

**Elevating Expectations  
for  
Online Discussion Board Postings  
at the  
Graduate Level**

**By Dr. Amy R. McDaniel  
Columbus State University  
Mcdaniel\_amy1@columbusstate.edu**

# Discussion Board Quality

- ▶ For further information about quality, these three links are a good starting point:
  - <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/art-science-successful-online-discussions/> (The Art and Science of Successful Online Discussions)
  - <http://educationcoffeehouse.com/writers/high-quality-discussion-posts.html> (For Online Students: How to Write Solid Discussion Board Posts (& Classmate Replies))
  - <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/asynchronous-learning-and-trends/why-demand-originality-from-students-in-online-discussion-forums/> (Why Demand Originality from

# Discussion Board Postings

- ▶ This presentation will address these four elements that are components of practices to elevate expectations of student postings:
  - American Psychological Association, APA style,
  - initial and classmate (peer) responses,
  - timeliness, and
  - a rubric.

# American Psychological Association APA style

- ▶ Discussion board posts should include:
  - ✓ proper language,
  - ✓ cordiality,
  - ✓ correct grammar, and
  - ✓ punctuation.

# American Psychological Association

## APA style, page two

- ▶ In addition, all posts are expected to be original work of the student and follow current APA style guidelines at the graduate level.

# American Psychological Association

## APA style, page three

- ▶ For quality, discussion board postings must have citations throughout with information from various research sources and reading assignments supporting your responses, including the reading materials assigned for the designated week.

# Example of Student Initial Discussion Board Post

My school implements Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS). Our PBIS team, which includes our school counselor and behavior specialist, .....  
Whitted and Dupper (2005) reported that it is fairly common that supervisors have “difficultly differentiating playful and aggressive fighting” (p. 171)

# Example of Student Initial Discussion Board Post, page two

Miligore (2003) recommended closely supervising any situations that have “the potential of becoming aggressive” (p. 174). Miligore (2003) also suggested intervening as soon as an incident occurs and insisting that the students apologize. This practice is something that I do with my students. I always model and encourage students to be specific about why they are apologizing.



# Example of Student Initial Discussion Board Post, page three

## References:

Miligore, E. T. (2003). Eliminate bullying in your classroom. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 38*(3), 172 – 176.

Whitted, K. S., & Dupper, D. R. (2005). Best practices for preventing or reducing bullying in schools. *Children & Schools, 27*(3), 167 – 175.

# Example of Student Classmate Discussion Board Post

Even though research shows there are many factors of student achievement, .... Burton wrote, “Closing the gap must be more than a one-front operation” (p. 13). He was referencing the need to engage the government, communities and families. .... Nevertheless, it is our duty as educators to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap to the best of our ability. As Paul Burton (2004) wrote, “Educators must hold ourselves responsible and accountable for improving schools when and where we can” (p. 13).

## Reference:

Barton, P.E. (2004). Why does the gap persist? *Educational Leadership*, 62(3), 8-13.

# Timeliness

- ▶ Designated week of Discussion Board:
  - During the week
  - Initial post on days one through three
  - Classmate responses days three through six
  - Participate throughout the week
  - not just one or two days

# Rubric

► Seven criteria for Discussion Board Postings are:

- ✓ Quality of Initial Postings,
- ✓ Quality of Classmate Responses,
- ✓ Quantity of Classmate Responses,
- ✓ Timeliness of Initial Post,
- ✓ Timeliness of Classmate Responses,
- ✓ Duration, and
- ✓ Mechanics.

# Rubric - Rating Categories

▶ Four rating categories/points are:

✓Excellent (3 points),

✓Good (2 points),

✓Fair (1 point), and

✓Poor (0 point).

# Criteria: Quality of Initial Post

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
<p>Successfully completed all of the requirements set forth in the discussion board criteria with at least two references <b>OR</b> Thoroughly and clearly answered/ completed the discussion prompt requirements.</p>	<p>Completed some, but not all, of the requirements set forth in the discussion board criteria with at least one reference <b>OR</b> Answered/ completed some, but not all, of the discussion prompt requirements.</p>	<p>Partially completed the requirements set forth in the discussion board criteria without any references <b>OR</b> Partially answered/ completed the discussion prompt requirements.</p>	<p>No discussions or assignments were submitted <b>OR</b> Initial comments were posted but did not address the assignment.</p> <p><b>Credit: Brown, J.</b></p>

# Criteria: Quality of Responses to at least 3 classmates

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
<p>Addressed the expectations set forth in the discussion board criteria with at least two references <b>OR</b> gave appropriate contributions and/or corrective feedback.</p>	<p>Completed some, but not all, of the requirements set forth in the discussion board criteria with at least one reference <b>OR</b> Give some, but not all, appropriate contributions and/or corrective feedback.</p>	<p>Partially addressed the expectations set forth in the discussion board criteria without any references <b>OR</b> Did not give appropriate contributions and/or corrective feedback.</p>	<p>No responses were submitted.</p> <p><b>Credit: Brown, J.</b></p>

# Criteria: Quantity of Responses to Classmates

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
Replied to a minimum of 3 classmates' posts.	Replied to 2 classmates' posts.	Replied to 1 classmate's post.	Did not reply to any of the classmates' posts.

**Credit: Brown, J.**



# Criteria: Timeliness of Initial Post/Responses

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
<p>Material was submitted on time.</p>	<p>Material was submitted up to one day late.</p>	<p>Material was submitted two to four days late.</p>	<p>Material was submitted more than four days late <b>OR</b> was not submitted.</p> <p><b>Credit: Brown, J.</b></p>

# Criteria: Timeliness of Responses to at least 3 Classmates

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
<p>All of your replies were submitted on time.</p>	<p>One of your replies was submitted up to one day late.</p>	<p>One of your replies was submitted two to four days late.</p>	<p>One of your replies was submitted more than four days late <b>OR</b> replies were not submitted.</p> <p><b>Credit: Brown, J.</b></p>

# Criteria: Duration

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
	<p>Posted initial posts and/or replies on two different days during the designated week (e.g., Week 1 posts were posted on or before Day 7 of Week 1).</p>		<p>Did not post initial posts and/or replies on two different days during the designated week.</p> <p><b>Credit: Brown, J.</b></p>

# Criteria: Mechanics

Excellent (3 points)	Good (2 points)	Fair (1 point)	Poor (0 point)
0 to 2 misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and/or improper punctuation.	3 to 6 misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and/or improper punctuation.	7 to 10 misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and/or improper punctuation.	More than 10 misspelled words, incorrect grammar, and/or improper punctuation <b>OR</b> no posts were submitted.  <b>Credit: Brown, J.</b>

# Expected Outcomes: Elevating Expectations of Discussion Board Postings

- ▶ The results of using these practices include:
  - acquiring higher order thinking and
  - research skills
    - that expand knowledge on the course topic.

# Outcomes

- ▶ The discussion board postings become better learning and sharing forums more focused on objectives of the course.

# References

Brown, J. (2016). Rubric for the Discussion Board Postings. Retrieved from GoView EDAT 6115 Knowledge: Students/Learning Syllabus.

Tawzer, K. (2016). Discussion Board Postings. Retrieved from GoView EDAT 6159 Multicultural Studies.

# Quotation

*“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”*

*~ Abigail Adams*