Discussion Board Rubric

Criteria	A (90-100) Outstanding	B (80-89) Proficient	C (70-79) Basic	D/F (0-69) Below Expectations
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rich in content</li> <li>• full of thought, insight, and analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substantial information</li> <li>• thought, insight, and analysis has taken place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generally competent</li> <li>• information is thin and commonplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rudimentary and superficial</li> <li>• no analysis or insight is displayed</li> </ul>
<b>Connections</b>	<p>Clear connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to previous or current</li> <li>• to real-life situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new ideas or connections</li> <li>• lack depth and/or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited, if any connections</li> <li>• vague generalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no connections are made</li> <li>• off topic</li> </ul>
<b>Uniqueness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new ideas</li> <li>• new connections</li> <li>• made with depth and detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new ideas or connections</li> <li>• lack depth and/or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few, if any new ideas or connections</li> <li>• rehash or summarize other postings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no new ideas</li> <li>• “I agree with...” statement</li> </ul>
<b>Timeliness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All required postings</li> <li>• Early in discussion</li> <li>• Throughout the discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All required postings</li> <li>• Some not in time for others to read and respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All required postings</li> <li>• Most at the last minute without allowing for response time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some, or all, required postings missing</li> </ul>
<b>Stylistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few grammatical or stylistic errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several grammatical or stylistic errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors</li> <li>• Errors interfere with content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors</li> <li>• Makes understanding impossible</li> </ul>

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 5

### Contents:

1. Evaluation sheet
2. Criteria for Evaluation and an Explanation of that criteria

### ***Discussion Board Discussion Evaluation Sheet***

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Course: 311.50 Advanced Composition (online)

Semester: Summer II, 2004

#### Rating Scale:

3 – Outstanding

2 – Acceptable 1 – Weak, unacceptable 0 – No Posting

#### Characteristic/Criteria

<b>Discussion Board</b>	<b>Reading Title</b>
Focused on topic	
Organization of ideas/thoughts	
Critical thinking evident in responses	
Correlations of contributions to assigned readings	
Use of other resources/citations	
Thoughtfulness in interactions	
Listening to others	
Grammar/mechanics	
Timeliness per course policy	
Total	x/27
Comments:	
Overall participation score:	_____

## **Discussion Board Evaluation Sheet-Criteria & Explanation**

Criteria	Explanation
Focused on topic	Clear indication that the response is motivated by the particular reading and that the writer has taken a particular slant on that reading and developed it.
Organization of ideas/thoughts	There is a sense in the response that ideas lead to each other and that there are connections being made.
Critical thinking evident in responses	The response is just not a summary but an attempt by the writer to push attempt by the writer to push toward a particular personal meaning.
Correlations of contributions to assigned readings	The response refers consistently to the reading and to particular ideas and situations within the reading that have made an impression.
Use of other resources/citations	The response makes connections to information, writers and other texts the writer has read or seen.
Thoughtfulness in interactions	Evidence of college level thinking that relates the writer's life to the social.
Listening to others	The response illustrates that the writer has been paying attention to those who have interesting and provocative things to say.
Grammar/mechanics	Few grammar or sentence mechanics errors—non that interfere with the meaning the writer wants to convey.
Timeliness per course policy	Possible pts: 3=posted on time; 2=late, 0=no post

Scores:

27 – 22	3 points
21 - 17	2 points
16 and below	1 point
No post	0 points

## Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion - Middle Tennessee State - Example 6

<b>Category</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Promptness and Initiative</b>	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
<b>Delivery of Post</b>	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
<b>Relevance of Post</b>	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic.
<b>Expression within the post</b>	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly, no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal express of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic.	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
<b>Contribution to the Learning Community</b>	Des not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic.

# **Worcester Polytechnic Institute Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion 1**

Each week your discussion board postings will be graded on a 10 point scale:

## **Original Posting(s) - 7 points**

Your original posting(s) each week should...

- mention at least 2 points from the week's readings (1 point)
- relate new content to what you have already learned in the course to date (1 point)
- relate content to your own personal experiences (1 point)
- critically analyze the content - your posting should not be just a summary of the reading (3 points)
- be grammatically correct and proofread for spelling errors. It counts in the real world, so it counts here too (1 point)

## **Responses to Other Student Postings - 3 points**

Your responses to other students and the instructor should...

- incorporate quotes from the other postings (1 point)
- be logically reasoned and supported (1 point)
- be grammatically correct and proofread for spelling errors. It counts in the real world, so it counts here too (1 point)

## **Worcester Polytechnic Institute Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion 2**

### **Focused on topic**

Clear indication that the response is motivated by the particular reading and that the writer has taken a particular slant on that reading and developed it.

### **Organization of ideas/thoughts**

There is a sense in the response that ideas lead to each other and that there are connections being made.

### **Critical thinking evident in responses**

The response is just not a summary but an attempt by the writer to push toward a particular personal meaning.

### **Correlations of contributions to assigned readings**

The response refers consistently to the reading and to particular ideas and situations within the reading that have made an impression.

### **Use of other resources/citations**

The response makes connections to information, writers, and other texts the writer has read or seen.

### **Thoughtfulness in interactions**

Evidence of college-level thinking that relates the writer's life to the social environment in which it was written.

### **Listening to others**

The response illustrates that the writer has been paying attention to those who have interesting and provocative things to say.

### **Grammar/mechanics**

Few grammar or sentence mechanics errors—none that interfere with the meaning the writer wants to convey.

# **Worcester Polytechnic Institute Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion 3**

## **Discussion Rubric**

Participating 3 times during the week is measured by postings on 3 different days; you may actually make 5-6 postings, but participation only occurred 3 times during the week.

**A Discussion (9-10 points) - participated 3 times, minimum of 5 posts**

*A-level postings...*

- are made in a timely fashion, giving others an opportunity to respond
- are thoughtful, and analyze the content or question asked
- make connections to other content and real-life situations
- extend discussions already taking place, or pose new possibilities or opinions not previously voiced

**B Discussion (7-8) - participated 2 times, minimum of 4 posts**

*B-level postings...*

- are made in a timely fashion, giving others an opportunity to respond
- are thoughtful, and analyze the content or question asked
- make connections to previous or current content or to real-life situations, but the connections are unclear, not firmly established or are not obvious
- contain novel ideas, connections, and/or real-world applications, but they may lack depth, detail and/or explanation

**C Discussion (6) - participated 1 time, minimum of 2 posts**

*C-level postings...*

- are usually, but not always, made in a timely fashion
- are generally accurate, but the actual information they deliver seems thin and commonplace
- make limited, vague connections between class readings and postings by other students
- contain few novel ideas, reflecting what other students have already posted, and what class readings clearly articulate

**D-F Discussion (0-5) - participated 1 time, 1 post**

*D & F-level postings...*

- are not made in a timely fashion, if at all, keeping other students from reading and responding
- are rudimentary and superficial, lacking any degree of analysis or critique
- contribute no novel ideas, connections, or real-world applications
- may be completely off topic

# Worcester Polytechnic Institute Sample Grading Rubric for Online Discussion 4

## Discussion Assignments Grading Criteria

	0-10 points	11-15 points	16-20 points
<b>Quality of posting</b>	Postings are not relevant to the questions posed.	Postings reflect the reading and some outside source material but outside source material not cited.	Postings reflect the readings and outside information with proper outside source material citation.
<b>Quality of reply</b>	Response not relevant to original posting	Response relevant to posting but fails to support position	Response relevant to posting and supports position with factual information.
<b>Understanding of reading and outside source material</b>	Responds to the question posted but does not mention materials from the readings.	Responds to the question posted and makes reference to readings.	Responds to question posted and demonstrates understanding of material and outside source material and properly cites information.

# **University of Missouri Basic Grading Rubric for Online Discussion**

## **Basic Rubric**

MU instructors teaching online courses have used this streamlined rubric to assess student discussion board participation.

### **Grading Criteria for Weekly Discussion Question Postings (4 points/week, 60 points total)**

Your weekly postings will be assessed using the following guidelines. Of course, your postings are expected for each weekly unit of the course and the final evaluation will take place the final week of class. Your original postings addressing the weekly discussion questions should be made no later than noon each Wednesday. Final postings commenting and reflecting upon the posts of your peers should be made no later than noon each Friday -- late postings will not be given credit. If you post weekly and interact with your peers, you can expect full credit unless otherwise notified.

As you can see, the following rubrics assess the quality of your postings and not the quantity (we're not looking for "good idea" or "I agree").

<b>Weekly Discussion Posting Grading Criteria</b>	<b>Weekly Point Value</b>
Meaningful and New Ideas: Ideas examine topic from new perspective that contributes to group understanding of topic	2
Message Coherence: Messages explain issues, provide new perspectives, effectively question, or meaningfully elaborate on topic	1
Relevance of Replies to Other Messages: Responses elaborate, contradict, modify, or explain the original message	1

# University of Missouri Detailed Grading Rubric for Online Discussion

## Detailed Rubric

Instructors accustomed to more sophisticated grading rubrics may find this example useful

To facilitate ease of use and communication, all online discussion postings should be typed or pasted directly into the discussion message window.

For each discussion, please take time to consider the associated reading before posting your initial comments. Pay particular attention to the focus of the assignment outlined by your instructor. "Initial comments" are your original thoughts about the assignment, posted prior to reading/replying to messages posted by your classmates.

In order for our online discussions to be effective it is important for each member of the class to participate during the allotted time frame. In addition, your presence in the discussion should be apparent throughout the discussion period.

When composing replies here are a few approaches to consider:

- provide an alternative perspective
- share stories about your own experiences
- ask questions to further the discussion
- post additional resources (websites, books, articles)
- discuss why you agree or disagree with something

Your participation in each online discussion will be evaluated based on the following rubric:

	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Initial Comments</b>	<b>2</b>  Initial comments were posted but did not address the assignment.	<b>4</b>  Initial comments address some of the assignment requirements. Comments are not well organized and show limited knowledge and evaluation of the topic.	<b>8</b>  Initial comments address most, but not all, of the assignment. Comments are reasonably organized and demonstrate adequate familiarity and analysis of the content.	<b>10</b>  Initial comments thoroughly address all parts of the assignment. The comments are clearly and concisely stated, demonstrating that the content was appropriately reviewed and synthesized.
<b>Message Quality</b>	<b>2</b>  Postings are not substantial, limited to "I agree" types of replies.	<b>4</b>  Only one substantial message was posted.	<b>8</b>  Multiple postings including some substantial content were posted, however, a limited number include errors or need	<b>10</b>  Multiple postings are made offering substantial, well written contributions-opinions, observations, questions, experiences, critiques,

				additional supporting detail	suggestions, etc.
<b>Response</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	
	Questions/comments posed to you were not addressed.	Several questions/comments posed to you were not addressed.	The majority of questions/comments posed to you were addressed.	All questions/comments posed to you were appropriately addressed.	
<b>Contribution/ Duration</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	
	Participation was not continuous throughout the discussion period (1 day only). Replies were only posted for 1 classmate.	Postings were submitted on at least 2 different days during the discussion period (11:xx PM and 12:xx AM the next day does not qualify). Replies were posted for at least 2 classmates.	Postings were submitted on 3 or more days during the discussion period (2 or more during a 1-week discussion), but may not reflect participation from start to finish. Replies were posted for at least 2 classmates.	Postings are evenly distributed throughout the discussion period reflecting participation from start to finish. Multiple replies were posted for at least 3 classmates or more.	
<b>Etiquette</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	
	Postings are not appropriate--poor grammar/structure, inappropriate slang/abbreviations, etc.	Postings include inappropriate references and may include several errors in grammar/structure.	Postings are reasonably appropriate, but contain a few errors.	Postings are appropriate, using proper language, cordiality, grammar, punctuation, etc.	

# **University of Hartford Discussion Grading Rubric for Online Discussion**

## **Discussion Grading Rubric**

The purpose of both in-class and electronic discussions is for whole class "participation in discussions" in relation to achieving the stated goals of the course.

The key word here is "discussions." Discussions should not be viewed, simply, as recitation or question/answer exercises (although questions should definitely be asked if there is content that is not understood). Rather, discussions are dialogues that probe all aspects of the topic under discussion in which each participant qualitatively contributes to the dialogue. The following rubric will be used to evaluate participant's contributions to the topic discussion.

<b>Level 3 (3 points)</b>	<b>Level 2 (2 points)</b>	<b>Level 1 (1 point)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
In addition to Level 2, the participant initiates new threads of related discussion in the context of the current discussion dialogue. The participant explains how a new or previous concept connects to the current concept or how their daily experiences relate to class content and discussion.	In addition to Level 1, examples are provided that are relative to the topic and may support or challenge the ideas that others have proposed.	Contributions explore the topic or issue by identifying and organizing relevant facts, formulating conclusions, and presenting them.	Not participating in class, not participating online or postings that are not at Level 1, such as "I agree" without further explanation

Obviously, a discussion cannot begin at Level 3, it must begin at Level 1. Therefore, it would seem that a participant could earn more "participation credit": by "lurking" until the topic under discussion was well established and then join the dialogue by adding a Level 3 comment. Yes and No!

To attempt to keep the participation at a constant, qualitative level throughout the dialogue, the instructor will take into account the consistency of participation. A participant who consistently joins the discussion on a quality level, adding to the discussion at all stages of development, will receive more credit than a participant who waits until the discussion is well established before joining in the dialogue, for example, does all of their postings on Saturday and Sunday.

# Virginia Commonwealth University Online Discussion Grading Rubric

- In this class, we will use online discussions to discuss and practice writing concepts, to practice supporting a written viewpoint, and to share responses with each other.
- Expect to post three to five times in each unit, and to write 150-200 words minimum.
- Having your Reading and Reflection notes nearby also may be helpful.
- Do check to see if you are expected to post in more than one topic for the week.
- Discussion is a significant activity and counts toward 20 percent of your total grade in this course.

Unsatisfactory 0 Points	Needs Work 14 Points	Satisfactory 18 Points	Excellent 20 Points
Less than 3 postings are made in the discussion board area.	<p>3-5 entries are posted.</p> <p>HOWEVER</p> <p>Each entry is posted but is brief (less than 2 sentences).</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Each entry has little in the way of thoughtful, substantive ideas concerning the assignment or course content related to it.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No entries respond to fellow student(s) or response to fellow student just a personal remark, not a substantive reply (e.g., "Good, I really liked your comment.")</p>	<p>3-5 entries, 150-200 words total are posted.</p> <p>PLUS</p> <p>Each entry has 3 or more sentences.</p> <p>PLUS (a or b)</p> <p>a) Each contains thoughtful, substantive ideas concerning the assignment or course content related to it.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b) The entries are responsive to at least tow other classmates, with detailed remarks about their writing or discussion response.</p>	<p>3-5 entries, 150-200 words total are posted.</p> <p>PLUS</p> <p>Each entry has 3 or more sentences.</p> <p>PLUS (a or b)</p> <p>a) Each contains thoughtful, substantive ideas concerning the assignment or course content related to it.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b) The entries are responsive to at least tow other classmates, with detailed remarks about their writing or discussion response.</p> <p>PLUS (c or d)</p> <p>c) Entries include an outside resource or relevant, specific application.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>d) Your response clearly indicates your position in relation to what your fellow student(s) wrote (e.g., agreeing, disagreeing, adding to, modifying, extending or questioning).</p>

# University of Delaware Rubric for Asynchronous Discussion Participation

Asynchronous discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates' understanding of the course content. Use the following feedback to improve the quality of your discussion contributions.

Criteria	Unacceptable 0 Points	Acceptable 1 Point	Good 2 Points	Excellent 3 Points
<b>Frequency</b>	Participates not at all.	Participates 1-2 times on the same day.	Participates 3-4 times but postings not distributed throughout week.	Participates 4-5 times throughout the week.
<b>Initial Assignment Posting</b>	Posts no assignment.	Posts adequate assignment with superficial thought and preparation; doesn't address all aspects of the task.	Posts well developed assignment that addresses all aspects of the task; lacks full development of concepts.	Posts well developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.
<b>Follow-Up Postings</b>	Posts no follow-up responses to others.	Posts shallow contribution to discussion (e.g., agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion.	Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation.	Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts.
<b>Content Contribution</b>	Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion.	Posts information that is factually correct; lacks full development of concept or thought.	Posts factually correct, reflective and substantive contribution; advances discussion.
<b>References &amp; Support</b>	Includes no references or supporting experience.	Uses personal experience, but no references to readings or research.	Incorporates some references from literature and personal experience.	Uses references to literature, readings, or personal experience to support comments.
<b>Clarity &amp; Mechanics</b>	Posts long, unorganized or rude content that may contain multiple errors or may be inappropriate.	Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner with some errors in clarity or mechanics.	Contributes valuable information to discussion with minor clarity or mechanics errors.	Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to read style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors.

Examples of postings that demonstrate higher levels of thinking:

- "Some common themes I see between your experiences and our textbook are...." (analysis)
- "These newer trends are significant if we consider the relationship between ...." (synthesis)
- "The body of literature should be assessed by these standards ...." (evaluation)

# Northeastern University Discussion Grading Rubric for Online Discussion

In this course 40 percent of a participant's final grade is based on participation in class discussions.

## A-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (40 Points)

- The participant consistently posted insightful comments and questions that prompted on-topic discussion.
- The participant consistently helped clarify or synthesize other group members' ideas.
- If disagreeing with another group members' ideas, the participant stated his or her disagreement or objections clearly, yet politely.

## B-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (36 Points)

- The participant was notably lacking in one or two of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant consistently had to be prompted or coaxed to participate.
- The participant usually, but not always, expressed herself or himself clearly.

## C-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (32 Points)

- The participant was consistently lacking in two or more of the items listed for A-level participation.
- The participant was extremely reluctant to participate, even when prompted.
- The participant rarely expressed himself or herself clearly.

## D-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (32 Points)

- The participant frequently attempted (success is irrelevant) to draw the discussion off-topic, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric.

## F-LEVEL PARTICIPATION (32 Points)

- The participant was rude or abusive to other course participants. The participant consistently failed or refused to participate at all, even when specifically prompted or questioned, even if the participant's participation otherwise conforms to a higher level on the rubric.

# Matrix of Rubric Attributes

	Rubric	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
Grading Scale		1-100	1-100	1-100	1-100	1-10	1-3	0-4	1-3	1-7	1-100	1-100	0-3	1-3	1-4	1-10	1-10	1-20	1-2	1-10	1-3	1-20	1-3	1-40		
Initial Posting	Responsive to Topic/ Critical Thinking/ Analysis	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Uniqueness of Posting/ New Ideas											x			x		x		x		x						
Extend the Conference Discussion																										
Organization of Posting															x		x									
Quality of Posting / Skills																										
Demonstrated/ Logical	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x		
Correlation to Assigned Readings												x	x		x		x		x		x			x		
Level of Participation																		x		x		x		x		
Number of Postings Per Topic	x	x	x			x		x		x	x						x		x	x						
Timing of Postings		x				x			x		x	x	x													
Quality of Ideas Presented	x	x			x			x												x						
Good Communication/ Writing/ Gramatics/ Scholarly Dialogue		x			x		x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x						
Quality of Discussion/ Interaction/ Community			x	x	x				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Level of Preparation	x																				x	x		x	x	
APA Format	x																									
Reflection and Synthesys		x																				x	x			
References			x										x				x					x				
Connection to Professional Practice/ Personal Experience				x							x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Concise					x		x																			
Response to Other Postings						x			x	x				x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Length of Repsonse							x														x			x		
Relevance of Responses								x										x			x	x	x	x	x	x

Key:

Attributes Related to Initial Posting

Attributes Related to the Response

Attributes Related to the Level of Participation

Attributes Related to Communications, Writing and Grammar

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# **The Online Discussion Conference Grading Rubric**

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**Appendix II  
Best Practices Sample Rubric**

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**Presented By:  
Professor Clifford A Wilke**

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<b>Criteria</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Outstanding Contributor: A (90+)</b>	<b>Good Contributor: B (80-89)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory Contributor: C or less (below 80)</b>
<b>Quality of Initial Answer to Topic Question</b>	<b>(25%)</b>	All initial answers are substantive, consistently responsive to the topic questions and demonstrate significant understanding of the subject and class readings (e.g., illustrate a point with examples, suggest alternative perspectives on an issue and seek to draw a new or original conclusion). Uses citations in a way that reflects a complete understanding of course modules, of required readings, and/or other external scholarly sources.	Most initial answers are substantive, often responsive to the topic questions and demonstrate sufficient understanding of the subject and class readings (e.g., uses limited examples, takes a narrow perspectives on an issue) and reflect a reasonable understanding of course modules and required readings.	Initial answers are not substantive, are weakly responsive to the topic questions or provide few, if any, insights, understanding or perspectives, or reflect a limited understanding of course modules and required readings.
<b>Quality of Interaction and Discussion</b>	<b>(25%)</b>	All discussions are substantive and consistently responsive to other students' postings, plus ideas provide excellent insights or perspectives, and significantly enhance the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion, readings and subject applicability to professional experience (e.g., illustrates a point with examples, suggest new perspectives on an issue, includes citations to support views, asks questions that help stimulate further discussion, responds to questions posed by classmates or the instructor).	Most discussions are substantive and often responsive to other students' postings, plus ideas provide relatively good insights or perspectives, and generally enhance the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion readings and subject applicability to professional experience (e.g., uses limited examples, takes a narrow perspective on an issue).	Discussions are not substantive, are weakly responsive to other students' postings or provide few, if any, good insights or perspectives. Has limited effect on the quality, breadth and direction of the classroom discussion.
<b>Level of Preparation and Communication</b>	<b>(10%)</b>	All answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials, professional experience including a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) with strong communications, and scholarly dialogue and applicable assertions are made with appropriate citation.	Most answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials, professional experience including a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) and most communications, scholarly dialogue applicable assertions are made with appropriate citation.	Few answers and discussions are based on required readings, class materials and a thorough review of the literature (e.g., scholarly sources) and few assertions are made with appropriate citation.

<b>Level of Participation and Interaction with classmates as a Scholarly Community</b>  <b>(15%)</b>	Participation and interaction as a scholarly community discussion through conference activity continually ( <b>four or more days</b> ) during the week, plus more than three original postings, plus significantly more than two responses to classmates. The responses should include topics for which the student did not post an original response.	Participation and interaction as a scholarly community discussion through conference activity on three days during the week, plus three original postings and two responses to classmates. The responses should include topics for which the student did not post an original response.	Participation and interaction as a scholarly community discussion through conference activity on less than three days during the week and less than three original postings and/or less than two responses to classmates, and/or no postings for one of the topics.
<b>Timing of postings</b>  <b>(10%)</b>	Postings are well distributed throughout the week, with all three original responses ( <i>i.e. first level responses</i> ) occurring early in the topic week.	Postings are distributed throughout the week, with at least one original posting ( <i>i.e. first level response</i> ) occurring early in the topic week.	Original postings ( <i>i.e. first level responses</i> ) occur during the week.
<b>Communications Clarity and Coherence of Discussion</b>  <b>(10%)</b>	Ideas are persuasive, concise, always expressed in a clear and coherent manner, without spelling or grammatical errors.	Ideas are usually persuasive, concise and are expressed in a clear and coherent manner, with no or very minor grammatical and spelling errors.	Ideas are disorganized and/or contain grammatical and spelling errors.
<b>References and APA Format</b>  <b>(5%)</b>	In-line citations and summary reference lists properly reflect all sources used and are consistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.	In-line citations and summary reference lists properly reflect most sources used or are reasonably consistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.	In-line citations and summary reference lists are limited and reflect few sources used or are inconsistent with APA 6 <sup>th</sup> Edition standards.
<b>Your Grade:</b>			
<b>Additional Comments:</b>			