

GETTING STARTED WITH COURSELINK SERIES

Discussions

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

- **Why Discussions?**
- **Common Types**
- **The Basics**
 - Discussion creation (open & group-restricted)
 - Topic availability
 - Monitoring discussions
 - Assessment options (rubrics, grade items)
- **Question & Answer Period**

WHY DISCUSSIONS?

- Discussions are a useful tool in CourseLink to encourage asynchronous interaction between students as well as students and the instructional team
- Can be adapted for many purposes (asking questions, debating topics, etc.)



COMMON TYPES

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COMMON TYPES

- **Weekly Discussion**
 - Students create original posts in response to weekly course materials
 - Students reply to peers
- **Thematic Discussion**
 - Students create and reply to posts grouped according to specific course themes or topics
- **Assessed Discussion**
 - Students are evaluated on the quality and/or quantity of their posts and responses

ADDITIONAL TYPES TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT

- **Create an Ask Your Instructor Topic**
 - Students can ask questions AND find answers
 - Popular questions/answers can be pinned by instructors
 - Enable anonymous posts for students to increase activity
- **Create an Informal Discussion Area (Coffee Shop)**
 - Popular in OpenEd's DE courses
 - Allows students to discuss non-course related activities
 - Learn how to use the tool
- **Add New Topics During the Semester (Current Events)**
 - Connect course content with current events
 - Ask related open-ended questions in the description
 - Continue the discussion in-class

THE BASICS

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DISCUSSION CREATION

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DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

- All discussions in CourseLink have the same basic structure
- **Forum:** Creates categories for discussions, helps to keep Discussions organized
- **Topic:** Space where the actual discussion will take place
- **Thread:** Start of a new idea or question
- **Reply:** Responses to a thread

Note: An Instructor (or TA) **must** create the Forum and Topic for students to be able to participate

DISCUSSION STRUCTURE

Demo Forum ▾

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Demo Open Topic ▾ Open topic, everyone can access this topic and all its contents.	0	0	
Demo Group Topic ▾  Group/section restrictions. Group or section topic, everyone can access this topic but students only see threads from their own group or section.	0	0	

ADDING TOPICS

Properties Restrictions Assessment Objectives

New Topic Details

Forum *

Demo Forum [New Forum] ?

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

Title *

Description

Paragraph **B** *I* U ~~A/~~ + Lato (Recom... 19px ...

TOPIC TYPES

Two topic types exist in CourseLink

- **Open topic**
 - All students can see all posts and respond to them
 - Common uses:
 - FAQ topics
 - Smaller class sizes
- **Group/section topic**
 - Everyone has access, but students only see the posts from students in the same group, instructors/TAs see everything
 - Common uses:
 - Assessed discussions in larger classes to break down into more manageable sized groups

DEMO

- Create a new forum
 - Add one open topic
 - Add one group-restricted topic

FORUM & TOPIC AVAILABILITY OPTIONS

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TOPIC RESTRICTIONS - AVAILABILITY

The screenshot shows the 'Restrictions' tab of a topic configuration interface. It includes the following options:

- Hide from Users
- Availability**
 - Has Start Date
 - Calendar icon: 2/8/2022
 - Time icon: 3:31 PM
 - Visible with access restricted before start ?
 - Visible with submission restricted before start ?
 - Hidden before start ?
 - Has End Date
 - Calendar icon: 2/15/2022
 - Time icon: 8:31 PM
 - Visible with access restricted after end ?
 - Visible with submission restricted after end ?
 - Hidden after end ?
- Display In Calendar

- **Visible with access restricted**
 - Students can see the topic but cannot access it
- **Visible with submission restricted**
 - Students can see the topic, access to view any previous submissions, but cannot create new submissions
- **Hidden**
 - Topic does not appear to students

FORUM AND TOPIC AVAILABILITY: COMMON USE 1

End Date

- Lock a topic after a specific date and time (due date)
 - Enable “Has End Date” and set a date/time
 - Select “Visible with submission restricted after end”
 - As of that date/time no new posts can be added
 - Students can still view what was posted/see rubrics

Weeks 1-2 ▾

🕒 Available until Jun 20, 2022 11:00 AM. Submission restricted after availability ends. 👤 Group/section restrictions.

☆ [Subscribe](#)

Reflect on the lectures and text and provide a stance on [TOPIC X] and 2 reasons why you believe your position is correct.

Read posts from your fellow group members, select one and reply to either provide additional support to their position or an argument against their position.

← No “New Thread” Button

Filter by: [All Threads](#) ▾

Sort by: [Most Recent Activity](#) ▾

Discussion Post Example 1 ▾

CourseLink Student 01 posted Jun 20, 2022 9:09 AM to [Group 1](#) ☆ [Subscribe](#)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras porttitor placerat laoreet. In egestas nunc maximus commodo mattis. Nulla malesuada tortor

▾ more

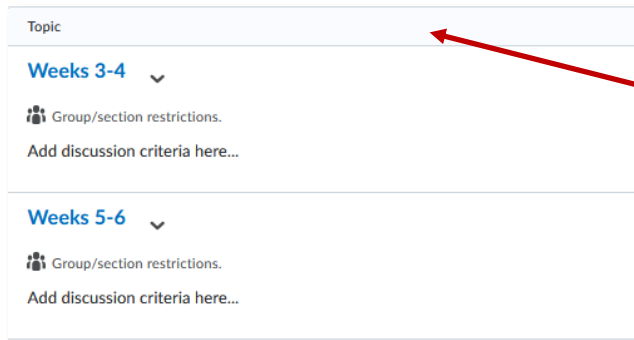
4	4	0	?	Last post 2 hours ago by
Unread	Replies	Views		CourseLink Student 01

< 1 / 1 >

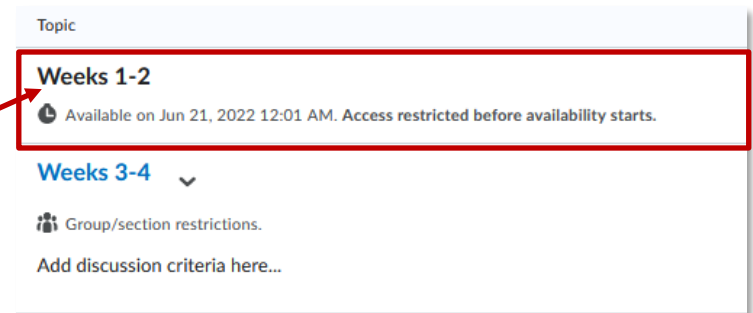
FORUM AND TOPIC AVAILABILITY: COMMON USE 2

Start Date

- Hide a topic / keep activity “secret” until it begins
 - Enable “Has Start Date” and set a date/time
 - Select:
 - “Hidden before start” (hide it entirely)
 - “Visible with access restricted” (hide description)



Topic not visible to students



**Topic title visible to students,
but no description until date**

MONITORING DISCUSSIONS

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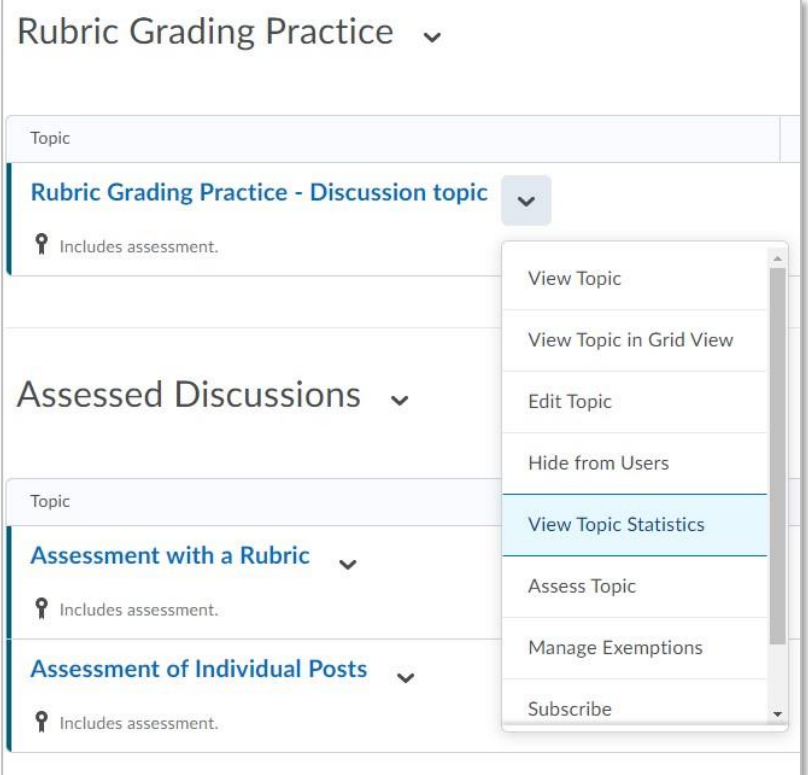
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MONITORING DISCUSSIONS

- Keeping an eye on the discussions can be challenging, particularly for larger courses
- Develop a plan for regular engagement and presence within the Discussion tool
- Setting clear expectations for students around posting up front
- Discourage unwanted behaviours
 - If consistent across class, consider a public post
 - If individual student, have conversation privately (e.g., email)

DISCUSSION STATISTICS

- Provide insight into student engagement with the topic
- Includes:
 - Overall statistics
 - User statistics
- Access through topic context menu
 - **View Topic Statistics**



The screenshot displays a user interface for managing discussion topics. At the top, there is a dropdown menu labeled "Rubric Grading Practice" with a downward arrow. Below this, a "Topic" section is visible, containing a dropdown menu for "Rubric Grading Practice - Discussion topic" with a downward arrow. A key icon and the text "Includes assessment." are shown below the topic name. A context menu is open over the topic, listing several options: "View Topic", "View Topic in Grid View", "Edit Topic", "Hide from Users", "View Topic Statistics" (highlighted in blue), "Assess Topic", "Manage Exemptions", and "Subscribe". Below the topic section, there is another "Assessed Discussions" dropdown menu. Underneath, two more topics are listed: "Assessment with a Rubric" and "Assessment of Individual Posts", both with downward arrows and "Includes assessment." text.

DISCUSSION TOPIC STATISTICS

User Statistics

View By:

Last Name ▲, First Name	Number of Posts					Post Ratings		
	Threads	Replies	Read (including own)	Unapproved	Scored	Up	Down	Star
Student 01, CourseLink	1	0	1	0	0			
Student 02, CourseLink	1	1	3	0	0			
Student 03, CourseLink	1	1	3	0	0			
Student 04, CourseLink	1	3	6	0	0			



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DELETING A DISCUSSION POST

- There could be an instance where removing a student's post is necessary
 - E.g., language, tone, etc.
- Instructors and TAs can delete posts from a discussion topic
- Caution should be taken as removing a post also removes any replies
- Students can delete a post as long as another student has not already replied

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Rubrics and Grade Items

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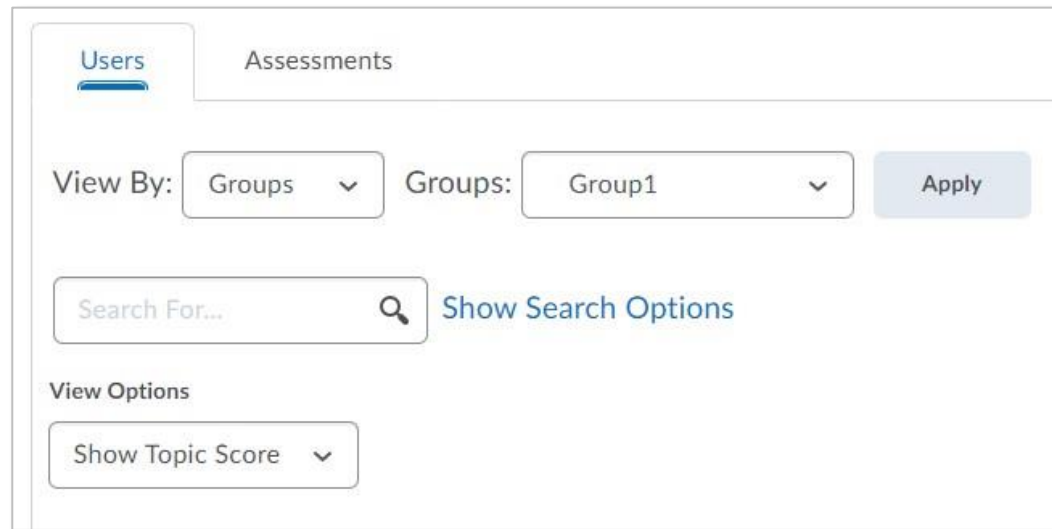
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ASSESSMENT OF DISCUSSIONS

- Two main methods for assessment
 - Assessment with a rubric
 - Assessment of individual posts
- Access assessment panel by selecting **Assess Topic** from topic menu
- To enter assessment for a specific student, select **Topic Score**
- Assessment recommendations
 - While grading, save completed evaluations in draft form
 - Use **Publish All Feedback** to release evaluation to all students at the same time

ASSESSMENT OF GROUP TOPICS



The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Assessments'. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Users' (which is selected and underlined) and 'Assessments'. Below the tabs, there are two dropdown menus: 'View By:' set to 'Groups' and 'Groups:' set to 'Group1'. To the right of these dropdowns is an 'Apply' button. Below the dropdowns is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Search For...' and a magnifying glass icon, followed by a link that says 'Show Search Options'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'View Options' with a dropdown menu set to 'Show Topic Score'.

- Default option for **View By** is Users
- Can change to **Groups** to sort by group membership
- Helpful for dividing grading assignments equally between TAs
 - E.g., TA 1 has groups 1 & 2, TA 2 has groups 3 & 4, etc.

ASSESSMENT WITH A RUBRIC

The screenshot displays a student's interface in CourseLink. At the top left, the user is identified as 'CourseLink Student 02'. The main content area shows a discussion thread titled 'My Idea' from February 18, 2022, at 11:39 AM, consisting of 129 words. Below it is a reply titled 'Thread' from the same date and time, consisting of 215 words. On the right side, there is a 'Rubrics' panel showing a 'Discussion Assessment Rubric' which is 'Not scored'. Below the rubric, the 'Overall Grade' is shown as an empty box followed by '/ 30'. At the bottom of the interface, there are 'Publish' and 'Save Draft' buttons.

- **Overall Grade** is auto-populated based on rubric selections.

ALLOW ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL POSTS

Assessment of Individual Posts
Assessed Discussions

CourseLink Student 02

Filter ▾ Sort: Oldest First ▾

Post: 1 thread, 1 reply 2 Unscored	Score
<p>Another idea</p> <p>Feb 18, 2022 11:39 AM • 129 words</p> <p>Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?</p>	0 / 10
<p>◀ Replied in thread "Thread"</p> <p>Thread</p> <p>Feb 18, 2022 11:39 AM • 215 words</p> <p>Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut</p>	

Overall Grade
Average post score
0 / 10

Overall Feedback

0 / 10

Publish Save Draft

- **Overall Grade** is auto-populated based on scores of individual posts.

DEMO

Example #1:

- Link a discussion topic to a new grade item
- Add a rubric to a discussion topic
- Assess topic

Example #2:

- Link a discussion topic to an existing grade item
- Assess individual posts

SUPPORT OPTIONS

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DISCUSSIONS TOOL SUPPORT

CourseLink Support can provide timely assistance for how-to questions about the Discussions tool.

CourseLink Support

Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca

Phone: X. 56939

Hours:

Mon-Fri. 8:30 AM-8:30 PM, Sat. 10 AM-4 PM, Sun. 12-6 PM

CourseLink Support also has a resource page for Discussions:

<https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/grades>

ITS ASSISTANCE & DISCUSSIONS SESSIONS

If you are looking to make significant adjustments to your current discussions or starting from scratch, the ITS team offers consultations.

Contact the Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) Team

- Email: insttech@uoguelph.ca
- Consultation Request Form:
https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_03zMVhZjuVsXL5H

Previous Discussions Tool Sessions (Recorded):

- Next Level Discussion Options
<https://opened.uoguelph.ca/instructor-resources/rethink-your-assessments-for-remote-environments-with-ed-tech#Discussion>
 - Includes more information on using rating systems and bonus grades
- CourseLink Discussions Tool (Online Assessments with EdTech)
<https://opened.uoguelph.ca/instructor-resources/winter-2022-programming#Discussions>
 - Includes more information on performing assessments in Discussions

QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD

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