Online forum regulations

Forums are communication tools that, used wisely, can enhance a great deal your experience exchanges as well as your mates and facilitators, regarding one or more issues.

Any forum must include directions to follow in order to reflect on or build upon questions or specific situations; while it is the starting point, every forum’s success involves two specific actors:

1. The Students (the role you are actually playing)
2. A facilitator

It is facilitator’s responsibility to keep updated during forums evolution, help participants to regain forum’s principal objective if discussions start to turn away, and keep the quality of exchanged posts in order to reflect the collective construction and enrichment process within the final product (conclusion, agreements, synthesis, recapitulation, etc.).

If you have already participated in an online forum (it does not matter if it was with academic or non academic themes), you will know that, as in every social community, there are some considerations for you to follow in order to keep the space functional to everyone involved.

General recommendations

During your forum posts within this formative program you should consider the following:

- Keep your attitude friendly and positive
- Respect others opinions
- Do not post just to appear. Before posting a new message consider if you are really contributing something new to the discussion. If you are not, then take some time to mature your idea before sharing it
- Take advantage of Moodle’s forum “search” tool option before posting and examine contents already addressed through the discussion to avoid generating repetitive or confusing discussion lines regarding the same theme
- Keep on the theme. If you realize that there are enough elements to generate a new theme, it is better to start a new discussion line (just beware not to forget the original purpose of the discussion theme made for the activity)
Online forum regulations

- Make sure your post’s title is concrete and coherent with the content you develop. Avoid ambiguous titles such as: “Help please!” or “I am in trouble”
- This next point may seem difficult, but it is basic in this kind of activities: pay attention to your spelling, grammar and words you use
- Be clear: Use capital letters and minuscules; structure complete sentences. Don’t write the whole text in CAPITALS. No matter how incredible it may seem, using capitals at communications on the Net are taken as yelling and can be considered offensive
- Avoid publishing alien or irrelevant contents to the discussion (one word opinions, too short or nonsense). Isolated answers like “I agree”, “me too”, “interesting” or “I like it” (just to say some), are useless.
- Be specific. Citing a complete message from a previous post is unpractical. Refer to the key points only. Before posting, remember to make a last review of your contents.
- Keep in mind that a forum is not a chat. If you are looking to communicate with someone else to talk about personal matters, use your email, social forum or Moodle’s instant message system.

Forum facilitators, reserve their right to delete any offensive post without warning and to admonish those who violate the rules stated above.

Discussion participation and following procedures

To participate and follow up themes in forums using Moodle:

1) Follow the recommended participation guidelines

2) For each forum you can find one or more discussion lines, each one corresponding a specific theme. To keep it in order, you must give a click to the link regarding the conversation or theme line, which is the “Theme” column you are following. If you have something to add or ask within the discussion line, press the “Answer” button from the first post you find on top of the list.

3) If you are interested in answering someone else’s question, press the “Answer” button but, this time, from the specific post where the question was made (this kind of participation in Moodle forums is called “in cascade”).

REMEMBER: When generating or following a new theme, it is necessary for you to write a specific and clear title to give an understandable idea of your post’s content.

When pressing the “Answer” button to follow any comment through the forum, you will see the title of the original post with the prefix “Re:”. E.g. If “John’s” original post was “Social net’s concept perception” and you want to continue John’s post, when pressing “Answer” it will automatically appear in your subject theme: “Re: Social net’s concept perception”. Since you are interested to address to a specific point
about John’s post, you will have to update the title (e.g. “Questions to John’s perceptions”). This way you will make easier for everybody to identify specific issues in a discussion line instead of having to read the whole cascade with ten previous posts repeating the same “Re: Social net’s concept perception” title.

We hope you find these recommendations useful during your online communicative exchange process.