

ESTIMATED TIME

2-3 class periods

PREREQUISITES

- This lesson is related to Lesson 18, Social Networking Tools.
- The lesson should be taught *before* assigning students any kind of online discussion work.
- Computers with internet access.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- *Threaded Discussion Rubric*
- *Threaded Discussion Questions*

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Used frequently in distance education is the communication forum of a *threaded discussion*. Threaded discussions allow for members of a class or group to thoughtfully respond to an initial post with continual posts and an ongoing online conversation. The threaded discussion is effective in any subject as it allows for individuals to think about and edit their responses before posting them. It also allows for individuals to simultaneously view and engage in multiple conversations over time.

LESSON GOAL

Develop the skill of online conversation through a threaded discussion in which students can post thoughts or answers to questions in an online forum.

Essential Question

What interaction strategies produce effective online threaded discussions?

Student Expectations

1. Participate in discussions about communications.
2. Contribute to a paper discussion.
3. Participate in a threaded discussion.
4. Write a reflection about threaded discussions.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate understanding of online threaded discussion as a mode of communication.
2. Explain the benefits of threaded discussion as a means of communication.
3. Communicate through threaded discussions.

RATIONALE

Many students have engaged in multiple forms of online communication such as e-mail, chat rooms and blogs, as well as through social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *MySpace*. More recently some groups such as online communities and academic circles have used threaded discussion as a method of communication for the purpose of having ongoing, thoughtful conversations by members of the group whether it be as part of an idea, a response to a question or concern, or a stimulus for reflection.

This lesson helps students to practice how these threaded discussions work. They are different than casual postings on a friend's *MySpace* or *Facebook* account and less direct than an email.



Threaded Discussion Rubric



Threaded Discussion Questions

PROCEDURES: WHAT TO DO

1. **WHOLE GROUP** Hand out the *Threaded Discussion Rubric* to explain how students will be evaluated. Then discuss the following.
 - a. Ask the class to identify as many different forms of communication as they can.
 - b. Ask what is seemingly the most effective communication.
 - c. Ask the class what can hinder a group or even just two people from communicating effectively (differing styles or forms of communication, distance from one another, technology, etc.).
 - d. Explain to the class that sometimes communication takes place over time and not in a one-on-one interaction.

ASSESSMENT

Discussion Contribute to discussion to develop an understanding of various forms of communication and their effectiveness.

2. **SMALL GROUP** –Break students into groups of 4-5. Pass out the *Threaded Discussion Questions*, *What do you think is the most important issue regarding taking care of our planet? Why?*
 - a. Give each member of the group 5 minutes to carefully write out his or her answers on the paper under the questions.
 - b. Have one person read the question out loud again and then have everyone else read his or her own answer out loud, one at a time.
 - c. Once all group members have read their answers out loud, have each student pass the paper to the person sitting next to him or her. Take 3-4 minutes for each person to respond or comment on the answer. Then, pass the paper around again to the next person and repeat until everyone has responded on everyone else's paper. Responses and comments can be directed to either the original answer or someone else's comments on that paper. They need to be thoughtful and conversational in content.
 - d. Once everyone has commented on each other's papers, feel free to send them around again and give everyone the ability to comment on any other response given by another student to their initial response (i.e. answer question, defend their view, etc.).

ASSESSMENT

Threaded Discussion without Technology Effectively contribute to paper discussion exercise.

ASSESSMENT

Discussion Contribute to discussion of how threaded discussions can be effective.

3. **INDIVIDUAL** Set up an online discussion thread using *Sakai* or Google's groups.



ASSIGNMENT 1

If using Google,

- Have students create a Google account by going to <http://groups.google.com> by clicking on "Sign In" at the top-right corner of the



Student Pages

page.

- If no Google account exists, select “create an account now.”
- Fill in the needed information and provide email addresses to the teacher.

If using *Sakai*,

- Create a Threaded Discussion in *Sakai* using the Forum tool.
- Have students log into their *Sakai* accounts and click into the Forum tool, located on the side bar.
- Have students continue to respond to postings in this format while logged into *Sakai*.
- Be specific with your instructions. For example, “Please respond to the discussion question with a full paragraph (5-7 sentences minimum). Once you have posted your answer to the question, please respond to at least 3 other student postings. All responses to other student’s answers must be at least 2 sentences long and include at least one question concerning their initial posting.”

If using *Google*,

- Create a group using your account.
- Sign into your account.
- Click on “Create a Group.”
- Fill out the information starting with “name your group” (make sure you click on the option to make the group restricted for invitation only).
- Click on “Create Group.”
- To add members (your students), click on **Add Directly** and type in the email addresses provided by the students.
- You can skip this step (adding your students) in order to have a discussion question or questions ready for when they provide email addresses and join the group.
- Once everyone has been accepted into the group, assign the first discussion thread.
- Be specific with your instructions. For example, “Please respond to the discussion question with a full paragraph (5-7 sentences minimum). Once you have posted your answer to the question, please respond to at least 3 other student postings. All responses to other student’s answers must be at least 2 sentences long and include at least one question concerning their initial posting.”

ASSESSMENT

Online Discussion Thread Participate in the set up and contribution of online discussion thread.

REFLECTION

Have students write a reflection on the following prompt. Have them use the *Sakai* Assignments Tool to submit their reflections.

Write a one-page reflection on the use of threaded discussion. Use the following questions as a guide:

1. In what ways was the use of the Threaded Discussion helpful for a group conversation?



ASSIGNMENT 2

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

FORUM

- Use Forum to participate in a threaded discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENT

- Use Announcements to remind students of assignments and due dates.
- Announcements should be coordinated with Assignments and Schedule.

SCHEDULE

- Add Assignments to the Schedule.

EVALUATE/REVIEW

- Student Assignments
- Student Portfolio
- Add a test or quiz if desired.

LESSONS

- Review Lessons.
- Add Resources if desired.
- Change a Lesson if desired.
- Schedule a Lesson.
- Unschedule a Lesson.

COMMUNICATE IF DESIRED

- Blogger
- Mailtool
- Chat Room
- Roster
- Drop box

Ohio Academic Content Standards

Grade 10 Language Arts

Reading Process Comprehension Strategies

1. Apply reading comprehension strategies, including making predictions, comparing and contrasting, recalling and summarizing and making inferences and drawing conclusions.
2. Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade-appropriate print texts and electronic and visual media.

Writing Applications

Write informational essays or reports, including research that:

- a. pose relevant and tightly drawn questions that engage the reader.
- b. provide a clear and accurate perspective on the subject.
- c. create an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience and context.
- d. support the main ideas with facts, details, examples and explanations from sources;

Writing Process Drafting, Revising, Editing

10. Use available technology to compose text.

2. How do you think that Threaded Discussions can be most useful?
3. What are some of the downfalls or problems that might occur when using Threaded Discussions?
4. Why do you think that Threaded Discussions are used, especially with groups whose members cannot regularly meet or distance education classes where students do not all have class at the same time?

ASSESSMENT

Reflection Write a reflection paper on the use and effectiveness of online discussion threads.

ASSESSMENT

Use the *Threaded Discussion Rubric* to evaluate student performance. Have students complete the rubric as a self-evaluation and then discuss the results.

In addition to the rubric, each submission should be evaluated individually for appropriateness for submission to the ePortfolio before posting.

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students on IEPs should do well with the material presented in this lesson and the way it is presented. Where necessary, they should be given additional time or extra assistance from the advisor.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Gifted students can be challenged in this lesson by acting as classroom leaders during the discussion. The material may be intuitive to them, but not to their classmates. Therefore, charge them with directing the discussion and giving encouragement to struggling participants. Other tasks could include creating another discussion in response to a book or article. For more ideas, see the article listed in the resources section titled, "Literature discussion in cyberspace: Young adolescents using threaded discussion groups to talk about books."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEBSITE SOURCES

Preview sites for appropriateness before recommending them to students. If links are broken, search for similar information.

Access these sites for more information about threaded discussion.

- www.dartmouth.edu/~webteach/articles/discussion.html
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threaded_discussion
- http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=wolsey/index.html
- Groups.google.com