A Discussion About Discussions

Increasing Student Interaction in Discussion Boards

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Presenters

Quick Introductions:

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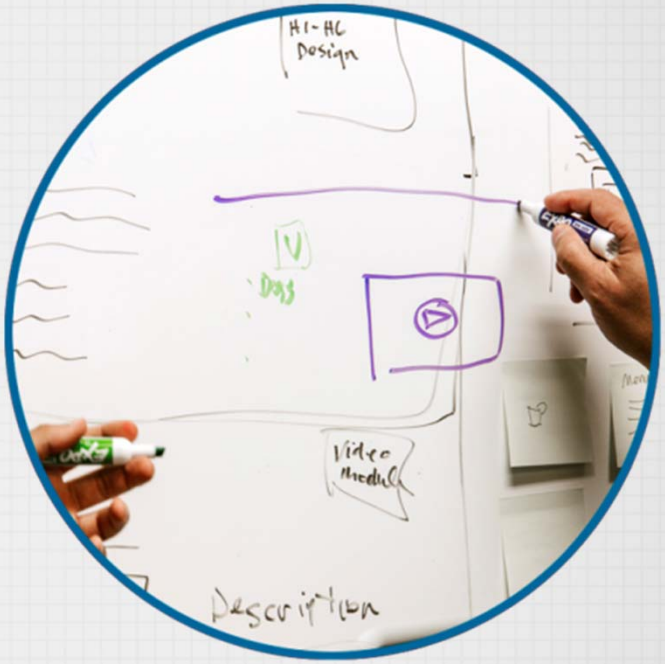
- Mrs. Lynn Frank
  Instructional Designer
  Instructional Design Services at Athens State University

Overview of Presentation

Topics Covered:

- Importance of Student Engagement
- Current Problems with Most Discussion Boards
- Steps of the CREST+ Technique
- Implementation of CREST+ in Courses
- Additional Best Practices with Discussions
- Questions and Answers



QM Engagement Standards

QM Standards Focused On:

- Standard 1.9
  - Introductions to the class.
- **Standard 5.2**
  - Activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.
- **Standard 6.2**
  - Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.

Current Discussion Boards

Problems with Discussion Boards:

- Boring to Students
- Minimal Interaction Between Students
- Timing Problems with Posts and Replies

Overview of CREST+ Technique

Steps of the CREST+ Technique:

1. Determine Purpose of Discussion
2. Provide Context of Discussion
3. Implement Experiential Elements
4. Determine Type of Question
5. Construct the Actual Discussion Question

CREST+ Article: http://jolt.merlot.org/vol3no2/akin.htm

CREST+: Define Purpose

Purpose of a Discussion:

- Discussions are NOT for Summarizing
- Create Interaction Between Students
- Types of Discussions with Interaction:
  - Reflection
  - Debate
  - Synthesize
  - Etc.

CREST+: Provide Context

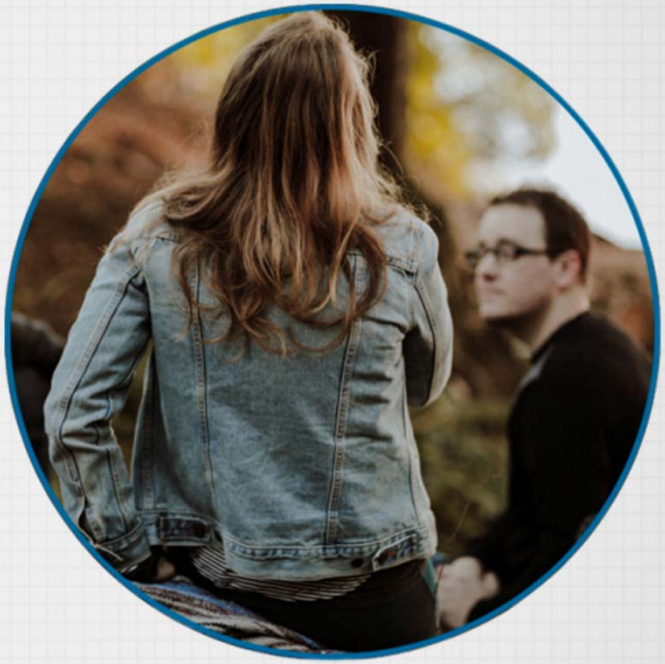
Setting Up the Background Info:

- Textbook or Lecture
  - Readily Available, Easy to Create
  - Less Engaging
- Multiple Sources
  - Middle Ground
- Non-Literary Sources
  - Harder to Moderate and Create
  - More Engaging

CREST+: Experiential Element

Allowing for Personal Experience:

- Opinion Based Discussion
- Scenarios Based on Prior Experience
- Makes Discussion Relevant and Interesting
- Important for Adult Learners



CREST+: Select Type of Question

Types of Discussion Questions:

- Metacognitive
- Practical Relevance
- Reflective Analysis
- More Evidence
- Cause and Effect
- Case Study
- Synthesis of Information

CREST+: Construct the Question

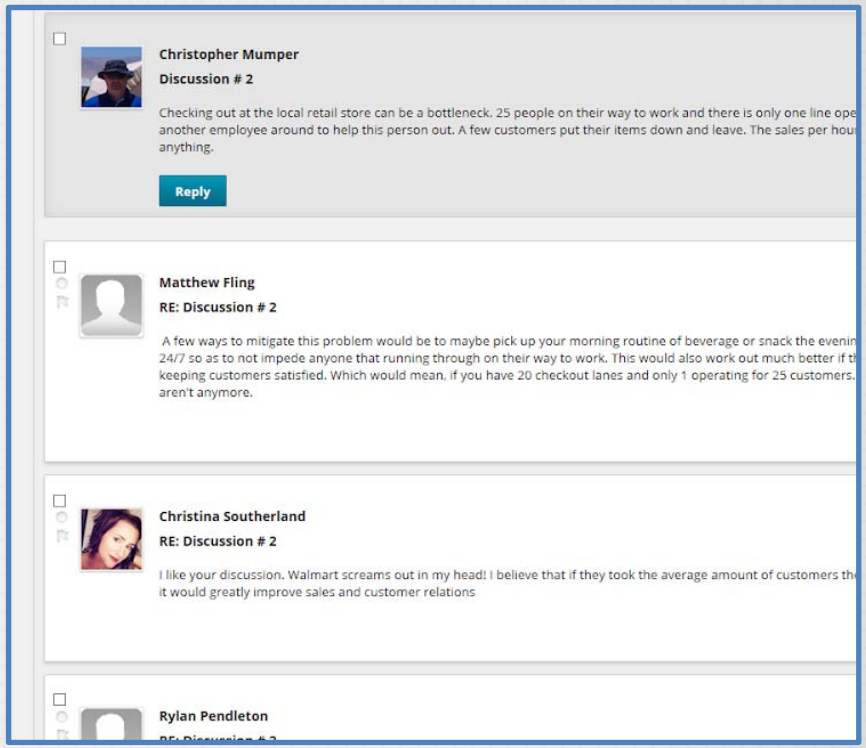
Building the Question:

- Purpose and Background
- State the Actual Question
- Give an Example of a Response
- Provide Any Additional Examples
- Include Due Dates

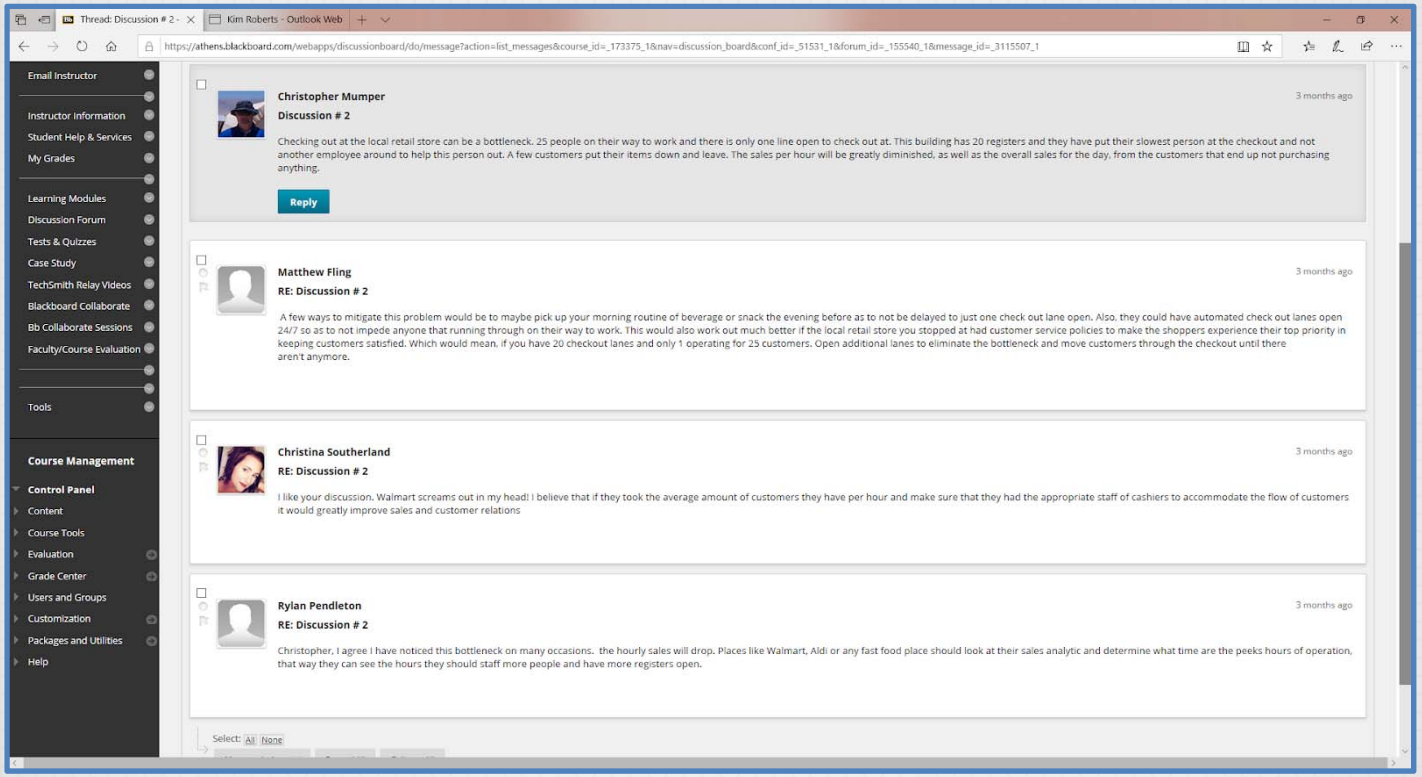
First Implementation

Student Created Scenarios:

- MG 390: Operations Management
- Question Description
- Increase in Number of Responses
- Increase in Quality of Responses
- Grading Was Unique and Enjoyable



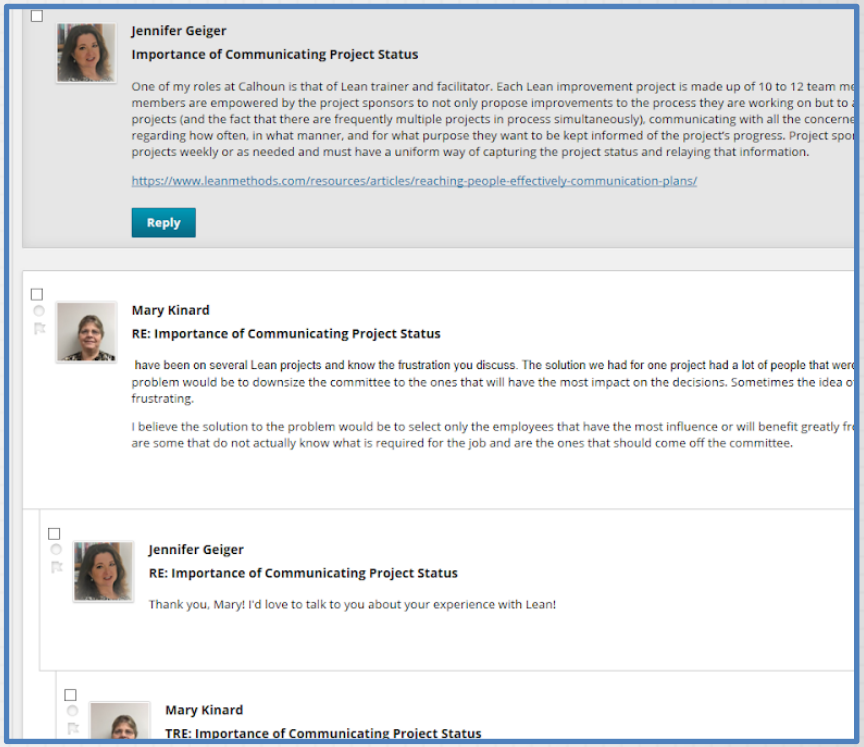
First Implementation



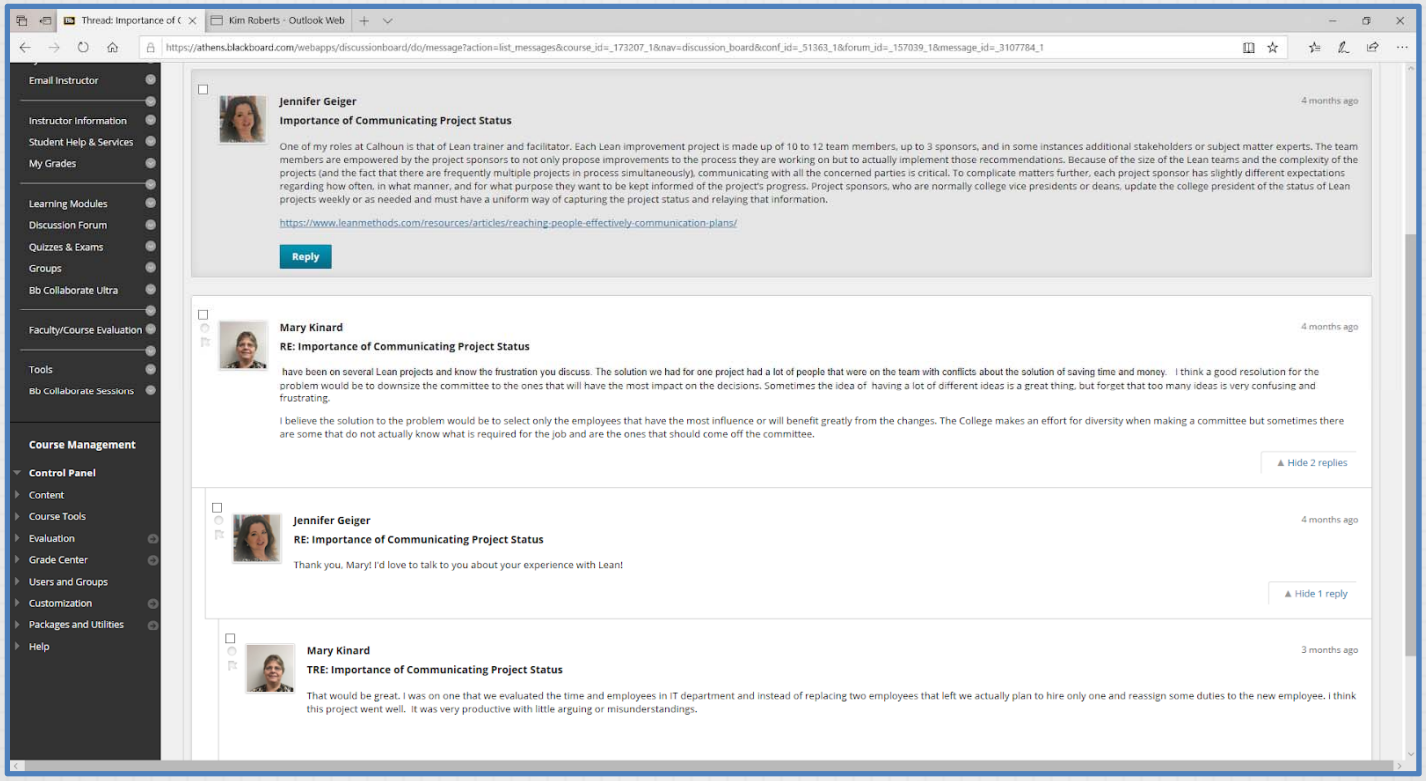
Further Implementation

Expanding to More Courses:

- Expanded Technique to Multiple Courses
- Gathered Anecdotal Feedback
- Responses:
  - Think More In Depth
  - Read Multiple Posts
  - Inventive and Engaging
- Intend to Follow Up with Additional Research



Future Implementation



Across Curriculum

Implemented Model in the Following:

- Various Business Courses
- Various Education Courses
- Various Arts and Sciences Courses
- Various Technology Courses
- Various Delivery Modes (Online, Hybrid, F2F)

More Best Practices in Discussions

Tips for Stronger Discussions:

- Number of Discussions
- Role of the Instructor
- Students to Take Them Seriously
  - Grading
  - Crest+ Technique
  - Student Created Topics

Summary

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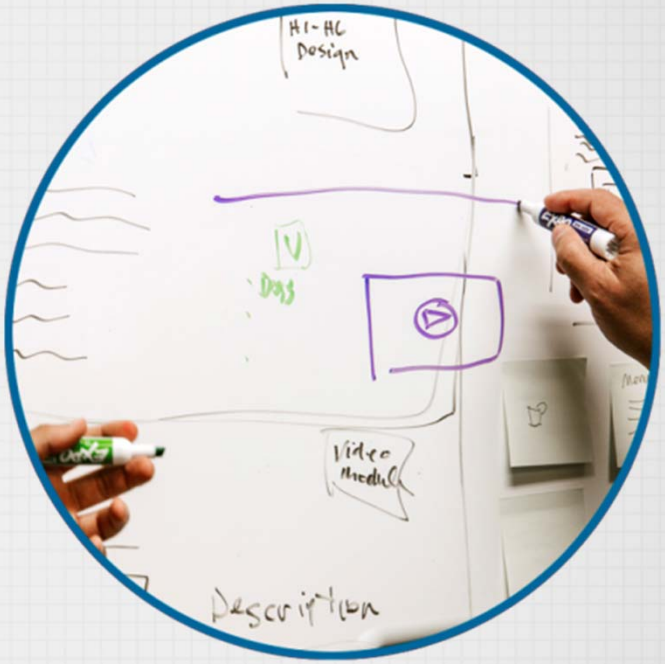

Image Sources

- **Slide 3, 18:** Drawing on Whiteboard
  - Photo by Kaleidico on Unsplash
- **Slide 4:** Fingers Typing on Keyboard
  - Photo by Glenn Carstens-Peters on Unsplash
- **Slide 5:** Sleeping Person
  - Photo by Pocky Lee on Unsplash
- **Slide 6, 16:** Talking in Front of Computer
  - Photo by Headway on Unsplash
- **Slide 7:** Group of People Talking
  - Photo by Alexis Brown on Unsplash

Image Sources – Pt. 2

- **Slide 8:** Person Reading Newspaper
  - Photo by Roman Kraft on Unsplash
- **Slide 9:** People Outdoors
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- **Slide 10:** Student Raising a Hand
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- **Slide 11:** Person Typing on a Keyboard
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- **Slide 17:** Group of Men Talking
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Questions