

Discussion Board Guidelines

Students: Read this document carefully prior to posting to the discussion board.

Colleagues: You can make a copy of this document by going to File> Make a copy.

This was part of a 2019 Educause article: [10 tips for effective online discussions.](#)

Grading

Forum contributions are scored on a 0-5 scale as follows:

0 = no, late or inadequate posting

1-2 = substantive posting

3-4 = substantive posting AND meaningful return comments to your classmates

5 = substantive posting with meaningful comments, including connections to the reading materials and insight into the issue

Guidelines

When typing an answer to a classmate or your instructor on the discussion, ask yourself:

Am I adding value to this discussion thread?

How many posts/ replies

You should reply to the required number of questions by the course deadline of each week and reply to your **classmates** by Saturday noon. Do not wait until the last minute to reply to your classmates or they won't have a chance to reply to you! Try to spread out your answers

The Division of Continuing Education | The University of Colorado Boulder |
[Graduate Certificate in Language Teaching with Technology](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

between Wednesday and Saturday. Visit the discussion board and don't leave your classmates hanging even if you have posted your two replies.

Style

Although you may have experience using this type of asynchronous communication through texting or Facebook, your posts should be composed of complete and grammatically accurate sentences (no abbreviations please). Avoid writing in all caps (all caps = yelling).

Length

Initial posts (answers to prompts) should be between **200 and 250 words** (about 2 paragraphs). Try to only develop one idea per post to facilitate the development of threads. Answers to your classmates' posts may be shorter as long as they meet the requirements described in this document.

Frequency

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).

Content

"I agree" is not enough: Avoid postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc. "I agree" type of answers crowd the discussion board and make it harder for everybody to navigate the discussion.

If you agree (or disagree) with a posting then say why you agree/disagree by supporting your statement with concepts from the readings or by bringing in a related example or experience. Make each post count! Again, ask yourself whether your post brings value to the discussion.

Quote your sources: Take advantage of the asynchronous nature of the discussion forum to look up any source you quote and make sure to cite these sources by mentioning the last name of the author, the publication and the year. No need to use a particular style.

Stick to the point: Address the questions as much as possible (don't let the discussion stray).

Connect to prior knowledge: Bring in related prior knowledge (work experience, prior coursework, readings, etc.)

Respond rather than add-on: You will not get credit for any posts such as "I agree with x" or "Great job Y". You're expected to provide real contributions. Build on others responses to create



threads.

Innovate, don't replicate: You usually have the choice between several questions. If you're late contributing to the initial posts, try to answer questions that have not been addressed yet, even if they wouldn't have been your first pick. The early bird...

Take it beyond the readings: Do quote the readings but don't stop there. Do your best to add value to the discussion. Ask questions you really want to find answers to, discuss what you found intriguing, confusing, share your top takeaways.

Tone & Etiquette

Although it is perfectly fine, even recommended, to challenge your classmates' posts and defend your opinions, you're expected to do so in respectful and polite manner.

Always use proper etiquette (proper language, typing, etc.)

Express your ideas clearly to avoid misunderstanding, give people the benefit of the doubt. Over 90% of human interactions are non-verbal. We convey meaning and intention via body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc. Here is an example of the importance of one's tone of voice from the TV show Friends (<https://youtu.be/OvEci5Bjgd4>)



The Division of Continuing Education | The University of Colorado Boulder |
[Graduate Certificate in Language Teaching with Technology](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

Sample initial answer :

Question: Do you think that classroom learning should be the measuring stick by which we evaluate online language learning? What are the potential risks of using a comparative approach to measure online language learning?

Answer: I would agree **[states opinion clearly]** with Blake that the classroom is not necessarily a panacea of learning against which all other learning should be measured. We have much research that points to the nature of language learning which tells us that it is a slow process which is input dependent and individual in nature so the development rates cannot be predictable. **[Provides evidence to support opinion]** He also notes on page 139: "Clearly, there exists more than one pathway to reach the goal of becoming bilingual-no matter how much some in our profession value the in-class format over any other avenues of language study". **[Direct reference to the reading with quote and page number]** I would also posit that the vast differences in style and materials in both F2F and virtual classrooms would also make teasing out differences for comparison would be impossible. I think that by comparing the approaches, we run the risk of stifling innovation by creative teachers who are developing tools and environments that have the potential to meet the needs of many students who are seeking to improve their proficiency in a second language. **[Provides additional argument to support answer]**

- Good length
- Addresses the question directly
- Free of typos and spelling error
- Easy to read

Sample reply to a classmates post

Using the comparative approach is extremely risky because not all classrooms are created equal **[part of the post the student is reacting to, not always necessary but useful strategy]**.

That's very true. I suppose we all had bad F2F class experiences but it would not occur to us to dismiss face-to-face learning as a valid way to teach. Yet, I very often hear how online



learning does not work because of a one-time negative experience. I appreciate the emphasis you place on the teacher **[reacting to another aspect of the post]**, and this is one other misconception about online learning: that you don't need a qualified teacher, or that you don't need one at all. This is something that ACTFL is trying to rectify. This is an excerpt from [their latest position statement on the role of technology in language teaching](#) : *"Therefore, ACTFL strongly advises school and university administrators to place the responsibility for language instruction in the hands of qualified language teachers rather than solely in technology programs."* **[provides link to external source]**

Students: Enter your name below when you have read the document above, thank you!

-

