

Extending Classroom Discussion with Forums, Blogs, and Email


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Some Advantages to Using Forums, Blogs and Email to Extend Classroom Discussion

- Extends the learning opportunities beyond the context of the scheduled class time and space, fosters sense of community.
- Allows for different learning styles. Some students might not be comfortable speaking in class or might need more time to process their ideas. A student who is quiet during an 8 am class may have lots to say at 11 pm. Ensures that every student participates in the larger discussion.


- 
- Provides a place for regular writing (thinking, communicating and learning) opportunities, brainstorming or planning for future projects, sharing rough drafts or ideas, posting responses to course readings, reviewing for exams, asking questions, etc.
 - Exposes students to alternative viewpoints, as well as giving them the opportunity to see how other students are working to meet course learning goals.
 - Important points made can be referenced in class to enrich discussion and to acknowledge thoughtful ideas.

- 
- Gives students yet another opportunity to grapple with the course material and to develop critical thinking skills.

These types of communication are inherently reflective in nature. They give students the opportunity to engage with various alternative perspectives, carefully consider a response, and position that response in the context of the larger, ongoing discussion.

- 
- Before students respond to an instructor's initial discussion question or to classmates' posts, they can refer to their course materials and think through their answers.

Because of this extra time and care a student can take crafting a post or response, they are more likely to reference a course reading or make a connection to a related topic or concept.

- 
- Encourages students to form relationships built around academic work (social networking for an academic purpose, building classroom community) and develop a shared understanding of course and content expectations.
 - Enables collaborative learning. Students often answer each others questions with little or no prompting or intervention from the instructor.

- The instructor is a facilitator and participant in this environment and thus is not viewed as having all of the knowledge and the answers. Power is decentralized as the discourse encourages interaction and collaboration between peers.

There is a distinct shift to student-centered learning, students as active participants in learning and making of meaning. Students directly engage with course content and become active learners (as opposed to passive, as in a lecture-centered/only class).

Discussion Forums: Strategies (Short List)

- Allow time for a discourse community to form and for students to “get the hang” of discussion using forums.
- Create effective discussion questions.
- Be present, but don’t dominate the discussion.
- Respond and redirect effectively. Make expectations clear through standards and modeling.
- Connect discussion forums to what’s happening in the classroom.

WebCT Discussion Forums

at View

PHI 112 - 500 Ethics: AH3 (Eric Salahub) SPO

Your location: **Discussions**

Discussions

Create Topic




Create Category

Reorder Categories

All Topics (3654 Messages / **9 New**)

All My Posts (356 Messages / **1 New Replies**)





Week 10 Topics

-  [Lying](#) (51 Messages)
Use the Lying topic to analyze the morality of lying. Kant, of course, argues that it is always wrong to lie, regardless of the circumstances. Kant is an absolutist where lying is concerned -- all lies are necessarily immoral. Does this make sense? Is lying ever morally acceptable or morally required? What about little white lies? How would a Utilitarian respond? Make sure to concentrate your work here on Kant's theory -- you must understand Kant's stance on this point before discussing it. Read...[more](#)
-  [Advice to Julie](#) (6 Messages / **3 New**)
Use this topic to discuss the Journal Assignment and for general questions about Deontology.
-  [Punishment vs. Rehabilitation](#) (18 Messages / **6 New**)

Midterm Review and Extra Credit Discussion

-  [Midterm Review](#) (12 Messages)
Use this topic to analyze and discussion answers to the midterm review
-  [Mill vs. Mill](#) (48 Messages)

Week 8 Interactive Topics

-  [Critiquing Singer](#) (203 Messages)
Use this topic to discuss Peter Singer's essay. Remember, as much as this discussion is about reacting to Singer, it is really more about using Singer's essay as a case study to address Utilitarianism.
-  [The Callous Passerby](#) (133 Messages)
-  [Utilitarianism](#) (58 Messages)
Use this topic to discuss this theory. Ask questions. Explore the basic concepts, arguments and assumption of Utilitarianism.
-  [Human Happiness](#) (47 Messages)
Use this topic to follow up on ideas from last week and to focus on your Journal Assignment.

Writing Studio Discussion Forum



Writing Studio Class Pages
Class Discussion Forum

Home | Your Pages | Class | Your Account | Writing Resources | Teaching Resources | Feedback | Logout | Help

Collaborative Explanations  [Back](#)

 [Update this Forum](#)

 You Are Viewing

Food Advertising--Rhonda, Rhonda (Jul 17, 2007 at 8:13 AM)
Re: **Food Advertising--Rhonda**, Amy (Jul 17, 2007 at 11:05 PM)
Re: **Food Advertising--Rhonda**, Jacques (Jul 18, 2007 at 8:43 AM)
Re: **Food Advertising--Rhonda**, Joe (Jul 18, 2007 at 11:08 AM)
Re: **Food Advertising--Rhonda**, Vanessa (Jul 18, 2007 at 5:51 PM)

The History of Vegetarianism in the United States, Vanessa (Jul 17, 2007 at 8:34 AM)
Re: **The History of Vegetarianism in the United States**, Amy (Jul 17, 2007 at 11:12 PM)
Re: **The History of Vegetarianism in the United States**, Jacques (Jul 18, 2007 at 8:51 AM)
Re: **The History of Vegetarianism in the United States**, Joe (Jul 18, 2007 at 11:09 AM)
Re: **The History of Vegetarianism in the United States**, jingyi (Jul 18, 2007 at 2:55 PM)

Global Food Habits, Chelsea (Jul 17, 2007 at 2:58 PM)
Re: **Global Food Habits**, Amy (Jul 17, 2007 at 11:20 PM)
Re: **Global Food Habits**, Jacques (Jul 18, 2007 at 9:03 AM)
Re: **Global Food Habits**, Joe (Jul 18, 2007 at 10:53 AM)
Re: **Global Food Habits**, Vanessa (Jul 18, 2007 at 5:58 PM)

explanation, Mikallah (Jul 17, 2007 at 3:04 PM)
Re: **explanation**, Amy (Jul 17, 2007 at 11:30 PM)
Re: **explanation**, Jacques (Jul 18, 2007 at 9:06 AM)
Re: **explanation**, Joe (Jul 18, 2007 at 10:28 AM)
Re: **explanation**, jingyi (Jul 18, 2007 at 3:05 PM)
Re: **explanation**, Vanessa (Jul 18, 2007 at 6:01 PM)

Fast Food, Rebecca (Jul 17, 2007 at 5:01 PM)

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Mathematics M


Search: in **Mathematics board**

Yahoo! Message Boards > Science > Mathematics

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Godel's incompleteness theorem 27-Dec-03 11:54 am

can anyone explain this to me? as far as i understand this, any formal system at some foundational point is not proveable. is this the same as the fact that in order to explain an explanation you would need explanations ad infinitum? so essentially there is no beginning?


 Male

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Messages in Topic View messages rated:

Subject	Author	Rating	Time of Post (ET)
Godel's incompleteness theorem	mudpaint1	(1 Rating)	27-Dec-03 11:54 am
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem Let's see if I can make sense of this for you. The theorem is more that somewhere along the line, when you state your ax ...	randy1ee	Rate it	27-Dec-03 07:47 pm
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem The incompleteness isn't in the logic system. A logic system has its axioms itself and it's complete itself. It' ...	freshmathomas	Rate it	27-Dec-03 11:52 pm
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem This is nonsense!	rjserinko	Rate it	4-Jan-04 02:24 pm
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem Whatever it is...it isn't math.)	kevinju_99	Rate it	13-Jan-06 08:07 pm
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem ***** The incompleteness isn't in the logic system. A logic system has its axioms itself and ...	dr_george_s_patto...	Rate it	12-Mar-07 03:49 pm
Re: Godel's incompleteness theorem test1234	patankms	Rate it	2-Feb-06 05:48 am





Allow time for a discourse community to form and for students to “get the hang” of discussion using forums.

- This is not going to be immediately natural or normal for most of your students. It will take time (weeks, multiple forums) before they are comfortable or competent, and before they know each other well enough for a true discourse community to form (shared language, common goals, etc.).

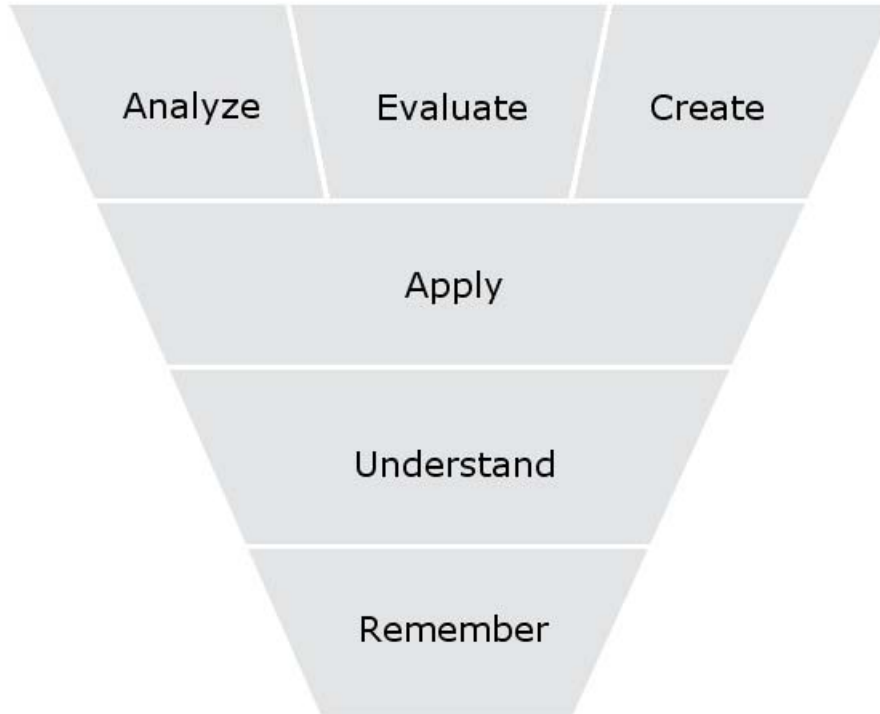
Create effective discussion questions.

- Good questions are open-ended—that is, they have a complex answer and/or a range of possible answers, different perspectives and interpretations. It's a *discussion* (examination, investigation, debate), not a search for the “right” answer.
- Even though open-ended, the question is specific enough to promote a focused discussion.

- 
- Good questions recognize that students will have different perspectives and interpretations and such questions attempt to engage students in dialogue with each other.
 - Ask yourself: Will the question stimulate debate; elicit different opinions, varying viewpoints, doubt, or even soul searching—without causing unnecessary confusion?

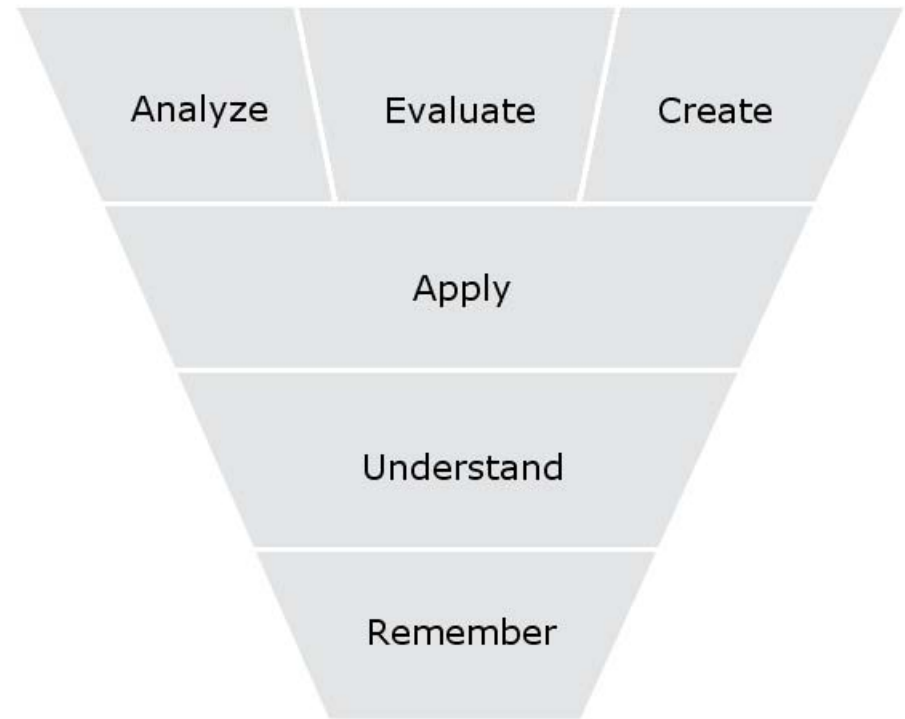
- 
- Grappling with good, complex questions can help to clarify course concepts or issues students may find difficult.
 - Good questions are appropriate for the stage of learning they have reached with the course content (consider Bloom's Taxonomy).

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain




For example, at the level of comprehension or understanding you could expect your students to summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, compare, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend, rephrase, put in your own words, explain, interpret, translate, or extrapolate essential course concepts.


When students reach the level of analysis of course concepts, you could expect them to analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer, identify motives or causes, draw conclusions, determine evidence, support, separate a complex idea into its parts and have an understanding of organization and relationship between the parts. You would thus be able to ask them questions about course concepts that required this level of understanding to answer.




Example Discussion Questions/Topics

- “What happened at the Battle of Gettysburg?”
- Better: “Describe the circumstances that led Colonel Joshua Chamberlin to try a unique maneuver on Little Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg” or “In 100 to 150 words, describe the role intelligence gathering played in battle strategy of the generals at the Battle of Gettysburg.”


- 
- Closed Question: “Do you think living on campus enhances the college undergraduate experience?” (This can be answered with a “yes” or “no”).
 - Better, open-ended version: “In what ways does living on campus enhance an undergraduate college experience?”

- 
- “Explain why Jane left Tarzan?” She was unhappy.
 - Better question: “There were several factors that in combination with the difficulty of jungle life led up to Jane leaving Tarzan. Discuss each of these factors and how they contributed to Jane’s final decision to leave.”

- 
- “What’s your opinion about the use of technology in education?”
 - Better question(s): “What are your general thoughts about the use of technology in education—plagiarism, computers in the classroom, hybrid or online classes, e-reserves, online discussion forums, email, etc? What concerns you about it, what do you find useful?”


Be present, but don't dominate the discussion.


- Unless you plan to moderate & participate, don't do it.
- Make your presence known in the forums, but do not dominate them or overwhelm by posting too often.
- Posting too frequently leads to short discussions and fewer student postings; posting too infrequently leads students to believe the instructor is disinterested or absent.




Respond and redirect effectively. Make expectations clear through standards and modeling.

- Weave student comments into your responses. Quoting students boosts student confidence and engagement, and leads to more frequent posting.
- This also models the kind of interaction you'd like them to have with other students on the forums. It encourages student-to-student learning and enables students to attribute learning and success to themselves.

- 
- Continually and gently push the discussion further by responding to posts with more questions, encouraging and challenging students to more deeply and fully develop their thinking.
 - Play devil's advocate, or assign the role to a few students.
 - Consider having students take turns playing the role of discussion leader or moderator.

- 
- Resist the temptation to make declarative statements, such as “that's right” or “not exactly” in your responses. These tend to shut down discussion.
 - If the discussion gets side-tracked or off-topic, step in and bring it back to its intended focus.

- 
- Because discussion boards lack facial gestures and body language, misunderstandings between students can take place. Manage flaming, bullying or inappropriate language use quickly and decisively through private emails.
 - If you deem it necessary, come up with discussion forum guidelines—in terms of both conduct and content expectations. You can even involve your students in constructing these guidelines.

Connect discussion forums to what's happening in the classroom.

- Encourage students to extend classroom discussions in the forums by considering alternate perspectives and other criteria which may challenge their assumptions, beliefs and findings.
- Regularly reinforce positive behavior and strong comments on the discussion boards through personal correspondence (email), referencing them in class, and by weaving student comments into your own postings.

Practical Matters

- Ask students to post early in the week, at mid-week read the overall discussion and post again, and at end of week read again, posting once more if they are so moved. Continue the discussion for more than a week if it's warranted.
- Plan to spend the same amount of time reading and posting as your students.

Blog (Web Log)

- A blog is a web page made up of usually short, frequently updated posts that are arranged chronologically. The content and purposes of blogs varies greatly.
- Not only is “blog” a noun, but can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Engaging Ideas: Live Links

MARCH 31, 2008

The Murky Politics of Mind-Body

[Mental Health Insurance Parity - The Murky Politics of Mind-Body - New York Times](#)

From Plato and Aristotle to Descartes, the great thinkers have for millennia argued over what is known in philosophy as the "mind-body problem," the relationship between spirit and flesh. Dualism tends to win the day: The mind and the body, while linked, are separate. They exist independently, perhaps mingling but not merging.

The debate lives on these days in less abstract form in the United States: How much of a difference should it make to health care -- and health insurance -- if a condition is physical or mental?

Posted by Eric at 6:08 PM | [Permalink](#)  | [Listen to this article](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

Mill is a Dead White Male With Something to Say

[spiked review of books | 'Mill is a dead white male with something to say'](#)

Mill's emphasis in *On Liberty* was on the freedom to cultivate individuality, which he believed would spur progress; the 'harm principle' was actually a fairly minor part of his thesis, a way of acknowledging that we live in a society of mixed interests and clashing outlooks and not on a desert island. Mill was a sophisticated thinker, seeking to generate an understanding of individuality that did not ignore other people and the context in which we progress our individual selves: his was a true understanding of individual liberty, as opposed to today's cries of 'individual rights' which are frequently about erecting a legal forcefield around individuals to protect them from the alleged harm and poisons of their unthinking fellow men.

Posted by Eric at 8:41 AM | [Permalink](#)  | [Listen to this article](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

MARCH 28, 2008

Why Web Won't Be Nirvana

[Why Web Won't Be Nirvana | Newsweek Technology | Newsweek.com](#)

After two decades online, I'm perplexed. It's not that I haven't had a gas of a good time on the Internet. I've met great people and even caught a hacker or two. But today, I'm uneasy about this most trendy and oversold community. Visionaries see a future of telecommuting workers, interactive libraries and multimedia classrooms. They speak of electronic town meetings and virtual communities. Commerce and business will shift from offices and malls to networks and modems. And the freedom of digital networks will make government more democratic.

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<http://co302writingideas.blogspot.com/>

CO302 Writing Ideas

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2007

Something to read: Flirting with Disaster

This is a story from the latest issue of Wired Magazine with a surprise ending that I can't stop thinking about. All I kept saying was "no way!" If you are able to guess the ending before you read it, you are smarter than me! It's a really good example of why you can't always trust identity on the web. Maybe a bit of a cautionary tale?

["An IM Infatuation Turned to Romance. Then the Truth Came Out."](#)

Posted by Jill at 6:08 PM

[0 comments](#)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2007

For example: Reading Log

"Time's Person of the Year: You" By Lev Grossman
December 13, 2006

Summary: Time article about the Person of the Year: You. "And for seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for working for nothing and beating the pros at their own game, TIME's Person of the Year for 2006 is you." The article claims that 2006 was a year of "community and collaboration on a scale never seen before."

About Me



Jill

I am the Editor/Programmer for Writing@CSU. I also occasionally teach CO302: Writing Online. My academic special interests include computers and composition, the use of technology and hypertext/hypermedia in the classroom, creative nonfiction writing and writing for the Web. And yet, I'm probably the happiest when I'm hiking with my dogs, Obi and Dexter.

[View my complete profile](#)

Blog Archive

▼ 2007 (45)

▼ December (2)

[Interesting Site](#)

Writing Studio Blog

Jill Salahub's Blog

[←Class Blogs Index](#)

CO302.02 Writing Ideas Blog

Description: This is my url for my blogger.com blog

August 28, 2007 

40 Questions

If you were a super hero, what would be your super power?

I know that the popular choice is to be able to fly. However, if I were a super hero, my super power would be that in any physical fight with any person, or persons, I would always win. I would be a master of every style of fighting that there is, from drunken monkey to bar room brawling, and it wouldn't matter how many people were trying to fight me at once, I would still win. Now that I think about it, I guess I would be able to fly a bit, a la "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."


What is one thing you wish you could learn or were able to do?


I wish I could play the ukulele. I tried to learn the guitar, but I have such tiny hands, that I can't play one, can't reach far enough to put my fingers in the correct positions. So, I decided that the ukulele would be a good compromise. I've had people ask why not the mandolin or banjo, and while those are also small and maybe the more obvious choices, something about the ukulele just seems right for me. My best friends gave me a ukulele for my last birthday and at first, I tried to teach myself. I terrorized my dogs with my version of "row, row, row your boat" for months before I gave up and decided that it would be best to take some lessons.

[1 Comment \(January 17, 2008\)](#)

Blogs: Strategies

- Blogs give students a specific, academic audience that can provide them with feedback, but also space where they are the central author or voice. The audience can be limited to the class or even just the teacher, or be open to the whole web.
- Consider keeping a class blog yourself. Share the interesting stuff you're learning, an idea that the class work or discussion made you have later, what you forgot to tell them in class, something you heard or read that's related to the course content, etc.

- 
- Blog posts can be in response to teacher prompts or more open-ended, course related writing—any short writing/exercise.
 - It's important to allow time for students to read each other's blogs and respond. It's important that they view this thinking and writing as connected to the larger course community, discussion and learning.
 - As with forums, be present but don't dominate. Unless you plan to moderate & participate, don't do it. They need to know you are there and invested, but don't want you to take over.

- 
- Weave relevant, strong student comments from their blogs into class discussion.
 - Again, you might consider establishing guidelines for class blogs. Students may have developed their own understanding of what blogs are (diary or journal, pure opinion that doesn't have to be reasoned, casual or even profane language use).

- Consider: do you want students (or even yourself) to keep a blog that's shared with only the teacher, a smaller group, the whole class, or available to anyone with an internet connection?
- <http://writing.colostate.edu>,
<https://www.blogger.com>,
<http://www.vox.com/>,
<http://wordpress.org/>

Email Discussion Lists (Listserv)

- An electronic mail-based discussion group based on common interests that uses a mailing list to distribute messages to all members' email. Individuals send e-mail to the listserv address, and all members on the distribution list receive the message.
- Messages are archived and can be read on the web as well, (combines features of email and a discussion forum).
- You can start your own email discussion group, <http://groups.yahoo.com/> or <http://groups.google.com/>.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fortcollinsfreecycle/>

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NETFLIX | There's no place like home | FREE TRIAL | Click here

fortcollinsfreecycle: Fort Collins Freecycle

Search for other groups... Search

Home | Join This Group

Activity within 7 days: 247 New Messages | 7 New Photos | New Questions

Description


Freecycle(TM) provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's trash can truly be another's treasure!

Everything posted must be free, legal, and appropriate. Whether it's a chair, a fan, machine, piano, or an old dog, it can be posted on the network. Maybe you're looking to acquire something yourself? Respond to the posting directly. After that it's up to the giver to set up a pickup time for passing on the treasure.

"Think globally, recycle locally." The Freecycle(TM) Network is open to all cities and to all individuals who want to participate. Freecycle(TM) groups are run by local volunteer moderators from across the globe who facilitate each local group -- Overseas at its best!

For Freecycle(TM) Beginners, please check out the Files section of this site.

Want to talk with other folks on the group? Have questions, share links, discuss area resources, and much more! Join LYFC community group today!!



Click to join LYFCCommunity

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Message History

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2008	2597	2299	2492	24								
2007	1778	1767	2678	2106	2182	2267	2228	2796	2512	2267	2242	2772
2006	821	1200	714	680	2227	2205	2042	2292	1782	2202	2284	2492
2005	808	206	269	272	608	486	471	487	408	462	261	498
2004				2	12	22	68	87	228	224	227	298

Yahoo! Answers

What is Yahoo! Answers?

Yahoo! Answers, a new Yahoo! community, is a question and answer exchange where the world gathers to share what they know... and make each other's life. People can ask questions on any topic, and help others out by answering their questions.

Questions in Science & Mathematics > Environment & Ecology

need thesis for renewable energy resources vs. fossil fuels?

Question for Europeans: do you believe global warming is a threat to humans?

Looking for free peer reviews journals, or scientific papers, related to bioplastics. Any help is appreciated.

Should we be boycotting General Motors and refusing to buy their cars, because they produced a great electrical

If you could raise awareness on a environmental issues what would they be?

Want to help answer other questions? Go to Yahoo! Answers

Group Email Addresses

Related Link: <http://www.freecycle.org/>

Post message: fortcollinsfreecycle@yahoogroups.com

Subscribe: fortcollinsfreecycle-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Unsubscribe: fortcollinsfreecycle-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

List owner: fortcollinsfreecycle-owner@yahoogroups.com

Join This Group

<http://www.intervarsity.org/lists/techrhet/subscribe.html> (TechRhet started as a yahoo group)



Illustrious Benefactors | Discussion Lists
TenGr1 | Rhetoricians for Peace
International Writing Centers Association
Teachers Against War | Susan Ohanian
The Writery | Divided We Stand | American Dissident

Intervarsity Quotes

"I think it's time to ask the Standardbore. Where's the test for compassion? For honesty? For curiosity? For moral commitment? Until they can answer, let's let them to shut up."

—Susan Ohanian (*One Size Fits Few: The Folly of Educational Standards*)

Intervarsity Projects

Echoes of Orwell: The purpose of this webforum is to promote a lively discussion among students and faculty alike about George Orwell's 1984 and the parallels or echoes found in today's society.

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OR

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t
i
o
n
s
- Regular Mail**
(Restart mail after being set to nmail or switch back to individual postings after being set to digest)
- Switch to Digest**
(Receive messages bundled together, usually one digest daily)
- No Mail**
(Receive no email messages but stay subscribed; Useful when you're going to be away for a while and don't want mail to pile up.)

Name (First and Last)

Full Email Address:

(If you're **subscribing**, this address should be exactly the same as what appears in the from line of your message headers, as the address you subscribed with.)

Please note: if you should experience any trouble along the way, subscribing or unsubscribing, please write to listmom@intervarsity.org for help. Include any information, including error messages, that might shed light on the subject. Write sooner rather than later! Most problems can be solved quickly and easily.

eric

- start a project
- benefactors
- blogs
- books
- donate
- projects
- commentary
- create content
- discussion lists
- feedback
- merchandise
- news
- moo
- recent posts
- log out

Email Discussion List: Strategies

- This has the potential to engage your students in the larger conversation taking place around issues related to your course or their major field of study. For example, I belong to the TechRhet list (computers & writing, new media).
- Or, you can start your own discussion group email list and continue or extend your course specific discussions.

Most important consideration when using technology to enhance a course:

- Are there **sound pedagogical reasons that support the use of this technology?**
 - What learning goals will be met with the use of this technology? How will this technology facilitate these goals, exactly?
 - Are there other, better ways to achieve this learning goal?
 - How will the success of this technology in meeting learning goals be measured?

Also, don't fall into the

- **Toy trap:** The technology is new, exciting and cool, so let's use it.
- **Tool trap:** We understand the nuts & bolts of how to use it, so that's all we need. Just because you know how to use a hammer and a saw doesn't necessarily mean you can build a house.

Take your time!

- Don't try to implement all three discussion strategies in a single semester.
- Take a semester to consider where these strategies might fit in your course.
- Try just one strategy, and expect it to go wrong (and to work) in ways that you couldn't predict.
- Experiment to see what works with your class, your teaching style, your course content.