



## Discussion Forum Participation

Online and blended classes often use discussion forums as a place to build community, ask questions, share information, demonstrate learning and develop your ability to express ideas in writing. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your discussion forum participation:

- Understand the purpose of your discussion forum(s). Is posting optional or for credit?
- Be clear on instructor expectations for frequency, content and length of posts. You may also have a rubric for how posts will be graded.
- Read discussion prompts carefully.
  - Decide whether to “add a new discussion topic” or “reply” to an existing post.
  - Create a clear subject for your posts. Strong example: “*Advantages of Montessori preschools*”; Weak example: “*my response*”
- Write in full sentences. Keep it brief and relevant.
- Keep the dialogue going:
  - Share resources relevant to the topic - articles, videos, podcasts, websites, etc.
  - Point out interesting ideas or facts in classmates’ posts and include your own thoughts.
  - Cite sources to support your ideas and thoughts.
  - Ask questions that continue the conversation.
  - Give examples from real-life experience or observations.
  - Explain how this learning could be applied.
- Follow netiquette and VCC’s student code of conduct.
  - If you disagree, do so politely. Use “I” statements: “I believe, I feel, I think that...”.
  - Assume positive intent. If you are having strong emotions in response to a post, take some time before replying. Speak with your instructor about concerns.
- Check your grammar and spelling before you submit.

Example posts:

Strong Post	Weak/Problematic Post
Online learning is not always more accessible just because it’s online. This CBC podcast describes how internet access is still a barrier in northern communities: [link]	U shd chk this podcast [link]
I agree with Lina’s points about ___ and ___. One additional point in building community in online courses is _____.	Good point Lina.
I disagree with Saiff’s view of online learning. In my experience, it depends on the instructor. There can be excellent teachers in face-to-face or online classes, as well as poor teachers. In this meta-analysis, online learning resulted in the same, if not slightly, higher grade performance.[link]	WRONG!!!! Saiff’s post is STUPID– it’s the instructor that matters, not whether it’s online or face to face!!!!!!!!!!!!

