



Using online discussions to improve student engagement

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Why Use Online Discussions?

1. Build Community
2. Make discussions accessible to more people
3. Provide students a chance to analyze and evaluate material (Bloom's Taxonomy!)
4. Be able to see the level of understanding students have of material. Have they just memorized???

Steps in creating Engaging Discussions

1. What is the goal of the discussion? (Objectives) For example:
 - Class introductions
 - Analysis of material
2. Create a discussion prompt based on your objective.
 - Bloom's Taxonomy can help here for creating clear objectives for discussion (or any course activities).

REVISED Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs

Definitions	I. Remembering	II. Understanding	III. Applying	IV. Analyzing	V. Evaluating	VI. Creating
Bloom's Definition	Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers.	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.	Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.	Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.
Verbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose • Define • Find • How • Label • List • Match • Name • Omit • Recall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classify • Compare • Contrast • Demonstrate • Explain • Extend • Illustrate • Infer • Interpret • Outline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply • Build • Choose • Construct • Develop • Experiment with • Identify • Interview • Make use of • Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze • Assume • Categorize • Classify • Compare • Conclusion • Contrast • Discover • Dissect • Distinguish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree • Appraise • Assess • Award • Choose • Compare • Conclude • Criteria • Criticize • Decide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt • Build • Change • Choose • Combine • Compile • Compose • Construct • Create • Delete

Examples

If you want students to 'Apply' a concept, you could prompt them to "Identify three ways global warming has impacted the world's economy.

If you want the highest level of learning, 'creating', you could prompt students to discuss and "compile" a list of five causes of global warming. With your group, order the list in level of impact and provide reasons for how you prioritized your list."

Parts of a good discussion prompt

1. Find a balance between closed and open ended questions.
 - Yes and No questions don't provide an opportunity for discussion but too open ended can make it difficult for students to know expectations for the assignment.
2. Have measurable components if you are going to grade the discussions.
 - Include numerical expectations (Identify three ways...)

How to encourage engagement within the discussion

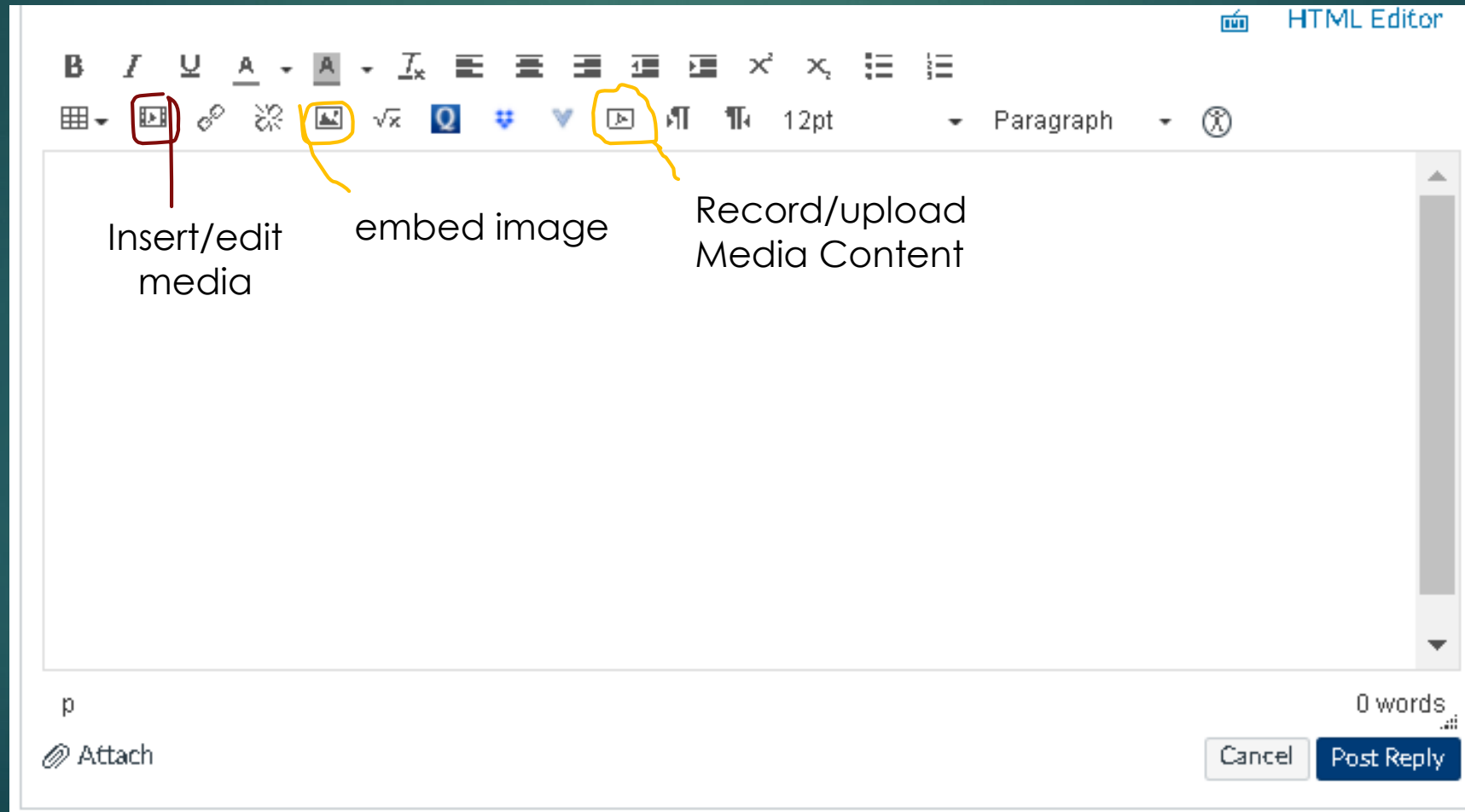
1.) Specify if responses are necessary and refer to what you are looking for. You can pull specifics from Bloom's Taxonomy [here](#).

▶ **Example:** You need to respond to at least three original posts.

Responses must include either a question and why you have that question or a statement with a rationale and reference to support the statement.

How to encourage engagement within the discussion

Provide opportunities for more than typed responses.



The screenshot displays an HTML Editor interface with a toolbar at the top. Three icons in the toolbar are highlighted with yellow circles and labeled with text:

- The first icon, a play button inside a square, is labeled "Insert/edit media".
- The second icon, a picture inside a square, is labeled "embed image".
- The third icon, a play button inside a square, is labeled "Record/upload Media Content".

The editor's main area is currently empty. At the bottom left, there is an "Attach" button. At the bottom right, there is a word count "0 words" and two buttons: "Cancel" and "Post Reply".

A few helpful links

- ▶ [UConn ECampus: Developing Engaging Online Discussions](#)
- ▶ [How to write engaging questions for online forums](#)

If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to email me at Mandie.nash@bellevuecollege.edu or see me I e-learning on Mondays from 12:00pm – 4:00pm.