Course Design and Discussion Boards

Here are some quick tips about **how online discussion boards can fit into your course design**:

1. Always Be Opening. Alec Baldwin might prefer the mantra of ABC, “Always Be Closing,” but opening back up the conversation is the best practice for your participation in your course’s discussion board. It is great to be a regular presence in your discussion boards, but you want your posts to prompt more discussion, not shut it down. Try to avoid simply answering questions outright. Instead, frame your responses in a way that invites the students to take over the discussion.
2. Will this be on the test? It can be beneficial for engagement to indicate to students that you will pull test questions from thoughtful discussion board posts. Although this method is less likely to inspire an intrinsic motivation for discussing the course material, it is a surefire way to increase the attention given to your discussion boards. Of course, you will need to follow through on this claim when it comes time for assessment!

Whether your course meets as a face-to-face, online, or hybrid course, an engaging online discussion board can enhance student learning if you set the right tone for engagement. Contact **[your teaching and learning center]** for help with implementing discussion boards in your course design and more!

**Submitted by:**

Benjamin Peterson

Coordinator of Faculty Programs and Services

University Teaching & Learning Commons

University of North Carolina, Greensboro