



VALPARAISO  
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL  
TECHNOLOGY, DESIGN, & ASSESSMENT

TEACHING TIPS TUESDAY  
PROMOTING SOCIAL LEARNING  
&  
ADDING A BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION BOARD



Dear Colleagues:

Discussion posts are a great way to get students involved in social learning through active participation. Active discussions allow students to contribute individual posts, synthesize peer input, then communicate freely on differences and similarities of the course content. Likewise, a well-structured discussion board that is appropriately



moderated can entice students who would not normally speak out to participate in fruitful and constructive exchanges with their peers. Thus, creating a community of learners who may be more likely to collaborate on ideas in and out of the classroom.

To learn more about social learning and using Blackboard to foster collaboration via Discussion Boards, read the article from VITAL about the social learning app Perusall and see the ITDA documentation below with a step-by-step guide on how to create a Discussion Board and video that also includes tips on managing forums.



*"The Line" Quote from Experience*

"As an online learner for over 10 years, discussions were an integral part of the learning process and continued well beyond the classroom. In fact, I frequently collaborate with previous classmates about life and where our educational journey has taken us. These life-changing interactions are the direct result of our course discussion board."

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Blake Soller, EdD

Director of Instructional Technology, Design, & Assessment (ITDA)

Gina Rue

Instructional Designer, ITDA



## Benefits of Social Learning

- Creates a community of learners
- Fosters reflection
- Evaluates students learning & concepts retention
- Identifies gaps in learning
- Promotes peer-to-peer interaction
- Increases student satisfaction

A study from Harvard identified some interesting facts about their discussion forums. Click the link below to find out more!

[HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL - ONLINE COLLABORATION](#)



## TEACHING TIPS

From the Desk of Cynthia Rutz, Director  
Valparaiso Institute for Teaching and Learning (VITAL)

Like many of you, I have struggled to get my students to read for class. I tried daily reading quizzes, group presentations, even assigning questions for each reading. But nothing has worked as well as the free and easy-to-use app Perusall.

Perusall is a free online collective reading and learning community where you can place some of your class readings. Students can comment directly on the text, interacting and engaging with one another in ways that mirror social media platforms (such as liking, boosting, or tagging others). It was co-founded by Eric Mazur, Dean of Applied Physics at Harvard.

Instructor benefits include:

- generate confusion reports (frequent student questions and unclear concepts)
- automatic scoring of the quality of students' posts and level of engagement

- ability to create small “discussion” groups for larger classes
- ability to link Perusall scoring to the grade book in Blackboard

In this article, two of your VU colleagues share their experiences with Perusall. Economics Professor Sara Gundersen talks about why she uses it, and Detra Becker (Library) provides the student’s point of view.

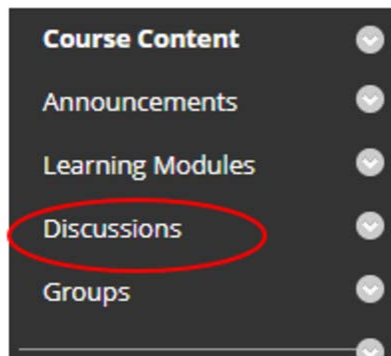
## GETTING STUDENTS TO READ WITH PERUSALL

### TECH TIPS

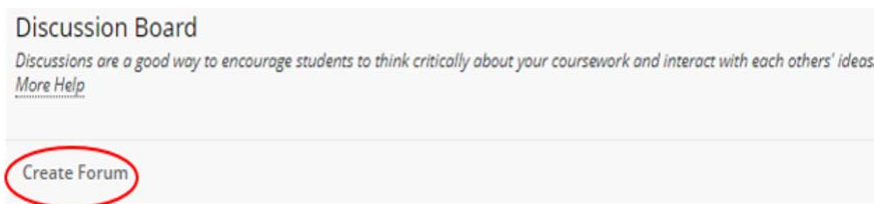
From the Office of Instructional Technology, Design, & Assessment (ITDA)



#### Adding a Discussion Board in Blackboard



In the Course Content section of your Blackboard Navigation Menu, click on **Discussions**



Click **Create Forum**

Type the **Name** of the forum

Note: All items with an \* are

### Create Forum

Create Forums to organize discussions. [More Help](#)

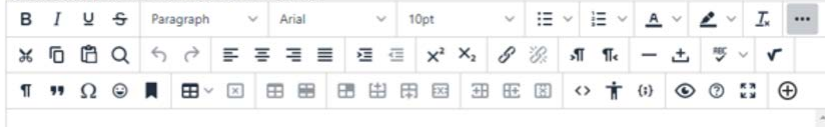
\* Indicates a required field.

#### FORUM INFORMATION

Name

Description

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).







required

#### FORUM AVAILABILITY

Available  Yes  No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions

Display After      
*Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.*

Display Until      
*Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.*

Set the Forum Availability to **Yes**

#### FORUM SETTINGS

*If a Due Date is set, submissions are accepted after this date, but are marked late.*

Viewing Threads/Replies

Standard View


Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.  
*If participants are required to create threads in order to view other threads in the forum, they cannot delete or edit their own posts, and cannot post anonymously. Those options will be set for you automatically.*

Grade



No Grading in Forum

**Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible: 15**

Grade Threads

Show participants in "needs grading" status  after every  Posts

Due Date

    
*Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.*

Choose **Forum Settings;** then **Click Submit**

Associated Rubrics

Add Rubric

Name	Type	Date Last Edited	Show Rubric to Students
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Subscribe

- Do not allow subscriptions
- Allow members to subscribe to threads
- Allow members to subscribe to forum
  - Include body of post in the email
  - Include link to post

Create and Edit

- Allow Anonymous Posts
- Allow Author to Delete Own Posts
- Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts
- Allow Members to Create New Threads
- Allow File Attachments
- Allow Users to Reply with Quote
- Force Moderation of Posts

Additional Options

- Allow Post Tagging
- Allow Members to Rate Posts

Click **Submit** to proceed.

Cancel

Submit

<input type="checkbox"/> FORUM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL POSTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Board Week 1	Here you will provide a description and instructions.	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Discussion Template	INSTRUCTIONS	4

Office of Instructional Technology, Design & Assessment

Blackboard  
Discussion Boards

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY



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[Learn More About Blackboard for Instructors](#)

[FOR ITDA ASSISTANCE, SUBMIT A HELP DESK TICKET HERE](#)

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