



Discussion Forum Rubric

Criteria	Exemplary	Accomplished	Developing	Beginning
Points Possible: 25	5	4	3	1
Critical Thinking Skills**	Discussions incorporated all 10 critical thinking skills and continued to widen discussion into larger picture/framework with no uncritical thinking statements	Discussion incorporated 6-9/10 critical thinking skills on a consistent basis and/or 1-2 uncritical thinking statements.	Discussion incorporated 5/10 critical thinking skills sporadically and/or a few uncritical thinking statements	Discussion only provided relevant and important statements and/or more than 6 negative uncritical thinking statements
Content/Subject Knowledge	Addresses the question completely and in-depth; points are all clearly made and all evidence supports arguments/rationale; clearly has grasp of content and elaborates with explanation and examples	Sufficient information that relates to the topic; includes essential accurate information that satisfactorily addresses the question/topic.	Includes some essential information and begins to address topic/question, but great deal of information is not clearly connected.	Points not clear; information included does not support topic in any way; does not have grasp of information.
Coherence & Organization	Information clearly stated and developed; specific examples are appropriate; conclusion is clear; flows well together in a logical order; good transitions; succinct but not choppy.	Majority of information is presented in a logical sequence; generally very well organized, but better transitions from idea to idea are needed.	Concepts and ideas are loosely connected; lacks clear transitions; flow and organization choppy.	Posting is disjointed and choppy; does not flow; development is vague and illogical in order.
Participation	Participation within the discussions was on a consistent, almost daily basis; high degree of engagement and interaction with others	Original post and good interaction/engagement with others (6-10); posting every other day	Original post and limited interaction/engagement (3-5); posting with a few days passing	Little (1-2 postings) to no participation; only provided original posting.
Timeliness	Posting and interaction occurred 2-3 days after face-to-face meeting	Posting and interaction occurred 4-7 days after face-to-face meeting	Posting and interaction occurred 8-10 days after face-to-face meeting	Posting occurred less than 11-13 days after face-to-face meeting
/ 25 Points				

**** See second page for explanation of critical and uncritical thinking skills indicators.**

Newman, D. R., Webb, B., & Cochrane, C. (1996). A content analysis method to measure critical thinking in face-to-face and computer supported group learning. Retrieved April 25, 2005, from <http://www.qub.ac.uk/agt/papers/methods/contpap.html>

Indicators of critical (+) and uncritical (-) thinking within online discussion forums

Indicator	+	--
Relevance	Relevant statements	Irrelevant statements, diversions
Importance	Important points/issues	Unimportant, trivial points/issues
Novelty. New info, ideas, solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New problem-related information • New ideas for discussion • New solutions to problems • Welcoming new ideas • Bringing new things in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating what has been said • False or trivial leads • Accepting first offered solution • Squashing, putting down new ideas • Dragged into discussion by instructor
Bringing outside knowledge/experience to bear on problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing on personal experience • Refer to course material • Use relevant outside material • Evidence of using previous knowledge • Course related problems brought in (e.g. students identify problems from lectures and texts) • Welcoming outside knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticking to prejudice or assumptions • Squashing attempts to bring in outside knowledge
Ambiguities: clarified or confused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, unambiguous statements • Discuss ambiguities to clear them up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused statements • Continue to ignore ambiguities
Linking ideas, interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking facts, ideas and notions • Generating new data from information collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating information without making inferences or offering an interpretation • Stating that one shares the ideas or opinions stated, without taking these further or adding any personal comments
Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing proof or examples • Justifying solutions or judgments • Setting out advantages and disadvantages of situation or solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrelevant or obscuring questions or examples • Offering judgments or solutions without explanations or justification • Offering several solutions without suggesting which is the most appropriate
Critical assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical assessment/evaluation of own or others' contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncritical acceptance or unreasoned rejection • Instructor prompts for critical evaluation
Practical utility (grounding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate possible solutions to familiar situations • Discuss practical utility of new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss in a vacuum (treat as if on Mars) • Suggest impractical solutions
Width of understanding (complete picture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widen discussion (problem within a larger perspective. • Intervention strategies within a wider framework.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow discussion. (Address bits or fragments of situation. • Suggest glib, partial, interventions)