COURSELINK TOOL SPOTLIGHT

New Discussions Creation Experience

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While we are coming together today in a virtual space, it is important to recognize the physical space that connects us and brings us together. The University of Guelph and its campuses are situated on the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We understand that these lands are connected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum and continue to be home to diverse communities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. By acknowledging the land, we reaffirm our commitment to decolonization and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and our responsibility to the land on which we live, learn, and play.
AGENDA

• Brief Review of the Discussions Tool
• New Discussion Topic Creation Experience
  – Why a New Experience?
  – What is Affected (New Topic vs. New Forum)
  – Exploring the New Interface
• Creating Discussion Topics via the New Experience
  – Discussion Topic Creation Workflow Demo
• Where to Find Discussions Support
• Question & Answer Period
BRIEF REVIEW OF THE DISCUSSIONS TOOL
WHAT IS THE COURSELINK DISCUSSIONS TOOL?

Allows for the creation of structured areas for asynchronous communication between course participants (instructors, students, and TAs).
**Basic Discussion Structure**

A discussion consists of 4 tiered components:

**Forum** (1st tier)
Instructor-created container for a topic or several related topics.
*E.g., US Presidents*

**Topic** (2nd tier, belongs to a forum):
Instructor-created area where course participants can post messages.
*E.g., US Presidents (Forum) > Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Barack Obama (Topics)*

**Thread** (3rd tier, belongs to a topic)
Participant-created (student, instructor, TA) new post within a topic.
*E.g, Joe Biden (Topic) > Biden is too old for a second term (Thread)*

**Reply** (4th tier, belongs to a thread)
A participant-created post responding to a thread or another reply.
*E.g., Biden is too old for a second term (Thread) > I disagree because... (Reply)*
**Discussion Structure: Example – Forums and Topics**

### Ask Your Instructor

Please post course-related questions here and answer questions from your peers. Be sure to check to see if your question has already been asked/answered already before posting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Threads</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Last Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask Your instructor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Weekly Discussions

Engage in weekly discussions with your peers about course materials. A prompt question will be posted each week by your instructor or TA to get the ball rolling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Threads</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Last Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Discussion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 Discussion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION STRUCTURE:
EXAMPLE – TOPICS AND THREADS
DISCUSSION STRUCTURE: EXAMPLE – THREADS AND REPLIES

I'm confused by problem 4 in the week 2 assignment

ITS Demo Student posted May 26, 2023 9:33 AM • 25 Words 

The equation is unclear and I am uncertain how I would find the coefficient of X. Can someone please help me figure this out??

Thanks.

Hi Demo Student!

Thanks for reaching out. I'm sure others are struggling with this one too.

The formatting of the equation is a bit different than what we discussed in lecture, but the underlying principle for solving the equation remains the same. Consider the variables Y and Z and how they might help you discover the coefficient of X.

I can't give away the answer now, but I'll be sure to cover this one in lecture next Tuesday!

Prof. Demo
Why Use the Discussions Tool?

There are several reasons to consider using Discussions:

• They’re asynchronous, allowing students to participate when it is most convenient for them/their schedule
• Provide an opportunity for students to reflect and think critically about a topic in a more casual format
• May provide insight on a topic from different perspectives
• Provide a way to continue in-class conversations online
• They can be linked to CourseLink Groups to provide a communications channel for group assignments
• They can be linked to grade items and rubrics for assessment
Previously, the Discussions assessment experience was to bring it in line with the **assessment experience** for Dropbox.

- The discussion **creation experience** update continues the alignment of tool experiences in CourseLink.
NEW DISCUSSIONS CREATION EXPERIENCE
WHY A NEW DISCUSSION TOPIC CREATION EXPERIENCE?

CourseLink is built on the Brightspace by D2L Learning Management System (LMS), and they are in the process of updating various tools to:

• Improve user experience
• Create consistent experiences
• Simplify language & improve locations for settings options
• Provide consistency between tools and grade items

The Discussions tool’s creation experience is just the latest update. Previous updates included: Content, Rubrics, Dropbox, and Quizzes.
WHAT IS AND IS NOT IMPACTED BY THE UPDATE

The update **only impacts the process of creating new discussion topics** directly.

It **does not** have any impact on:
- Creating new forums
- Creating new forums and topics via the Groups tool
- How discussions are assessed
USER EXPERIENCE – CREATE/EDIT DISCUSSION TOPIC

Old Experience
Difficult and time consuming to locate and enable features

Multiple tabs, each with various setting options.

Several seemingly unrelated settings options grouped together on the “Properties” tab.
USER EXPERIENCE – CREATE/EDIT DISCUSSION TOPIC

New Experience
Single page access to all settings with improved organization

- Simplified primary panel.
- Advanced options grouped into roll-down panels next to the primary panel for quick access.
- Each roll-down panel summarizes modifications made.
- Visibility toggle.
**CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE – DISCUSSIONS, DROPBOX, & QUIZZES**

**New Experience**
Discussion Topics now have the same create/edit interface as Dropbox Folders and Quizzes.
LANGUAGE & LOCATION CHANGES FOR SETTINGS

In the new Discussion Topic creation experience, there are several areas where the language used and locations for certain options have been updated, most notably:

• Allowing anonymous posts, requiring users to start a thread, and moderating posts
• Selecting topic type (open topic/group-restricted topic)
• Setting availability dates and restrictions

We’ll explore each of these in more detail.
"Allow anonymous posts", "Users must start a thread…", and "A moderator must approve.." options now:

- Are accessed from the new **Posts & Completion** panel
  - Located under **Properties** in the old experience

- Anonymous/Must Start display as radio (select 1) buttons
  - Used checkboxes (select multiple) in the old experience

- Updated description text (see below)
LANGUAGE & LOCATION CHANGES – SELECTING OPEN OR RESTRICTED TOPICS

Options related to topic access restrictions for learners, now appear in the new **Availability Dates & Conditions** panel

- Previously located under **Properties** in the old experience

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**Old**

**Topic Type**
- Open topic, everyone can access this topic and its contents
- Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads from their own group or section

**New**

**Availability Dates & Conditions**

- **Start Date**
  - M/D/YYYY
- **End Date**
  - M/D/YYYY

**Release Conditions**

Users are not able to access or view the discussion topic unless they meet the release conditions.

**Group and Section Restrictions**

- Only selected groups or sections can view this topic
- **Manage Restrictions**

**New**

**Group and Section Restrictions**

- **Restrict topic**
  - Only selected groups/sections can view this topic and all its threads. This allows open communication between learners.
- **Restrict topic and separate threads**
  - The selected learners can see this topic but only view threads from their group/section. This restricts learners from communicating with other groups/sections.

**Select who will see this topic**

- [ ] Section
- [ ] Discussion Groups
Here the new language can be a little confusing.

- In the new experience, open topics ( anyone can post) will have “Restrict topic” selected but with no restrictions selected.
- For a Group-restricted topic (only group members can see each other’s posts), select “Restrict topic and separate threads”
LANGUAGE & LOCATION CHANGES – SETTING AVAILABILITY DATES

The options to set a Start Date and End Date for discussion topics:

- Moved to the new Availability Dates & Conditions panel
  - Located under Restrictions in the old experience
- Now progressively disclose once a start or end date is added (e.g., Start Date options appear if Start Date is enabled)
  - All selection options appeared for both dates in the old experience
- Have minor updates to the language used
The new location and language aim to:

- Not overwhelm instructors with more options than they may plan to use
- Simplify text to shorten option descriptions
IS THE NEW EXPERIENCE OPTIONAL?

Yes - When creating or editing discussion topics, you may leave the new experience on or toggle it off at any time.

- With May’s CourseLink update, the new topic creation experience is now ON by default.
- We recommend using the new experience now to ensure you are familiar with it when the old experience is no longer available (date TBD).
**DEMO: NEW DISCUSSION TOPIC CREATION EXPERIENCE**

In this demonstration I will **Create a New Discussion Topic** and:
- Use the **Primary panel** to:
  - Give the topic a name and description
  - Add the topic to a forum
  - Set grading points and create a corresponding grade item
- Use the **Availability Dates & Conditions panel** to:
  - Restrict access using start and end dates
  - Restrict the topic to groups (make it a group discussion)
- Use the **Posts & Completion panel** to allow anonymous posts
- Use the **Evaluation & Feedback panel** to add a rubric for grading
DISCUSSION TOOL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES
DISCUSSIONS SUPPORT & RESOURCES

Online Resources
• OpenEd Documentation & Support – Discussions Tool
  https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/discussions
• Breakdown of the New Discussion Topic Creation Experience (D2L Community Site)
  https://community.d2l.com/brightspace/kb/articles/5622-introducing-the-new-discussion-creation-experience

CourseLink Support
• Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca
• Phone: x.56939

Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) Team
• Request a consultation: https://bit.ly/UG-ITS-Consult
• Email: insttech@uoguelph.ca