

Online Discussion Protocols and Rubrics:

Developed by [Dr. Nada Dabbagh](#) (2000 - 2003) to support asynchronous online discussions in teaching contexts. **Feel free to use and/or edit based on your own teaching needs.** Give credit or cite or link to this page as appropriate. No need to seek formal permission to use. If you have questions, feel free to email Dr. Dabbagh at ndabbagh@gmu.edu

Related research can be found in the following publication:

Gilbert, P. & Dabbagh, N. (2005). How to structure online discussions for meaningful discourse: A case study. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, v36, n1, pp. 5-18.

(1) Protocol for posting threads and contributing to an online discussion are as follows:

Postings should be evenly distributed during the discussion period (not concentrated all on one day or at the beginning and/or end of the period).
Postings should be a minimum of one short paragraph and a maximum of two paragraphs.
Avoid postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc. If you agree (or disagree) with a posting then say why you agree by supporting your statement with concepts from the readings or by bringing in a related example or experience.
Address the questions as much as possible (don't let the discussion stray).
Try to use quotes from the articles that support your postings. Include page numbers when you do that.
Build on others responses to create threads.
Bring in related prior knowledge (work experience, prior coursework, readings, etc.)
Use proper etiquette (proper language, typing, etc.).

(2) Rubric for evaluating online discussions:

Weekly Online Discussions Rubric				
Criteria	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Timely discussion contributions	5-6 postings well distributed throughout the week	4-6 postings distributed throughout the week	3-6 postings somewhat distributed	2-6 not distributed throughout the week
Responsiveness to	very clear that	readings were	postings have	not evident that

discussion and demonstration of knowledge and understanding gained from assigned reading	readings were understood and incorporated well into responses	understood and incorporated into responses	questionable relationship to reading material	readings were understood and/or not incorporated into discussion
Adherence to on-line protocols	all on-line protocols followed	1 online protocol not adhered to	2-3 online protocols not adhered to	4 or more online protocols not adhered to
Points	9-10	8	6-7	5 or less

(3) Evaluation criteria for facilitating/moderating an online (or in class) discussion:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The discussants will demonstrate an observable understanding of the articles being discussed. The understanding will be at the critical thinking and synthesis level. 2. The discussants will demonstrate an ability to engage the audience in a discussion that is relevant to the topics of the articles and related concepts. This can be done in a variety of ways including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - posing engaging questions; - eliciting responses; - engaging the learners in an activity or task. 3. The discussants will demonstrate the ability to effectively organize the discussion. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keeping the discussion focused on the topic; - providing structure (beginning arguments, closing arguments, wrap-up or synthesis); - staying within the timeframe allotted for discussion; - using effective media (if applicable). 4. The discussants will demonstrate the ability to respond to questions effectively. 5. The discussants will demonstrate the ability to relate the concepts discussed in the articles to personal and professional experience by using examples from everyday practices.
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