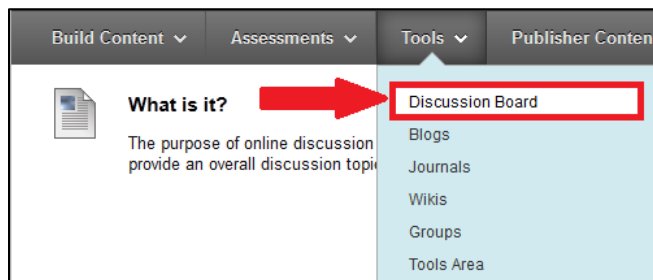**CITS | Instructional Development**

Creating a Discussion Forum

This guide walks instructors through the process of creating a discussion forum in a content area.
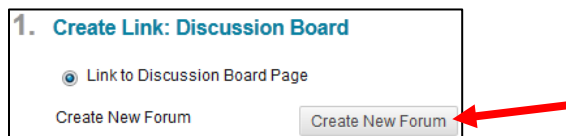
Step 1:
Place your mouse arrow over the "**Tools**" button the top of a content area and choose "**Discussion Board**" from the menu that appears.
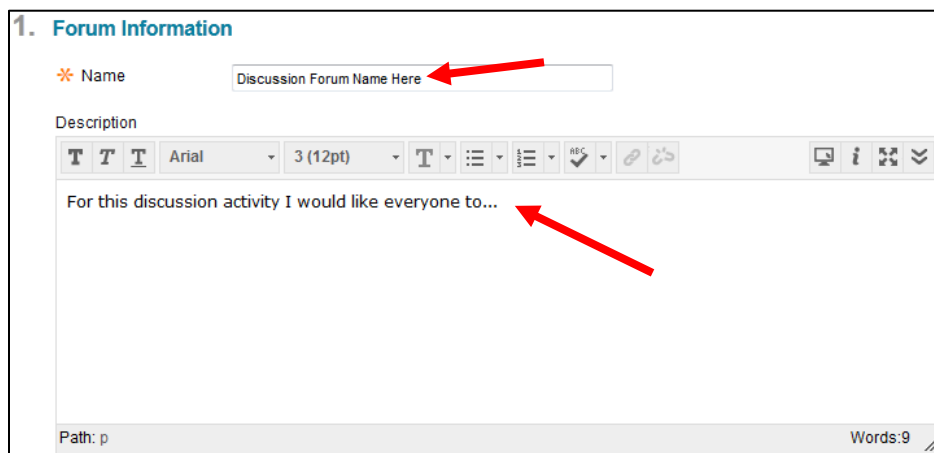

Step 2:
Click the "**Create New Forum**" button.

Step 3:
Enter a name for this discussion forum in the "**Name**" field and type directions in the "**Description**" box.

Step 4:
Now you will need to configure how the discussion will function for students. By default, students will be able to post to the forum, read what other people have posted, and reply to them. Refer to the breakdown below to learn more about each setting.

Viewing Threads/Replies
- "**Standard View**" is the default mode for discussion forums where students can read and reply to all posts made to a forum before they make their first post.
- "**Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum**" forces students to post at least once to a discussion forum before they will be able to see other student's posts. Enabling this setting can be helpful if you find that your student's posts are unoriginal and copied off one another.

Grade
- "**No Grading in Forum**" means that no column will be generated in the Grade Center for this discussion and it cannot be graded.
- "**Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible**:" Choose this option to enable grading for a discussion forum. You will also need to enter how many points you would like to grade this activity out of. (e.g. out of 100)
- "**Grade Threads**" allows you to enter grades for each post a student makes in one forum as opposed to providing an overall grade for the forum. Most people don't use this option.

Subscribe
- "**Do not allow subscriptions**" This setting prevents students from "subscribing" to the forum so that they cannot opt to receive emails when other students post.
- "**Allow members to subscribe to threads**" will make a "Subscribe" button appear next to students posts which, when clicked, triggers emails whenever someone responds to their post.
- "**Allow members to subscribe to forum**" adds a "Subscribe" button to the top of the discussion forum. When an instructor or student clicks the subscribe button they will receive an email every time a thread is posted to that discussion forum.
  - "**Include body of post**" will include the actual text of the new post within the email.
  - "**Include link to post**" will only provide a link to the post on the discussion, not the actual text of the post.

Create and Edit
- "**Allow Anonymous Posts**" will show "Anonymous" as the author of every discussion post instead of student's names. We do not recommend using this option.
- "**Allow Author to Delete Own Posts**" allows students to delete their posts after posting them.
- "**Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts**" provides students with an "Edit" button, which allows them to edit a post after they have posted it.
- "**Allow Members to Create New Threads**" un-checking this prevents students from making new posts in the forum. They will still be able to reply to posts that already exist.
- "**Allow File Attachments**" allows students to attach a file to their posts. (Word docs, PDFs, etc.)
- "**Allow Users to Reply with Quote**" gives students the option to include the original posters post text quoted above their response. This setting is default OFF and we typically recommend leaving it OFF.

- "**Force Moderation of Posts**" requires each post to be approved by the instructor (or designated student moderator) before it appears on the forum for the entire class to see.

Additional Options
- "**Allow Post Tagging**" allows student to "tag" discussion posts with metadata. This feature is useful if a forum is extremely dense with several (hundreds) of posts that need to be searched. Most people will not use this.
- "**Allow Members to Rate Posts**" allows students to rate each other's posts on a five-star rating scale. These ratings are not trackable - you can only see each posts overall rating.

After configuring the forum to work how you want it to, click the "Submit" button to move on.

Step 5:
Click the "**Next**" button on the "Create Link: Discussion Board" page.

Step 6:
On the final "Create Link" page, there is a large "**Text**" box located beneath the "Link Name" box where you should enter the directions for this discussion activity.

Step 7:
Choose if you would like to make this visible to students after is uploaded (by default it will be) OR set an availability date to have the discussion automatically appear and/or disappear at a certain date/time. Click the "**Submit**" button to finish creating your forum.