


# Using the Discussion Board

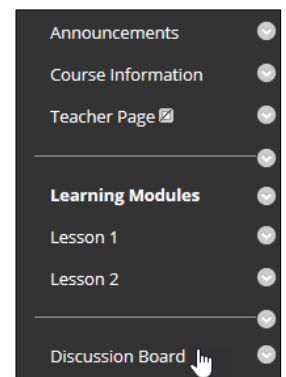
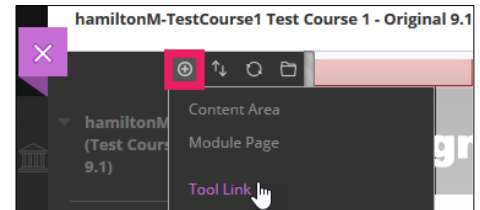


Blackboard

The discussion board is a communication tool that allows students and the instructor to discuss and exchange ideas centered on a specific topic. In this tutorial, you will learn how to create a discussion board tool link button and discussion forum. These instructions assume that you have [EDIT MODE](#) turned on in your course.

## Creating a Discussion Board Button

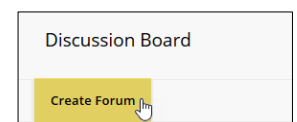
1. In your course, roll your mouse over the  **ADD** button. From the pop-up menu, select **CREATE TOOL LINK**.
2. An **ADD TOOL LINK** box will appear. Give the tool link a logical name and select **DISCUSSION BOARD** from the drop-down menu. Be sure to check the **AVAILABLE TO USERS** checkbox to make this area available to students. When done, click **SUBMIT**.
3. The tool link will now appear in your course menu. Click on the tool link to access the Discussion Board.



## Creating a Discussion Board Forum

To have a conversation about a specific topic, you must first create a forum. A forum is a place for you and your students to publish, share, and reply to comments (i.e.. threads). Follow these instructions to create a new forum.

1. On the discussion board page, click on the **CREATE FORUM** button.
2. On the **CREATE FORUM** page, complete the following fields:
  - a. **FORUM INFORMATION:** Give the forum a meaningful **NAME** and **DESCRIPTION**.



b. **FORUM AVAILABILITY:** Click the **AVAILABLE** radio button to make the forum available. If desired, you may use the scheduling tools to control the forum’s availability.

c. **FORUM SETTINGS:** Choose the settings you would like to use in the forum. Here, you can also determine if you want to include this forum in your Grade Center and set its point value.

3. When you are done completing the form, click the **SUBMIT** button at the bottom of the page. The new forum will be posted to the discussion board.

**Please note the following navigational features of the Discussion Board page**

- A. **Search Tool** – Click the *Search* button and use the provided tools to search the forums for content.
- B. **Reorder Tool** – Click the arrow icons and move the forums into a preferred order in the form that appears.
- C. **Sortable Columns** – The heading of each column is a clickable link that sorts forums ascending alphabetically. If you click on a sorting filter, a “Remove Sorting” button will appear on the page. While forum content is sorted, you will not be able to re-arrange forum order.
- D. **Forum Link** – Click on the name of the forum to access it. To edit the forum, click on the gray arrow button next to its name and select the option you want to perform: Edit, Grade, Manage, or Delete.
- E. **Forum Notifications** - The *Unread Posts* and *Replies to Me* notification will display a number indicating the number of posts in these categories. Clicking on the notification will display the forum posts associated with it.

FORUM	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL POSTS	UNREAD POSTS	UNREAD REPLIES TO ME	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
<a href="#">Welcome to Class Introductions</a>	Introduce yourself to the class. State your name, your degree program, what you hope to learn from this class, and one interesting fact about yourself.	3	3	0	0

**Creating Threads in a Forum**

A thread is an individual, original response posted within a forum. It is a best practice for the instructor to add the first thread in a forum as an example for the students to use when creating their own responses. The instructor and students may follow this process to add a new thread to a forum:

1. On the discussion board page, **CLICK ON THE LINK TO THE FORUM.** On the forum page, click on the **CREATE THREAD** button.

2. On the **CREATE THREAD** page, complete the **MESSAGE** form. Then, click the **SUBMIT** button to publish the thread to the forum.

3. The published thread will appear on the forum page as a link. Students must click the link to view the thread's message.

## Saving Unpublished Drafts

When you or students are composing a new thread, an unpublished thread can be saved for later revision and publishing by clicking the **SAVE AS DRAFT** button. **Only the original author can find, edit, and publish a draft.**

### Finding a Draft

Within the forum, roll your mouse over the **DISPLAY** button and choose **DRAFTS ONLY** from the menu that appears. This will sort the list of threads and display just those in draft status.

### Editing & Publishing a Draft Thread

Clicking on the link to the draft thread. On the **THREAD DETAIL** page, roll your mouse over the content of the thread and click the **EDIT** button that appears. This will display a text editor to edit the content of the thread. Once done making edits, click the **SUBMIT** button to publish the thread to the forum.

## Replying to Threads

1. When viewing a thread's content, click on the thread's **REPLY** button.

2. A drop-down form will appear, where you can add your reply to the thread. To publish the reply, click **SUBMIT**.

3. The reply will be added to the thread's details page, underneath the original thread.