

Blackboard Help

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Discussions

About Discussions

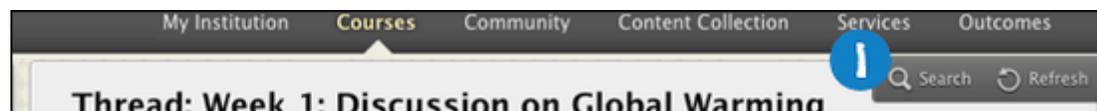
The Discussions building block that was incorporated into SP12 changes the discussion board user interface in two primary ways:

- The thread detail page has been thoroughly redesigned while maintaining all of its current functionality.
- Instructors now can require students to first post to a forum before they can see other students' posts.

Discussion updates include:

- **All posts on one page:** All of the posts in a thread are now visible at the same time on one page.
- **Instructor highlighting:** Posts made by forum managers and moderators now contain the user's course role and forum role.
- **Inline replies:** When replying to a post, the content editor used to write a response appears on the same page, in the context of the discussion.
- **"Post First" Discussions:** When creating a forum, instructors can use the *Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum* setting, which will require students to post to a discussion before seeing other students' posts.

All Posts on One Page and Instructor Highlighting



The screenshot shows a discussion thread titled "Week 1: Discussion on Global Warming". At the top, there is an action bar with "Select: All None", "Message Actions", "Expand All", and "Collapse All" buttons. To the right, it says "3 Posts in this Thread" and "1 Unread". The first post is by Beth Carlson, an instructor and manager, with a 5-star overall rating. The second post is by Sarah Johnson, with a 4-star overall rating. Numbered callouts (1-9) point to various UI elements: 1. Action bar; 2. Expand All and Collapse All buttons; 3. Unread count; 4. User avatar; 5. User role and forum role; 6. Reply and Quote buttons; 7. Marked as Read icon; 8. Overall Rating; 9. Overall Rating stars.

1. The action bar (Grading, Moderation, Alignments, Subscribe/Unsubscribe, Search, and Refresh buttons) has been relocated to a new layer that appears when the user hovers over the body of the page. This change was made to increase the amount of vertical screen space available for viewing posts.
2. Two new functions are now available at the top of the page: Expand All and Collapse All. These buttons help the user manage the visibility of the posts on the page with a single click. Note that the existing batch actions are still available as well.
3. The number of unread messages is prominently displayed at the top right, along with the total number of posts. Clicking on this takes the user to a collection (based on current functionality) that only contains the posts marked as unread in the current thread.
4. A larger version of the user's avatar is displayed.
5. The user's course role and forum role are displayed for users whose forum role is either manager or moderator. If the institution has set up custom roles for instructors or TAs, for example, this information is displayed. This highlight is only available within the discussion board at this time., highlighting of discussion board posts within the Bb Stream will be available in a future Learn release.
6. The ability to reply in-line is available to all posts. See below for more information about this new user experience.
7. There is a new Marked as Read icon. When this icon is blue, this indicates that the post has not yet been read; conversely, when the icon is white, the post has been read. Posts are marked as read automatically as the user scrolls down the page. Only posts that are viewed on screen and expanded get automatically marked as read, and only after a slight delay (i.e. users will not automatically mark all posts as 'read' by quickly scrolling down the page). The user may choose to

manually override a post that is marked as read automatically.

8. Post dates are now displayed as relative dates. When the user hovers, a layer appears that provides the absolute date of creation and edit, as well as the number of views.
9. The rating displays the average rating for a given post, if the Rate Posts feature is turned on. When the user hovers, this changes to show the rating provided, or to be provided, by the user.
10. When copying, importing or exporting discussion board course material, you can decide whether or not to add starter posts for each thread in each forum (anonymously) to the package.
11. **Accessibility:** The new experience of reading a thread is simple to consume with screen reader technology. We also removed clutter on the page, so screen reader and keyboard-only users have less to sift through as they navigate the interface.

To learn more about using the Discussion Board, see [Discussion Board](#).

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